

1 **Marlene Hester discusses her career as a**
2 **production worker, material handler and UAW member at the**
3 **Fisher Body plant in Lansing, MI**
4
5

6 Doug Rademacher: [clicking] This is the Lansing Fisher Body Historical Team. [papers
7 rustling] We are here today interviewing Marlene Hester. Uh. We are at
8 the Frank Dryer [GreenHouse 0:13] across from the Local 602 Union Hall.
9 It is February 16th at approximately 10:50 a.m. Marlene, I'm going to go
10 around the room and in-, have everyone s-, share their name for the record.
11
12 Gary Judy: Gary Judy.
13
14 Earl Nicholson: Earl Nicholson.
15
16 Cheryl McQuaid: Cheryl McQuaid.
17
18 Marilyn Coulter: Marilyn Coulter.
19
20 Doug Rademacher: And Doug Rademacher. [0:37] Marlene, would you please say your name
21 and spell your name for the record?
22
23 Marlene Hester: My name is Marlene Hester, M-A-R-L-E-N-E H-E-S-T-E-R.
24
25 Doug Rademacher: [0:50] And where do you live? What is your address?
26
27 Marlene Hester: 818 Eugenia Drive, Mason, Michigan.
28
29 Doug Rademacher: [tsk] Okay. [0:59] And you are female, correct?
30
31 Marlene Hester: Yes.
32
33 Doug Rademacher: [1:04] Caucasian? Now, would you tell me, do you have any, uh,
34 educational background?
35
36 Marlene Hester: Well, I graduated from high school and I have an associate's degree.
37
38 Doug Rademacher: Okay. [1:19] Are you married?
39
40 Marlene Hester: No.
41
42 Doug Rademacher: [1:23] Do you have any children?
43
44 Marlene Hester: Yes.
45
46 Doug Rademacher: [1:26] And would you tell us a little bit about them?
47

1Marlene Hester: I have a daughter, uh, Marisa [Yvonne 1:30], she's – just turned 26. And I
2 have a son, Marc William. He is 21.
3
4Doug Rademacher: Okay. [1:42] And do you have any military service?
5
6Marlene Hester: No.
7
8Doug Rademacher: All right. [1:49] What did your parents do?
9
10Marlene Hester: My father worked at the Olds at the jet plant and, um, my mom was a stay-
11 at-home mom.
12
13Doug Rademacher: Okay. [2:03] Would you please tell us what you did before you hired in to
14 the Fisher Body plant?
15
16Marlene Hester: I had a job, uh, counting money that came out of the vending machines
17 from the MSU campus. And, um, on, on Fridays, I would count up to
18 sometimes \$20,000 worth a coins and a armored car'd come and get the
19 money and it didn't pay very well.
20
21Doug Rademacher: Well, that's gonna lead into my next question. [2:37] Why did ya come to
22 Fisher Body? Why did ya hire in there?
23
24Marlene Hester: It was a chance to triple my income.
25
26Doug Rademacher: [2:48] Can you tell us how did you hear about Fisher Body hiring?
27
28Marlene Hester: [tsk] I had a roommate and, uh, sh-, she happened to tell me that her
29 fiancée was gonna go to the Olds and put in a – an app that day and, um, I
30 said so am I. But she must a said Fisher Body because I took my lunch
31 that day and come on into Lansing and I stood in line for a little while and
32 I put my app in the – down front there at Fisher Body.
33
34Doug Rademacher: [3:26] Can you share that vision please? What was it like to drive into
35 Lansing? Were you familiar with Lansing?
36
37Marlene Hester: Yeah.
38
39Doug Rademacher: [3:33] And when you drove up to put in your application, can you...
40
41Marlene Hester: There...
42
43Doug Rademacher: ...tell us about that?
44

1Marlene Hester: ...there was a lot of people. There was like 2 or 3 lines and, um, just a
2 lotta people tryin' to get their apps in and I was fortunate and I got up to
3 the front, I got to, to get an app and fill it out, turn it in.
4

5Doug Rademacher: And when did you hire into Fisher Body?
6

7Marlene Hester: M-, they called me in August.
8

9Doug Rademacher: Of...?
10

11Marlene Hester: August 8th, 1978.
12

13Doug Rademacher: 1978. [4:06] How old were you when you hired in?
14

15Marlene Hester: Twenty-four.
16

17Doug Rademacher: I'm gonna ask you about your first day on the – into the plant. You were
18 called to work. [4:19] Can you talk about what happened? Did you know
19 what went on inside the building and...?
20

21Marlene Hester: Well, back then, we had a pretty good orientation. They take us to the
22 labor relations room. There was quite a few of us and we went through
23 orientation. They were pretty thorough about what was – what to expect.
24 And, um, that first day, it was, it was, um, different. Um. Lost. Got lost
25 easy and, um, you know, it's a big, big place.
26

27Doug Rademacher: [4:58] What shift and which department did you start in?
28

29Marlene Hester: I was on second shift and I was up in Trim, up in [3X2 5:05].
30

31Doug Rademacher: [5:08] How did that happen? Can you talk about bein' in that room? How
32 was – how were you selected to go to this particular operation? Do you
33 remember?
34

35Marlene Hester: No. There was 3 or 4 of us and, um, they s-, just said follow, follow me
36 and they took us outta the hospital, I think, and on up. We walked up into
37 [3X 5:31] and went to the boss, [George Burdette 5:35], and, um, they just
38 put us on the job. I don't know how they selected it or – really, I don't
39 know.
40

41Doug Rademacher: We can see your first day. [5:47] Would ya share with us what job did ya
42 do and tell us about that.
43

44Marlene Hester: I stocked the rear belts on the B line on the, uh, 98s, 88 line.
45

46Doug Rademacher: [6:01] Which belt would that be?

1
2Marlene Hester: The rear, the rear seat belt.
3
4Doug Rademacher: Okay.
5
6Marlene Hester: And I had to go – uh, on the manifest, it'd have a color and, um, so I had
7 to pay attention and then I would, um – there were pull straps at the time
8 on the door and under the pull strap, there was, uh, 2 screws to bolt the
9 door in, so that's what I – I stocked the belts and I put in those pull strap
10 screws.
11
12Doug Rademacher: [6:29] Can you explain what a manifest is?
13
14Marlene Hester: Manifest w-, was the, [tsk] uh, printout on the front a the car and it, and it
15 stated what was supposed to go on that particular job. It was usually
16 numbers and letters in a combination and it told you what was needed for
17 that particular car.
18
19Doug Rademacher: [6:52] And how was your first day? Did you find it challenging?
20
21Marlene Hester: Yes. Yes, I did. 'Cause, uh, I never worked in a factory before. It was
22 totally, uh, foreign to me and it was, it was somethin' to get used to. I'll
23 never forget those first 2 weeks. I mean, feet hurt, body hurt, everything
24 hurt bad.
25
26Doug Rademacher: [7:25] Did anyone help you? Did you meet your union people early on?
27 Did, did someone come in and say hi, I'm the union or somebody was, uh,
28 there to help you learn a job?
29
30Marlene Hester: I'm sure there was someone to break me in but it was like, uh, 20 minutes
31 and then I was on my own. I remember it was hardly no time at all.
32 'Cause I think they had the, the guys that gave relief [inaudible 7:57]
33 [throat clearing] before we shut the line down but, um, yeah, he wasn't too
34 happy about breakin' anybody in.
35
36Doug Rademacher: Gary Judy.
37
38Gary Judy: Marlene, you said, uh, your girlfriend, roommate, came with ya. [8:12]
39 Did she get hired in with you or...?
40
41Marlene Hester: Her fiancée was gonna put in an app, John, and he ended up over, I
42 believe, at Plant 3 and, um, the best – that's the best of my knowledge.
43 She didn't put in an app.
44
45Gary Judy: Oh. [8:31] Was, was there – you were a young girl and goin' into the
46 factory and...

1
2Marlene Hester: Mm-hm.
3
4Gary Judy: ...was there a lot of other girls that hired in with you at that time?
5
6Marlene Hester: Yeah, there was. Quite a few other women.
7
8Gary Judy: [8:47] So it was, uh – did you – so you felt comfortable? Uh, did you
9 make some friends the first day and...?
10
11Marlene Hester: Yeah, I did.
12
13Doug Rademacher: Marilyn Coulter.
14
15Marilyn Coulter: Marlene, I'm just gonna take ya back a little bit. Now, I know you said
16 that you were from Lansing. [9:02] Did you know anything or anybody
17 who worked in Fisher Body [tsk] that you heard any stories about the
18 plant?
19
20Marlene Hester: No. No.
21
22Marilyn Coulter: So, um, when you came in – he asked you were there other women. [9:18]
23 Were there any other women in the department that you hired in?
24
25Marlene Hester: Yes, there were.
26
27Marilyn Coulter: [9:21] And so there were other women down the line?
28
29Marlene Hester: Mm-hm.
30
31Marilyn Coulter: [9:24] Did they befriend you? Did they give you any words of wisdom on
32 what it'd be to work [inaudible 9:29]?
33
34Marlene Hester: No, not really. We just, um, [tsk] tellin' each other how bad our feet hurt
35 and how bad our back hurt and just stuff like that [inaudible 9:41]...
36
37Marilyn Coulter: Hm.
38
39Marlene Hester: ...the first few weeks.
40
41Marilyn Coulter: [9:45] So now were there any other women who were already seniority
42 employees there? Who had already been workin' in the department?
43
44Marlene Hester: Oh, yes. Yeah, there were.
45
46Marilyn Coulter: [9:53] Did they tell you how to make it through it?

1
2Marlene Hester: My – I had an uncle, his name is [Bob Simons 9:58] and he was a foreman
3 at the Olds. He’s the one that told me to buy shoes, uh, 1 size larger,
4 where 2 pair a socks. He says your feet are gonna hurt worse than
5 anything, so that’s what I did. And, um, they still hurt a lot. [laughter]
6 Didn’t matter. That break-in time, you never forget it ‘cause it’s so bad.
7
8Doug Rademacher: Earl Nicholson.
9
10Earl Nicholson: [10:23] Did you wear boots or tennis shoes?
11
12Marlene Hester: Boots.
13
14Earl Nicholson: [10:27] Over the, over the ankle boots or, um...?
15
16Marlene Hester: No, they were – they weren’t high-top or anything, they were just regular
17 boots.
18
19Earl Nicholson: Mm-hm. [10:39] And, uh, and did you use gloves and – did they give –
20 ish-, issue gloves and safety glasses and...?
21
22Marlene Hester: Yes, uh-huh. Had to use gloves. Just ca-, cloth gloves.
23
24Doug Rademacher: Doug Rademacher. Marlene, you had never worked an assembly line, uh,
25 factory. ‘Course you put a lotta coins from what you said into, uh,
26 probably, uh, machines or sleeves or whatever. [11:06] But can you tell
27 wh-, what it was like to have a vehicle approach you? You’ve read the
28 manifest, you grab your stock. How do you, how do you, um – was there
29 enough time to get your job done? Was it a challenge to get that job done?
30
31Marlene Hester: There was enough time to get the job done. Um. I just – I had a big rack
32 beside me. It had all the rear belts, all the colors, [papers rustling] and,
33 um, [tsk] it told me on the manifest it was K something, K with a number,
34 and I s-, threw the belts in and put in the pull strap screws and then right
35 next to me was my partner. He’s the one that bolted in the rear belts and
36 then, uh, up the, up the line, that’s when the rear seats would go in, so had
37 to pay attention. Get the, get the right color, get the right style, stuff like
38 that.
39
40Doug Rademacher: Well, your – obviously your goal was to learn how to do the job and keep
41 up. [12:10] When did ya start establishing relationships with your
42 coworkers?
43
44Marlene Hester: Right away.
45
46Doug Rademacher: Right away?

1
2Marlene Hester: Hm.
3
4Doug Rademacher: [12:17] Do you remember your first break and things called wagons? Was
5 there anything like that at that time?
6
7Marlene Hester: Yeah.
8
9Doug Rademacher: [12:25] Can you describe that?
10
11Marlene Hester: Well, they had relief men then and, um, [Quimby 12:31] was my relief
12 man. And he knew who the new guys were and you couldn't complain
13 but he would, he would cheat us out of our break 3 or 4 minutes but what
14 could ya say? And yeah, I remember the wagon comin' up, buyin' stuff
15 off the wagon.
16
17Doug Rademacher: [12:55] Did ya start waiting for that part a the day [inaudible 12:58]?
18
19Marlene Hester: Yes.
20
21Doug Rademacher: Became a...
22
23Marlene Hester: Mm-hm.
24
25Doug Rademacher: I know the wagon was a bargained benefit and it went away in the f-, in
26 the future, so...
27
28Marlene Hester: Mm-hm.
29
30Doug Rademacher: ...just, uh. [13:07] I know we had breaks but that wagon was a special
31 break wasn't it?
32
33Marlene Hester: Yeah, it was.
34
35Doug Rademacher: [tsk] Earl Nicholson.
36
37Earl Nicholson: [13:16] I was gonna ask you when you first came into the factory and, uh,
38 when did you meet your supervisor and do you remember who it was?
39
40Marlene Hester: [throat clearing] Well, um, there was a group of 4 of us, uh, that followed
41 this person up into 3X and I th-, it was either [Lonnie Duke 13:38] or
42 George Burdette. I can't remember which, which foreman I had first but
43 they – [throat clearing] that was, uh, the foremans that were up in 3X in, in
44 my particular department.
45

1Earl Nicholson: [13:52] And how – and, and, and how was – do you remember the, the
2 initial interaction between you and a supervisor or did he just walk up and
3 say anything important to you or did he just ignore you or...?
4

5Marlene Hester: Yeah, **Lonnie Duke** was real – he was, uh, mean-looking and a little bit
6 grouchy and, um, **George Burdette** was a little more friendly and a little
7 more open, so, um, ya just do your job, you, you were all right.
8

9Doug Rademacher: Cheryl McQuaid.

10

11Cheryl McQuaid: Marlene, you said that **Quimby**, um, was your relief man and he would
12 short you 3 or 4 minutes. Was there – and you couldn't do anything about
13 it. [14:32] Was there any importance of that 3 or 4 minutes and did it
14 matter?
15

16Marlene Hester: Yes, it did. Because, um, add that up through the whole day and it
17 could've added up to almost 15 minutes and when your feet are, are
18 kickin' ya and every-, everything's hurting so bad, I mean, yeah, 5, 6
19 minutes made all the difference. And – but he knew what he was doin', s-,
20 you know, sooner he could get done, sooner he could leave.
21

22Doug Rademacher: Doug Rademacher. Marlene, you said you were hurting, aching. [15:11]
23 Is that the common job in a, in a auto factory? Was everybody hurting?
24 Uh, there's thousands of people work there. What – were the jobs
25 equitable or was everybody hurting?
26

27Marlene Hester: I imagine everybody, um, had their own aches and pains. It just depended
28 what job they were on or they might've gotten used to it or, um. [tsk] I, I –
29 the people that I was around, they, they did, um, voice their opinion on
30 how achy and tired, sore they were. [laughter]
31

32Doug Rademacher: Gary Judy.

33

34Gary Judy: [15:54] Did, did you ever feel like quitting? Did, did you think that maybe
35 you wouldn't make it through your probationary period or...
36

37Marlene Hester: No, no.

38

39Gary Judy: ...did any of the people that you hired in with, uh, did, did they all make it
40 through that period?
41

42Marlene Hester: We all made it. We all made the 90 days.

43

44Gary Judy: Uh, I'd like to go back to your relief person. [16:13] Once you got your
45 time in and got established and, and was in the union, did you ever
46 confront him about ripping you off on your relief time?

1
2Marlene Hester: I don't think I did because by that time, I had put in a transfer for another
3 job and I went downstairs on the A line, so I don't remember ever
4 confronting him about it.
5
6Gary Judy: [16:39] [Inaudible 16:39] – can you tell us a little bit about that job that
7 you went to [inaudible 16:42] and how it compared to your previous job?
8
9Marlene Hester: It was good job. It was at the end of the line on the A line and the, the
10 jobs were all done. The seats were in and, uh, me and my partner would
11 put plastic over the seats and put a big rubber band around the seats to,
12 um, you know, keep dirt off from'm. So that was our, that was our job.
13 It's a good job.
14
15Gary Judy: Hm.
16
17Doug Rademacher: [tsk] [17:17] Marlene, tell us a little bit about pranks. Did anyone pull
18 pranks on you and would you share that? And did you ever pull a prank
19 on anybody else?
20
21Marlene Hester: [tsk] Well, when I went down on the A line, uh, [sighing] th-, there was
22 quite a few guys that would hang around and, um – anyways, I was, I was
23 sitting on one a those high chairs. Remember when the foremans, they
24 didn't have an office then, they just had a high table where they had their
25 books and whatever and I was sitting at one a those h-, tables and, uh,
26 mindin' my own business and someone, I don't know who it was, if it was
27 [Don Bogart 18:04] or who it was, came behind me and, and took a hold a
28 that back seat and then I thought I was flipping backwards. And that
29 scared me more than anything. And I, I really – I jumped all over him for
30 that 'cause I was like 4 months with my baby and I said don't ever, ever
31 do that to me again. [laughter] So stupid. But I don't, I don't think I ever
32 pulled any pranks on anybody. I minded my own business and like that.
33
34Marilyn Coulter: Uh.
35
36Doug Rademacher: Marilyn Coulter.
37
38Marilyn Coulter: [18:38] Um, now how long had you been working when you went
39 downstairs to the A line?
40
41Marlene Hester: Um. [tsk] I had been working at least 3 or 4 months.
42
43Marilyn Coulter: Three or four months. [18:54] So, um, how were you treated being a new
44 hire and pregnant?
45

1Marlene Hester: Well, mostly everybody left me alone. It, it got to a point where they
2 wanted to eliminate that plastic job and it was [Rocky Wright 19:17] and
3 he was bound and determined to eliminate that job. And, um, and he did.
4 He got his own way eventually. And then – so I had to take out low man
5 in Trim, which was installing the rear belts and, um, I wasn't strong
6 enough. There was no way I could do that job, so I, I just went out on
7 maternity leave.
8

9Marilyn Coulter: So you just went out on leave. So...

10

11Marlene Hester: Yeah.

12

13Marilyn Coulter: ...um, 2 questions. [19:51] Number 1, so how long – so you went out like
14 shortly after your 4 months? Okay.
15

16Marlene Hester: Four or five.

17

18Marilyn Coulter: Four or five months.

19

20Marlene Hester: Mm-hm.

21

22Marilyn Coulter: [20:01] And so once again, what is that like to work on an assembly line at
23 a pace that you don't have any control over and being pregnant? What
24 was that like for you outside a your feet killin' ya?
25

26Marlene Hester: Mm-hm.

27

28Marilyn Coulter: [20:17] Was that difficult?

29

30Marlene Hester: Yeah, it was. Um. Just, you know, ya had to keep up or you'd get in
31 trouble. End up in the office. So ya had to keep up.
32

33Marilyn Coulter: [20:32] The next – when you said you took out somebody, was that a
34 transfer? How was that – what does that mean you took somebody else
35 out? You took out low man. What's taking out low man?
36

37Marlene Hester: I, uh, I bumped into the low man – I bumped low man in the trim shop
38 because I had more seniority than him. [clicking]
39

40Doug Rademacher: Doug Rademacher. [20:56] Marlene, did you have any other family
41 members that worked at the Fisher Body?
42

43Marlene Hester: No.
44

1 Doug Rademacher: [tsk] [21:05] Would you please tell us about the different supervisors you
2 had? Did you, uh, have supervisors that were good? Supervisors that
3 were bad? What made a good or bad supervisor?
4

5 Marlene Hester: Yes, I had good, good ones and bad ones. Um. The good ones were the
6 ones that would leave ya alone and it's – that's the most of it. Uh. If they
7 left ya alone, you do your job, that was good. Um. I had a, a really bad
8 foreman. It was in, in 1980. His name was [Jerry Done 21:44] and every
9 day I had to go up to his desk and get chewed out about something and,
10 um, [tsk] he was a really, really bad foreman.
11

12 Earl Nicholson: [Inaudible 22:04].
13

14 Doug Rademacher: Earl Nicholson.
15

16 Earl Nicholson: [22:05] Is he – was he the type a guy that he just liked – he kinda liked
17 trouble? Did he stir the pot or was he, was he...
18

19 Marlene Hester: Yes.
20

21 Earl Nicholson: ...pushing unnecessarily?
22

23 Marlene Hester: Yes. He – I, I could tell he's a – he was the type that liked, uh, the
24 adrenaline and getting upset and makin' the other person upset and he was
25 that type.
26

27 Earl Nicholson: [22:31] So, so how was he when he was out on the floor when he was
28 away from his office and he was out on the floor? Was he the type a guy
29 that would pace up and down the line watching people? Would he – was
30 he – he wasn't helpful at all?
31

32 Marlene Hester: No, not really.
33

34 Gary Judy: Gary Judy.
35

36 Doug Rademacher: Gary Judy.
37

38 Gary Judy: [22:47] Did – now did he treat everybody this way or was it just you? Do
39 you feel you were singled out or...?
40

41 Marlene Hester: Yes, I do. I was singled out.
42

43 Gary Judy: [22:56] Do ya have any idea why he might've acted that way? Was it
44 somethin' maybe against women or – do ya think or...?
45

1Marlene Hester: [tsk] I do. One day, I told him – I said I got a doctor’s appointment and it
2 was that afternoon whatever day it was and he refused to let me out. So I
3 left at lunch and I didn’t come back for 2 weeks. I mean, he, he had gotten
4 on, on my nerves so bad and so I had my doctor write me out a slip and I
5 didn’t go back for 2 weeks. I had to get away from that man.
6
7Gary Judy: [23:32] So, so what happened? Did...
8
9Marlene Hester: He...
10
11Gary Judy: ...uh, how did ya – did ya call into work and report it to somebody that
12 you were out on [sick leave 23:39]? How did...
13
14Marlene Hester: I...
15
16Gary Judy: ...that work...
17
18Marlene Hester: Yeah, I did.
19
20Gary Judy: ...[inaudible 23:41]?
21
22Marlene Hester: I’m sure I talked to my committee man and, uh, told, told him what was
23 goin’ on and – but I covered all the dates and all the times and he, he tried
24 to burn me every which way but I w-, like I had myself covered, so there
25 wasn’t too much he could do about it and that made him angry too.
26
27Gary Judy: So, so you were out for 2 weeks and you come back to work and you have
28 to come back to the same supervisor.
29
30Marlene Hester: Yeah.
31
32Gary Judy: [24:12] And what, what happened when you came back to work? Did, did
33 things change at all or, uh...?
34
35Marlene Hester: No. No, they didn’t change. Um. [tsk] I got away from him somehow. I,
36 I either put in for another job or, um, or they relocated me or – I can’t
37 remember but I didn’t have to work for him for very much longer ‘cause it
38 wasn’t workin’ out.
39
40Gary Judy: [25:40] Did he have other women in the area that he...
41
42Marlene Hester: Hm.
43
44Gary Judy: ...harassed or...?
45
46Marlene Hester: There was no other women there. I was the only one.

1
2 Gary Judy: So you were the only one in that area...
3
4 Marlene Hester: Mm-hm.
5
6 Gary Judy: ...and he was probably one a those supervisors or men that didn't feel
7 women should be workin' in the shop.
8
9 Marlene Hester: Yeah.
10
11 Gary Judy: Sounds like. Hm.
12
13 Doug Rademacher: Doug Rademacher. Marlene, you said you got with your, your, uh,
14 committee man, your union representation. [24:59] Can you imagine
15 [inaudible 25:10] what it would be like, uh, to work in a plant that didn't
16 have a union and can ya share how did that union help you in that
17 situation?
18
19 Marlene Hester: [tsk] Well, having the union there, it would be difficult to imagine what it
20 would be like without one. Um. Because you know there's always
21 somebody in your corner. Um. [tsk] What was the s-, the second one?
22
23 Doug Rademacher: [25:37] I just was curious if the – you, you needed the time off and you
24 were able to be protected by the doctor but...
25
26 Marlene Hester: Mm-hm.
27
28 Doug Rademacher: ...did the committee, the union representation step in and give you...
29
30 Marlene Hester: Yes.
31
32 Doug Rademacher: ...some support?
33
34 Marlene Hester: Yes, they did.
35
36 Doug Rademacher: [25:51] Did that keep that supervisor at bay a little bit?
37
38 Marlene Hester: Little bit, yeah.
39
40 Doug Rademacher: Earl Nicholson.
41
42 Earl Nicholson: Um. [25:59] Could you describe the interaction that you had back then?
43 Can you remember the interaction that you had with your, with your
44 committee man or, or any other union people?
45

1Marlene Hester: Just that they knew the problems I was having with Jerry Done and, um, I,
2 I kept them informed and they helped me, um, with – you know, they
3 helped me through that situation.
4

5Earl Nicholson: [26:28] So did they, did they come and talk to you? Did you go talk to
6 them?
7

8Marlene Hester: It was both. It was both ways.
9

10Earl Nicholson: [26:34] And did you, and, and did you go to the union hall or did you go
11 to the work center?
12

13Marlene Hester: I went to the work center.
14

15Earl Nicholson: [26:41] And, and, what, what – well, what is the work center?
16

17Marlene Hester: It's, um, a special place in the plant where the union reps have their offices
18 and, and they're located in a, in a particular, you know, spot and you –
19 when you go down in the work center, you know, you know you can find
20 your rep.
21

22Earl Nicholson: [27:05] So was that sort of like a safe zone for you...
23

24Marlene Hester: Yes.
25

26Earl Nicholson: ...that you could go in there and you could feel comfortable and, uh, you
27 could, you could be able to voice your, your problems without, without
28 repercussions.
29

30Marlene Hester: Yes. Yes, it was a – it made you feel safe.
31

32Doug Rademacher: Marlene, this is Doug Rademacher. [27:25] Could you – do you have a
33 particular committee person that helped you that you'll always be thankful
34 for? Anybody s-, uh, step out of the – out there and help you out a lot?
35

36Marlene Hester: I think, uh, [Bill White 27:39] was one of'm and [Joe Serna 27:42] was
37 another one. And [Curly Jones 27:45], he was pretty good. Those 3.
38

39Doug Rademacher: Sounds like you used th-, the union quite a bit to, to protect you and help
40 you.
41

42Marlene Hester: Mm-hm.
43

44Doug Rademacher: [27:58] Can you tell us what ya did on your lunch break?
45

1Marlene Hester: [sighing] Oh, I always carried my lunch 'cause it was always far to go up
2 to the cafeteria. There wasn't that much time and I just usually stayed in
3 and stayed near my job and [inaudible 28:20] just made it easier for me.
4 And rest.
5

6Doug Rademacher: You said [laughter] that. I, I'm just curious. [28:26] Did ya ever get lost in
7 the plant when you first hired in?
8

9Marlene Hester: Yes.
10

11Doug Rademacher: [28:30] What's that like when you know you're supposed to be
12 somewhere and the assembly line starts and you don't know where you're
13 at?
14

15Marlene Hester: You just start asking, um, the first person that comes along and ask'm for
16 directions or which way and, uh, they get a kick out of it but usually
17 they're, you know, they're helpful. Point ya in the right direction.
18

19Doug Rademacher: [28:54] Is there a particular panic – can you even describe that feeling?
20

21Marlene Hester: [sighing] Yeah, that you're gonna get in trouble [laughter] 'cause
22 [laughter] you're, you're not [laughter] where you're supposed to be.
23 Yeah, it is, it is – push the panic button. Definitely.
24

25Doug Rademacher: Okay. Marilyn Coulter.
26

27Marilyn Coulter: Marlene, I wanted to know – you said before previously that you were the
28 only woman working in that department. Uh, 2 questions. [29:21]
29 Number 1, did that happen often that you were the only woman working in
30 the department and how did that work for you?
31

32Marlene Hester: During that time, I was on first shift and it happened more, um, that there
33 were less women on the day shift and then when I went to second shift, of
34 course, there was more women and, uh, which was – it was a lot better...
35

36Marilyn Coulter: Hm.
37

38Marlene Hester: ...on the second shift.
39

40Marilyn Coulter: [29:52] Did the men – when you worked in areas where you were the only
41 female, did your coworkers – did they befriend you? Did they take care of
42 you? Were you the queen or were you somebody they wanted to push
43 out?
44

1Marlene Hester: [tsk] There was only usually 1 or 2 that would, uh, buddy up but the maj-,
2 the majority of the guys, they just kept to themselves. They really didn't
3 make a point to be friendly or...
4

5Marilyn Coulter: Hm.
6

7Marlene Hester: ...anything like that.
8

9Marilyn Coulter: [31:31] Did you find that when you went to the night shift and there were
10 more women there that the men and women got along better?
11

12Marlene Hester: Yes.
13

14Marilyn Coulter: [30:40] What were some a the biggest differences that you noticed about
15 the night shift from the day shift?
16

17Marlene Hester: Um, there's not as many, um, shirts and ties walkin' around and it was a
18 little more relaxed and, um, most of my friends were on night shift. And
19 that's where I stayed for, uh, 20 years.
20

21Marilyn Coulter: For 20 years.
22

23Marlene Hester: Yeah.
24

25Marilyn Coulter: So you said that you had fam-, friends. [31:09] Did any of these
26 friendships take place outside of the plant?
27

28Marlene Hester: Yeah, there was 3. Um, [Debbie Calwaite 31:19] and, uh, [Lottie Walker
29 31:22] and, um, [tsk] [Turell], [Lorrie, Lorrie Tarrell 31:30]. That's it.
30 Those 3.
31

32Marilyn Coulter: [31:38] And have you kept close contact throughout the 20 years?
33

34Marlene Hester: With Lottie I have mostly.
35

36Marilyn Coulter: That's great. [31:47] How did, um, ya pass the time workin' on the line?
37 What types of things did you guys do to pass the time to break the
38 monotony of work?
39

40Marlene Hester: [tsk] Hm, lis-, we could listen to radio back then and we could look at
41 magazines and read the newspaper, talk to our partner across the line.
42 Um. Stuff like that.
43

44Doug Rademacher: Earl Nicholson.
45

1Earl Nicholson: You said, uh, that you were 4 months pregnant. [32:20] When did you go
2 out for maternity leave?
3

4Marlene Hester: Four or five.
5

6Earl Nicholson: And how long did it last?
7

8Marlene Hester: Lemme see. My daughter was born in January, the end a January in –
9 [tsk] of '80. Then I had 6 weeks to recover after that.
10

11Earl Nicholson: [32:46] And when you came back, um, with a child – you know, t-, caring
12 for a child and husband in the house, you know, was that – did that make,
13 you know, your, your factory experience even more difficult?
14

15Marlene Hester: Yes, it did. I, I remember I was, um, I was in Trim. I was putting the, uh,
16 the window crank on and some other things there in Trim and I remember
17 just crying and – 'cause I – my daughter was a newborn and I'd call home.
18 My mom was watchin' her but st-, that was good enough. I just – I missed
19 her. And I cried every day for as long as I can remember 'cause I missed
20 her.
21

22Marilyn Coulter: Hm.
23

24Marlene Hester: Didn't wanna be there. I wanted to be with her. That was rough.
25

26Marilyn Coulter: It was rough...
27

28Doug Rademacher: Marilyn Coulter.
29

30Marilyn Coulter: Marilyn Coulter. [33:38] It was rough, so was that a time when your
31 friends really helped you through it? Did your friends help you get
32 through that time?
33

34Marlene Hester: Yes. 'Cause they – there was other women there. They, they were going
35 through the same thing. They all had kids at home.
36

37Marilyn Coulter: Marlene, you said that you worked on the assembly line. You said that
38 you had time to read. [33:58] There's time to read when you're workin' on
39 the line?
40

41Marlene Hester: Dependin' what job you had. How much, um, how much work was on
42 that particular job. Some you could, some you couldn't.
43

44Marilyn Coulter: [34:12] And what type of music? Um. Is it easy to hear a radio inside a
45 factory? It's not noisy?
46

1Marlene Hester: Hm. I always wore ear plugs. You could – I could always hear the radio,
2 what was playin’.
3

4Marilyn Coulter: [34:27] Were there a lot of radios? Was it...?
5

6Marlene Hester: Yeah. Sometimes they were on different stations or whatever but that
7 never bothered me.
8

9Marilyn Coulter: Oh.
10

11Marlene Hester: Just havin’ somethin’ to listen to.
12

13Gary Judy: [34:38] Marlene...
14

15Doug Rademacher: Gary Judy.
16

17Gary Judy: ...you, uh – now you went to trim on nights and how long did you stay
18 there?
19

20Marlene Hester: Well, it was quite a while. Um. It was a couple, couple a years anyways.
21

22Gary Judy: [35:01] And, and then what happened? W-, where’d you go?
23

24Marlene Hester: Well, um, [tsk] in 19 – about June of 1982 is when I got called into
25 Material.
26

27Gary Judy: [35:13] So that was, uh, a preferred job getting called into Material?
28

29Marlene Hester: Yes, it was.
30

31Gary Judy: [35:19] Can you tell us a little bit about that experience and, and what that
32 was like and how many – was there very many women in Material at that
33 time or...?
34

35Marlene Hester: Um. I – my job had been eliminated a-, a-, again and the, the foremans
36 were looking through my transfers in – or something to give them, you
37 know, um, a reference point to a job to put me on or that I could go to and,
38 um, it just so happened I had a transfer into Material and it was, uh, [Lyle
39 Leatherberry 35:56] that, um, [tsk] got me in, got me in Medical and, uh,
40 got my physical all done and I was on a truck that evening, so.
41

42Gary Judy: [36:11] So that was a – predominantly a male job, wasn’t it at that time?
43 There – was there very many other women on Material?
44

45Marlene Hester: There was no other women in Material at that time, uh, and I was told that
46 it had been at least 10 years went by be-, and there had been no women in

1 Material for the – for that last 10 years. So I was, I was being watched
2 [laughter] real carefully.
3
4 Gary Judy: [36:39] So you were kinda breaking new ground for, for women at that
5 time...
6
7 Marlene Hester: Yes.
8
9 Gary Judy: ...in the plant.
10
11 Marlene Hester: Yes.
12
13 Gary Judy: [36:46] How did that feel? What was, what was that like and did you feel
14 any added pressures to ya? I mean, did people, did, did people, uh,
15 encourage your or discourage you or...?
16
17 Marlene Hester: There was both. There were, there were men that, uh, turned their nose
18 up, went the other way, um, and they were no help but there was always 1
19 or 2 that, you know, took me under their wing and helped me. You know,
20 made sure I didn't...
21
22 Gary Judy: [37:15] Did you find, did you find jobs in Material, uh, some of'm that
23 were hard for women to do because a the job itself? Can you d-, describe
24 it a little bit and what it was like?
25
26 Marlene Hester: [tsk] Well, opening up, uh, back glass racks and the, and the door glass
27 racks. Those were really hard to open. And, um, then out to the body
28 shop, those big [quarter 37:40] racks. You had to unsnap a wooden bar
29 and snap it back into the rack, you know, up outta the way. There, there
30 was some things that it was h-, it was more difficult.
31
32 Gary Judy: So normally when you go into Material, uh, ya go in as a utility person.
33
34 Marlene Hester: Right.
35
36 Gary Judy: [38:02] Is, is that w-, how you went into material? As a...
37
38 Marlene Hester: Yes.
39
40 Gary Judy: ...utility person?
41
42 Marlene Hester: Mm-hm.
43
44 Gary Judy: 38:06] Did you ever get stuck on a job where you felt pressured that
45 maybe you wouldn't be able to do the job because of some of those racks
46 that were hard to open and, and what you did to overcome that?

1
2Marlene Hester: [tsk] [sighing] I didn't ever have a fear that I wouldn't be able to do the
3 job. I – um, if anything, I would go get my, my supervisor and let him
4 know that I was h-, havin' this problem or that problem and he found
5 another driver and – to show me an easier way to open up the rack or like
6 that. I wouldn't let it go. I'd get help.
7
8Gary Judy: So you never shut the line down. [laughter]
9
10Marlene Hester: No. Not that I know of.
11
12Marilyn Coulter: Marlene. Marilyn Coulter. [39:00] To be a trucker, do you have to have
13 any kind of training? Do you have to have any kind of annual training that
14 you have to take or special tests and if so...
15
16Marlene Hester: Yeah.
17
18Marilyn Coulter: ...what?
19
20Marlene Hester: Um. Every 3 years, we have to get relicensed and it's, um, [tsk] it's a
21 physical and then it's a written-type test and, uh, that takes about 4 or 5
22 hours outta the day to get that done and get relicensed.
23
24Marilyn Coulter: [39:33] When you first started, you said that they put you – so they...
25
26Marlene Hester: When I...
27
28Marilyn Coulter: ...tested you, trained you, and put you right onto the truck that same
29 night?
30
31Marlene Hester: When I, when I first went into Material, they didn't have any training or
32 anything like that set up. There was a physical but that was it. There was
33 no training t-, to learn how to drive a fork truck.
34
35Marilyn Coulter: On the job.
36
37Marlene Hester: It was on-the-job training.
38
39Marilyn Coulter: [39:58] What was your first night on the truck like?
40
41Marlene Hester: [tsk] I was drivin' an 8000-pounder and that was, that was pretty
42 overwhelming because th-, that was the biggest fork truck in the plant and
43 – but bein' out in the body shop every night, uh, you got used to it. And
44 then when you go to Trim, t-, and use those little 6000, you couldn't even
45 see the forks and so it was – I liked bein' in the body shop.
46

1 Marilyn Coulter: [Inaudible 40:30].
2
3 Gary Judy: Hm.
4
5 Marilyn Coulter: [40:33] How did the body shop differ from the trim shop insofar as
6 environment and people?
7
8 Marlene Hester: Yeah, it was, it was a lot different. Um. In the body shop, there was a
9 lotta sparks, a lotta smoke. You know, it was real noisy and not a, not a
10 whole lotta room to set your stock in and, um, and in Trim, it was m-, m-,
11 quiet and everybody wore shorts and, and, uh, but like I said, once you get
12 sent to body shop, day in, day out, for years, that's what you get used to
13 and that's what I got used to.
14
15 Marilyn Coulter: [41:19] In the body shop, you're not allowed to wear shorts?
16
17 Marlene Hester: No.
18
19 Marilyn Coulter: [Inaudible 41:22].
20
21 Marlene Hester: You have to have sleeves and long pants or wear coveralls. Cover up your
22 skin 'cause you don't wanna get burned from the sparks.
23
24 Marilyn Coulter: [41:33] Even truckers along with the people who worked on the line?
25
26 Marlene Hester: Yes.
27
28 Marilyn Coulter: [Inaudible 41:38].
29
30 Doug Rademacher: Doug Rademacher. Marlene, you just said you preferred the body shop.
31
32 Marlene Hester: Mm-hm.
33
34 Doug Rademacher: [41:44] Now did you ever work in body shop outside of the material
35 group?
36
37 Marlene Hester: [Inaudible 41:49], never.
38
39 Doug Rademacher: Never? [41:51] And what about the paint department? Did you ever have
40 to go to the paint department?
41
42 Marlene Hester: [tsk] When they reduced, um, drivers at one time, um, I had to – I ended
43 up in Paint up in 21, [21-2 42:08], for a little while, a few months. That's
44 the only contact I had with Paint.
45
46 Doug Rademacher: [42:17] Now, the 21-2, that's a location in the plant?

1
2Marlene Hester: It's a, it's a location, um, in the plant that the cars are already painted and
3 they're taped off and our job was to remove that masking tape and, and the
4 paper 'cause it was getting ready to go down into the trim shop.
5
6Doug Rademacher: You worked in Trim on the assembly line. Now you were up in the Paint
7 removing paper and tape. [42:53] What'd ya think of the difference in
8 those jobs?
9
10Marlene Hester: [tsk]
11
12Doug Rademacher: [42:56] What the – again, the job – are they equitable or...?
13
14Marlene Hester: Hm. No. The ones in Trim are not that good. The one in, in Paint was,
15 was a good job. It didn't – alls you were doin' was removing, um,
16 protectors from the bolts on the floor and like I said, the masking tape and
17 the paper, just removing that and throwin' it away.
18
19Doug Rademacher: [43:24] Can ya talk a little more about the environment? What was the air
20 like in the paint department and did you have to use any chemicals ever or
21 anything around that area?
22
23Marlene Hester: Hm. [tsk] Up where I was, um, it was well-ventilated and it was actually a
24 real small area and the cars just, uh, came up outta the ovens and looped
25 around once and, and then they were done – we were done with them.
26
27Doug Rademacher: Marlene, I had the pleasure of working with you in the Fisher Body plant.
28 Uh. [44:03] Would you talk a little bit about, uh, the different jobs you did
29 in body shop and Material [coughing] and can you describe a particular
30 location, uh, where the train would come in and wasn't there a particular
31 odor in that area?
32
33Marlene Hester: [tsk] Okay. Um. Being on utility, I done every job that could be done in
34 the body shop and, uh, driving fork truck. And there, there was the
35 [Hoffman 44:33] and, um, that was [tsk], uh, an area where the paint
36 sludge would come down from Paint into these big gondolas and in big
37 sheets of, um, paper towel or something and it – some, some days, it
38 would take [coughing] take your breath away [coughing] it smelled so
39 bad. [sniffing] Thank goodness for summer 'cause then we had to open the
40 door [little bit 45:01]. [sniffing]
41
42Doug Rademacher: [45:03] Can you tell us about moving into what is, uh, a different job that,
43 uh – in the material department. One a the preferred jobs in Material. Can
44 you share that and tell us what that was?
45

1Marlene Hester: Oh, the controller jobs were, um, were real good positions to have. You
2 call in your trucks or you order in your trains and, and the guys would
3 haul, haul the, uh, parts out. And, uh, controller jobs were hard to get.
4

5Doug Rademacher: [45:43] Can you talk about a Friday night? Was there – in that particular
6 group, was there camaraderie?
7

8Marlene Hester: Yes.
9

10Doug Rademacher: [45:54] What are some a the things that would happen on a Friday
11 evening?
12

13Marlene Hester: Oh, throughout the week, we'd get together and try to set up something for
14 Friday to have a dinner and, and have people bring in something. We'd
15 make a list and, and have a dinner on Friday night.
16

17Doug Rademacher: [46:14] Was that common practice?
18

19Marlene Hester: Most a the time, yep.
20

21Doug Rademacher: [46:19] And did that go on in other parts a the plant or was it just in the
22 material group?
23

24Marlene Hester: Yeah, it went, it went on throughout the plant also. I, I don't think
25 Production did that as much but we had dinners al-, almost every week.
26

27Marilyn Coulter: Mm-hm.
28

29Doug Rademacher: [46:42] Did you ever come to consider your coworkers brothers and
30 sisters?
31

32Marlene Hester: Yes.
33

34Doug Rademacher: [46:51] Can you explain that bonding, that...?
35

36Marlene Hester: Well, working with, with them every, every night for 8 hours, 9 hours and,
37 um, [tsk] tryin' to help them or they'd help you, I mean, you get close and
38 you know a lot about each other and, um, yeah.
39

40Doug Rademacher: There were programs that were introduced into the plant and I believe you
41 took, uh, the opportunity to, uh, be a leader in one of them. [47:32] Can
42 you say what – d-, describe what that was and what you did for that?
43

44Marlene Hester: Well, in the early years, they had the EPGs, that was Employee
45 Participating Group, and I really enjoyed that. I was out on track 8, um, at

1 the time. That's a rail dock and – uh, in the body shop and I done that for
2 quite a while. Probably until I, I got laid off outta Material again. W-...
3

4Doug Rademacher: [48:03] Well, y-, you had a job, so what exactly did ya do for this EPG?
5

6Marlene Hester: We would hold weekly meetings and, um, I would have the guys – it was
7 mostly about safety and safety hazards, things that were unsafe and the
8 floors being in really bad shape and trying to get the floors fixed and
9 things like that – of that nature.
10

11Doug Rademacher: Marilyn Coulter.
12

13Marilyn Coulter: Marlene, can ya – we talking about safety. [48:38] Can you tell us some of
14 the things that happened as a trucker where safety's concerned? I know
15 that – with pedestrian or structure-type things that have happened.
16

17Marlene Hester: Well, it was always the ped-, the pedestrian had the right a way. And, um,
18 we always, always had to be alert and payin' attention because there
19 would be people that would cut through and they wouldn't – you wouldn't
20 see'm until the last second but, um, after people did get hurt or whatever
21 happened, they started making the pedestrian routes. They outlined it in
22 green and, um, that helped a little bit to let the pedestrians ha-, have their
23 own little walkway and it helped a little.
24

25Marilyn Coulter: Hm. I know that there was some times when some truckers would hit
26 pipes and things like that. [49:42] Did that ever happen to you?
27

28Marlene Hester: Mostly [laughter] when you're backin' up and you didn't see the steel
29 beam behind ya, you'd back up into the beam but, [sniffing] um – [tsk]
30 and that was a wakeup. I'm tryin' to, I'm tryin' to think. I, I never, I
31 never spilled any, uh, load and, um, [tsk] no, just backed into a beam 3 or
32 4 times but that's about it.
33

34Doug Rademacher: Doug Rademacher. You said you never spilled a load.
35

36Marlene Hester: Mm-hm.
37

38Doug Rademacher: [50:26] Was there anything that was – uh, if you did spill a load, was there
39 somethin' that was, uh, expected of ya?
40

41Marlene Hester: Yeah, you had to jump down off your truck fast and get the stock back in
42 the basket and be on your way 'cause you'd be blockin' the aisle.
43

44Doug Rademacher: [50:46] But what about the fellow truckers and – was there a, was there a
45 due to be paid for that?
46

1Marlene Hester: Yep. When you, when you spilled a load, ya had to bring in doughnuts the
2 next day for everybody. That was the law.
3

4Doug Rademacher: I wanna take ya into a different part of your work life and this is, um,
5 [papers rustling] union activities. [51:11] Were you ever [sniffing] active
6 in your union?
7

8Marlene Hester: Hm, goin' to the union meetings.
9

10Doug Rademacher: [51:17] Did you participate in the elections?
11

12Marlene Hester: Always.
13

14Doug Rademacher: [51:23] What was your feeling about people that, uh, didn't exercise that
15 right? [sniffing]
16

17Marlene Hester: Well, um, it's, it's their choice, um, to be involved or not. I, I didn't – I
18 wouldn't hold it against'm but they – that's what we're – that's what
19 you're there for is to help us and stuff.
20

21Marilyn Coulter: Marilyn Coulter. [51:52] Marlene, can you tell us how did you, um, find
22 out about the different candidates who were running for officers – uh, to
23 be officers in your local union? Um. How did that happen?
24

25Marlene Hester: Mostly, um, the candidates would come in on the shop floor and hand out
26 flyers with their, with their picture and all of their background information
27 on it and [tsk], um, like that. That's how I'd hear about it.
28

29Marilyn Coulter: [52:26] Was it difficult to do your job and also listen to campaign
30 speeches at the same time?
31

32Marlene Hester: Hm.
33

34Marilyn Coulter: [52:35] Or how did that go for you?
35

36Marlene Hester: I think they knew if we were – if we were on a run or we had stock, uh, on
37 the front of our, our truck, they wouldn't hold us up for too long. So. But
38 the, the sheet gave all the information too that we needed.
39

40Doug Rademacher: Doug Rademacher. Marlene, I wanna talk about the benefits. [53:06]
41 Could you share what is your most appreciated bargained benefit that the
42 union secured at the bargaining table for you?
43

44Marlene Hester: Um. I, I'd have to say healthcare because, um, it's pretty tough in, in this
45 world without it, so I'm very appreciative of that.
46

1 Doug Rademacher: [53:35] Was there any other benefits that you were able to utilize? Any a
2 the education things? Can you tell us about those and...
3
4 Marlene Hester: Yes.
5
6 Doug Rademacher: ...explain?
7
8 Marlene Hester: Um. The TAP. I, I got, um, quite a bit a money for my daughter. Sh-,
9 she's been in college sh-, for 5 years. And, um, I've been taking classes
10 since, since last May and, uh – so that's a good program.
11
12 Doug Rademacher: Okay.
13
14 Marilyn Coulter: [54:11] Marlene, what is TAP?
15
16 Marlene Hester: Tuition Assistance Program.
17
18 Doug Rademacher: Could you tell us, uh – community activities. Uh, you've worked and
19 you've met lots of people. [54:27] Do you do anything outside of the
20 plant? Uh, has your plant life affected things that you see, uh, that are
21 needed in the community and have you done anything outside of the
22 plant?
23
24 Marlene Hester: I, um, signed up for community service in May of, um, '05 at the
25 Goodwill up in Mason and I worked up there every day for 30 weeks. I
26 got all my sheets. I kept'm all together. And that was a good experience.
27 Um. [tsk] It was, um, having donations being brought in, sorting through
28 the, the donations, and then, uh, getting them up, up on the floor to sell.
29 And, um, I enjoyed workin' at the Goodwill.
30
31 Doug Rademacher: [tsk] That's wonderful. [55:22] Can you just take for a moment and think
32 about anything that – special happened to you in the years at Fisher Body?
33 Did anyone do something special? Was there ever a day that stands out as
34 the best day you ever had at Fisher Body?
35
36 Marlene Hester: [tsk] Well...
37
38 Doug Rademacher: [55:47] And if not, could you tell me y-, the worst?
39
40 Marlene Hester: [laughter] That'd be 2, that's be 2 days long. Um. Well, it's the, it's the
41 night I got my daughter back from Mexico and my mother and brother
42 picked me up in Detroit and the very first stop I made, I s-, came, uh, up to
43 the shop and brought my daughter in and, um, everybody got to see
44 Marisa. So that was one a the best days.
45

1Earl Nicholson: Earl Nicholson. [56:24] Uh, Marlene, you might have to explain that one
2 just a little bit.
3

4Marlene Hester: When [sighing] my daughter was 2½, um, her dad picked her up for a visit
5 on a Sunday and he was supposed to take her to Greenfield Village for the
6 day and he was supposed to be back by 6 or 7. Well, 6 and 7 came and
7 went and I found out a-, after, uh, [tsk] oh, a few days that he had plane
8 tickets and it was all arranged and h-, he took her to Mexico. He flew her
9 to Mexico. And, um, it took me 16 months to get her back home. And,
10 uh, it was right around Christmastime when I got the call that they had
11 arrested him and they said get down here right away by tomorrow, this
12 such, such-and-such a time. And I did, I got down there the next day and,
13 um, it was kinda funny 'cause I flew outta Lansing and I, I told the
14 stewardess on this little prop plane, I said I gotta make my connection in
15 Chicago to Mexico because I haven't had – seen my daughter in 16
16 months and they found her. And so they radioed ahead to Chicago and
17 they held this plane for me for 45 minutes. They held it open. And they
18 w-, they had guards running with me through O'Hare, got me to the plane,
19 and I made my flight. Otherwise, I woulda, I woulda never got down
20 there in time. And so anyways, I got my daughter back.
21

22Earl Nicholson: [58:13] Were you working, uh, during this time period?
23

24Marlene Hester: Yes, I was.
25

26Earl Nicholson: [58:17] And when you got the news, were you at work?
27

28Marlene Hester: I was at home.
29

30Earl Nicholson: [58:23] And how – and – this, this happened on a weekend or was it
31 during the weekday?
32

33Marlene Hester: It was, um, a weekday.
34

35Earl Nicholson: [58:30] And how did you secure the time away from the factory in order
36 to...?
37

38Marlene Hester: I remember, uh, getting ahold of, uh, [Lyle Auten 58:42] and telling him
39 that I had to go and I'd be back within a couple a days. And, uh, I was, I
40 was back within 3 days, I think.
41

42Earl Nicholson: [58:58] But there was no harassment or something? They said just go do
43 it.
44

45Marlene Hester: Right. They were totally understanding.
46

1Earl Nicholson: Fantastic.
2

3Marlene Hester: Yeah. Yeah.
4

5Marilyn Coulter: [Inaudible 59:08]. Marlene. Marilyn Coulter. You worked in, in the
6 factory since 1978. Um. You've been through a lot. You know, you've
7 broken ground, you've been through a lotta things personally. [papers
8 rustling] [59:28] What would you think would be one of the – made Fisher
9 Body the capital of quality as [inaudible 59:33] became known as?
10

11Marlene Hester: [tsk] I just think that we, we had a oneness and we worked – most, most a
12 the time, we worked together pretty, pretty well. And, um, and our union.
13 Got a good union.
14

15Marilyn Coulter: After all this time, now it's closing. [1:00:00] Uh, they're gonna tear it
16 down and Fisher Body, Lansing Car Assembly, as we know, will no
17 longer be – how do you feel about that?
18

19Marlene Hester: Well, it's sad. Um. I drive by every once in a while and [sighing] it's
20 gonna be sad to see it go. And, um, but sorta lookin' ahead to goin' to the
21 new plant. It's a little bit scary but we all gotta do it.
22

23Marilyn Coulter: [Inaudible 1:00:30]. [1:00:31] What words of wisdom [throat clearing]
24 would you give to a young lady now coming in facing the things that you
25 faced in the factory? What words of wisdom would you leave for young
26 people?
27

28Marlene Hester: Well, my daughter works at Lear right now. She makes the seats that go
29 into the Cadillacs and, um, I do, I do tell her to wrap up her wrists and
30 wear comfortable shoes and, um, get to know your union reps and, um, do
31 the best job that you can, be on time, and all a that. I let her – I told her
32 that when she first started and I do remind her that every now and then but
33 she's a good employee. She's always on time and always there.
34

35Marilyn Coulter: Excellent.
36

37Marlene Hester: Mm-hm.
38

39Marilyn Coulter: You told her to wrap up her wrists. [1:01:28] Why do you tell her to wrap
40 up her wrists?
41

42Marlene Hester: I don't want her to get an injury to her hands, to get carpal tunnel or – just
43 give her wrists some support and then sh-, hopefully she won't get the
44 carpal tunnel. That's all I'm really worried about.
45

46Marilyn Coulter: Thank you.

1
2Doug Rademacher: Well, it's been a real pleasure. Doug Rademacher. Uh. [papers rustling]
3 Marlene, we really appreciate the opportunity to interview you. Is there
4 anything we did not ask you that you'd like to share today? Well, as you
5 said, you were exercising your TAP money and, uh, you have a class to
6 get to, so we really appreciate your time today. Thank you.
7
8Gary Judy: Thank you.
9
10Cheryl McQuaid: Thank you, Marlene.
11
12Earl Nicholson: Thank you, Marlene.
13
14Marlene Hester: Thank you. [clicking]
15
16
17/ad