

**1 Earl Nicholson Sr., an African American, discusses his career as a UAW production  
2 worker and GM manager at the Fisher Body plant in Lansing, MI**

3

4

5 Doug Rademacher: This is the Lansing Fisher Body Historical Team. Today is May 16th...

6

7 Earl Nicholson Sr.: 17th.

8

9 Jerri Smith: 16th.

10

11 Earl Nicholson Sr.: 16th.

12

13 John Fedewa: 16th.

14

15 Doug Rademacher: ...and its, uh, 2006 and we are at the...

16

17 Jerri Smith: [coughing]

18

19 Doug Rademacher: [Inaudible 00:15] Local 602 Frank Dryer Greenhouse. Uh, we are gonna  
20 interview Earl T. Nicholson...

21

22 Earl Nicholson Sr.: Senior.

23

24 Doug Rademacher: ...senior. And, uh, first we'll introduce the team.

25

26 John Fedewa: John Fedewa.

27

28 Jerri Smith: Jerri Smith.

29

30 Cheryl McQuaid: Cheryl McQuaid.

31

32 Doug Rademacher: And I'm Doug Rademacher. Today, uh, Mr. Nicholson, would you please  
33 state your name and spell it for us.

34

35 Earl Nicholson Sr.: My name is Earl Tucker Nicholson. E-, Earl, E-A-R-L. Tucker, T-U- [car  
36 engine in background] C-K-E-R. Nicholson, N-I-C-H-O-L-S-O-N.

37

38 Doug Rademacher: [00:52] And what is your address?

39

40 Earl Nicholson Sr.: My address is 2800 Tecumseh River Road Lansing, Michigan 48906.

41

42 Doug Rademacher: [01:00] And are you married?

43

44 Earl Nicholson Sr.: Yes.

45

46 Doug Rademacher: [01:03] Do you have children?

2Earl Nicholson Sr.: Yes.

4Doug Rademacher: [01:05] How many?

6Earl Nicholson Sr.: 4.

8Doug Rademacher: [01:07] And what are they?

10Earl Nicholson Sr.: I have, uh, you want their names?

12Doug Rademacher: [01:13] Oh just, uh, boys, girls? Uh...

14Earl Nicholson Sr.: Uh, 2 girls and 2 boys.

16Doug Rademacher: Okay. [01:18] Um, would you tell me where were you born and raised?

18Earl Nicholson Sr.: I was born in Columbia, Maury County, Tennessee. Columbia, Tennessee  
19 in 1932.

21Doug Rademacher: And wh-...

23Earl Nicholson Sr.: August 1932.

25Doug Rademacher: [01:41] What did your parents do for a living?

27Earl Nicholson Sr.: My parents was sharecroppers, even though we owned – had owned a-,  
28 about 14 acres a land. Uh, we worked for a man doin' sharecroppin'...

30 [creaking]

32Earl Nicholson Sr.: ...and sharecroppin' is when...

34 [creaking]

36Earl Nicholson Sr.: ...you put in a crop. At the end of the year, uh, you sell the crop, you get  
37 a third and he get two thirds.

39 [creaking]

41Doug Rademacher: [02:08] Okay and both your [mom and did 02:09] that?

43Earl Nicholson Sr.: Yes.

45Doug Rademacher: Okay. [02:13] And, uh, do you have any siblings?

1 [creaking]

2

3Earl Nicholson Sr.: I had – originally, I had – there was 9 boys and girls. Uh, 5 of'm had  
4 passed on and only 4 is livin'.

5

6Doug Rademacher: Okay. [02:29] What is your education level?

7

8Earl Nicholson Sr.: I...

9

10Female: [whispering]

11

12Earl Nicholson Sr.: ...I got a high school education.

13

14 [creaking]

15

16Earl Nicholson Sr.: I, uh...

17

18 [footsteps]

19

20Earl Nicholson Sr.: ...went to school in the army and I attended Lansing Community College.

21

22Doug Rademacher: [02:47] Were you in the military?

23

24Earl Nicholson Sr.: I was in the military from...

25

26 [creaking]

27

28Earl Nicholson Sr.: ...uh, January of '53 to December of '54.

29

30 [knock inaudible]

31

32Doug Rademacher: [02:57] What did you do before you hired into Fisher Body?

33

34 [door creaking]

35

36Earl Nicholson Sr.: I worked on – oh, uh, before I hired into Fisher Body I worked at, uh,  
37 Kellogg Center MSU, uh, from 1956, uh, up to, full time and part time, up  
38 to 'bout 1966 or somewhat like that.

39

40Doug Rademacher: Okay. [03:22] Why did you hire into Fisher Body?

41

42Earl Nicholson Sr.: When I first came to Lansin', Fisher Body and Oldsmobile were both was,  
43 was laid off. And they wasn't hirin' anybody. And, uh, so a friend of the  
44 family got me a job at Kellogg Center...

45

46 [coughing]

2Earl Nicholson Sr.: ...uh, makin' \$1 an hour and I tell you I don't – [inaudible 03:46] not – it  
 3 really bothered me knowing other people had worked at Fisher Body  
 4 Oldsmobile makin' \$3 an hour and I'm makin' \$1 dollar an hour. So when  
 5 I go the chance to, to go to Fisher Body that's where I went runnin'.  
 6

7Doug Rademacher: [04:03] And how old were you?  
 8

9Earl Nicholson Sr.: I was, uh, about – when I came to Lansing, I was 24 so I, I think I was  
 10 'round 28 or 29.  
 11

12Doug Rademacher: [04:18] And did you – were you married at that time [in our 04:20]....?  
 13

14Earl Nicholson Sr.: Yes.  
 15

16Doug Rademacher: [04:21] Did you have children yet?  
 17

18Earl Nicholson Sr.: Yes.  
 19

20Doug Rademacher: Um, [04:26] What did – when did you hire into Fisher Body? Can you tell  
 21 us your first experience?  
 22

23Earl Nicholson Sr.: My first experience was, uh, um, [car engine in background] I can't  
 24 [inaudible 04:40] but it was sometime in 1960 when I hired in the first  
 25 time. And I can't remember the exact – the month that I hired in.  
 26

27Doug Rademacher: [04:51] And what happened there?  
 28

29Earl Nicholson Sr.: I worked – they, they was runnin' what they called a cab line. I worked on  
 30 the cab line where there was a Oldsmobile convertible, uh, I think was, uh,  
 31 might've been Pontiac and it was – I think it was 3 convertibles they were  
 32 runnin'. And I used to, you know, convertibles are 2 doors. And I used ta  
 33 pick up these big ol' 2 doors and stick'm in the car and somebody else  
 34 would put'm on. So I used to put the doors in the car and then somebody  
 35 else would, would, uh, put'm.  
 36

37Doug Rademacher: Okay. Earl, would you tell me – you said, uh, you worked at Kellogg  
 38 Center and you knew people workin' over at General Motors at the Olds  
 39 and the Fisher plant were makin' \$3 an hour. [05:43] Um, how'd ya know  
 40 they were hiring at Fisher first of all?  
 41

42Earl Nicholson Sr.: Well, uh, the first, first time that I knew they's hirin' in is, uh, I – at the  
 43 time, I was livin' on Birch Street and Birch Street is gone now. I, I was  
 44 livin' on Hillsdale off of Birch and this friend, friend [inaudible 06:05] of  
 45 the family lived, uh, back in the day, the end of Birch and he saw me out'n  
 46 the yard and he says, "Earl they, uh, hirin' at Fisher Body." And I already

had a application in there. So I went over there and got hired and, and then after I got let – worked there for 89 days and got laid off for, I don't know how long, from '60 to '63 [car engine in background], I was out in the yard again and, and he come to me. His name was Fred [inaudible 06:33]. He came back to me again and said, "Earl, they hirin' at Fisher Body again." So I went back to Fisher Body, walked in the doe and the guy said, "They never sh-, they should have called you back a long time ago." And so I went to work, uh, the next day or so I was working in, in Fisher Body and, uh, after goin' back to work they had, they started making the Cutlass. And, uh, I never – after, in, in 19, um, 63 when I went back, I never was laid off over probably 5 days one year, 3 [the next 07:18] they – 'cause they used to have what they call it the runnin' change up. They'd run one car, the last car out, run the new one in [laughter] so you-...

[chuckle]

I never was laid off again.

Okay. I wanna take you back in the '60s...

[coughing]

...when, uh, again you said you knew those people were makin' \$3 an hour and you were makin' \$1 an hour at the Kellogg Center. Tell me about the first day ya hired in. [07:45] Did ya have to go through, uh, uh, an interview? Did ya have ta go through a physical? And can you tell me just the story about comin' into that plant and seein' automobile assembly line for the first time.

Well, I, I hired in. I went through the interview process. The, I don't know what they asked for, high school diploma, uh, birth certificate and, and all that. And I – being, uh, somebody off the farm, I had never been into a as-, assembly plant before and it was really, uh, somethin' to set there and see how they made cars, you know, knowin' – and knowing only about [ridin'm 08:27] and knowing nothin' about makin'm. And it was really, uh, a sight to see.

[08:35] Did ya have any fear or were ya, were ya wonderin' why did I pick – why did I think I wanted to do this or...?

Well I new I wa-, 'cause I wanted to make moe money for my family, I knew that. But 1 of the problems that I had was, uh, back in those days, was bein' somebody on the farm, ya know, that I could quit, go to the bathroom, go home and get me a drink a water or whatever I wanted to do, ya know? And I got in – and Fisher Body was just like bein' in – to me

1 now, prison because they didn't have no, um, uh, what do you call'm? Uh,  
2 relief people.

3

4 Doug Rademacher: Yeah, breaks. Relief.

5

6 Earl Nicholson Sr.: Well, now, we called'm, uh, uh...

7

8 Doug Rademacher: Intermittent relief?

9

10 Earl Nicholson Sr.: Intermittent relief. And so what you had ta do, at that time, you had to set  
11 there and scuffle and whatever and wait til the, til some-, they got  
12 somebody from somewhere else, uh, the relief man got time to relieve you  
13 to go to the bathroom or whatever you gotta do.

14

15 Doug Rademacher: Okay. [09:47] Now do you remember, were you put in a room with a  
16 group a people? Did ya hire in with a group or did you come in by  
17 yourself and, and what was the, uh, how did they select you to go up and  
18 do your job?

19

20 Earl Nicholson Sr.: Well, I, I can't exactly remember how they selected but in, in, uh, in uh, in  
21 the process, uh, the purse mail person, and I can't 'member who purse mail  
22 person was at the time. He sent you to the area that you went to. You  
23 didn't pick no area. Now, I don't know what you want – what's [inaudible  
24 10:27]

25

26 Doug Rademacher: Everything you want. We'd like...

27

28 Earl Nicholson Sr.: You can-...

29

30 Doug Rademacher: ...to hear it.

31

32 Earl Nicholson Sr.: ...you can, you, y-...

33

34 Doug Rademacher: No, this-...

35

36 Earl Nicholson Sr.: ...can cut it off or not.

37

38 Doug Rademacher: It's important for the record.

39

40 Earl Nicholson Sr.: So at that time, if you want to get right down, all the black people that was  
41 hired into Fisher Body, 95 percent of'm went to the body shop. Mosta the  
42 other people went to trim or somewhere else. Nobody hardly, I don't  
43 think, it was, it was, it was any black people in material control. Uh, that,  
44 that, ya know [inaudible 11:08] the personnel sent you where somebody –  
45 they needed you and most of'm went to the body shop.

46

1 [knocking]

2

3 Doug Rademacher: [11:15] And where were you sent?

4

5 Earl Nicholson Sr.: I was sent to the body shop, uh, uh, to – I worked on, at the – first I went  
6 to the convertible line. At-, first time I hired in where tha – I would pick  
7 up doors, 2 doors, 2 doors per car an lay'm in the car and they go down the  
8 line and somebody else would, uh, hang'm.

9

10 Doug Rademacher: Now you worked the farm and you, uh, worked in other facilities. [11:44]  
11 Can ya describe what it was like to lift a, a door and, and how often did ya  
12 lift a door?

13

14 Earl Nicholson Sr.: Every car.

15

16 Doug Rademacher: [11:51] And what – how often...

17

18 [inaudible]

19

20 Doug Rademacher: ...did a car come?

21

22 Male: [laughter]

23

24 Earl Nicholson Sr.: [laughter] [Inaudible 11:55] They must a been runnin' 50 or 60 an hour so,  
25 they, they was comin' about every minute or every 2 minutes. And, uh,  
26 going back when I came back to Fisher Body the second time, I went back  
27 to the body shop again. I went to the Cutlass line down in the body shop.  
28 Uh, I did spot welding [inaudible 12:20].

29

30 Doug Rademacher: [12:23] Can you describe body shop to people? You said that, uh, 95  
31 percent of the black population was sent to the body shop. What was the  
32 difference of the trim and the body shop?

33

34 Earl Nicholson Sr.: The differences between the body shop and trim was that body shop was,  
35 was, uh, moe physical labor than trim. And uh, uh, it took a lot-, like, uh,  
36 me not used to being on assembly line. At night when I went home, I was  
37 draggin'. Ya know? I had to rest [the time 13:01] to come back the next  
38 day because I had not been used to anything this physical, you know, for 8  
39 hours a-, and a – the second time I came back, when I came back in 1960,  
40 '63, I went to the body shop and I done spot welding and, and, uh, I used  
41 to pick up, uh, ah – that's when they had the unibody style with the Cut-,  
42 Cutlass with the unibody. And I had to pick up a big [car engine in  
43 background] spot weldin' gun and put it ova' my shoulder, git down and  
44 weld something on the front end of the car and, uh, when I left – goin'  
45 home every – at the time, when they's just started makin' and they was  
46 workin' anywhere from 10 to 12 hours.

1

1

2

[paper rustling]

3

4Doug Rademacher:

Earl, would you please share, um, the door sounded heavy and when you first hired in and, and you didn't get your 90 days so you went back out y-, you came back, you said and went back to the body shop. Now a spot weldin' gun it sounds like is a little thing that does a spot. It sounds a little easier than a, than a door. [14:09] Can you describe the size of this weld gun?

10

11Earl Nicholson Sr.:

Well some, some, i-, in most, most instances the person that's runnin' the uh, – doing spot weldin', most time he had more than 1 gun to run. He had a spot weldin' gun to weld his and then he had a spot weldin' gun to do somethin' else. So in, in, in all I believe the spot welding that, uh, was easier than me pickin' up them doors 'cause them doors had to weigh probably 60 pounds, uh, 25, 30, 50 pounds apiece.

17

18Doug Rademacher:

Oh I can imagine. The old 2 doors were very large autos. Cheryl McQuaid.

19

20Cheryl McQuaid:

[14:48] What would you say a typical spot weld gun would've weighed? Was it on the pulley system at that time or...?

23

24Earl Nicholson Sr.:

Yeah they was on a pulley system and had some hangin' from the ceiling to hold'm up or whatever with a spring – the spring driven thing where you push'm up, they go up or pull'm down, they, they come down.

27

28Doug Rademacher:

Okay. Um, the body shop and the welding area itself was referred to as the jungle. [15:18] Can you explain what the jungle is and why it was called that?

30

31

32Earl Nicholson Sr.:

It wa-, I, I don't actually know the real reason but I summarize the reason why it was called the jungle because if you walked down through the body shop at that time, they got weldin' guns hangin' everywhere. Ya know. It's just like grapevines from, from, in, in, in the jungle. You know how grapevines hang down? And, uh, I summarize that's what they, why they called it the jungle because of so many weldin' guns sp-, ya know, hangin' around. 'Cause that's all they done.

39

40Doug Rademacher:

[15:52] Would you describe the work environment and the air at that time?

41

42

43Earl Nicholson Sr.:

Well, if, if – when I went back in 1960 I was 60 – I mean in, in '63, I was runnin', uh, uh, puttin' on, uh, front end panel up by the dashboard, as I remember right. And...

46



1Male: [coughing]

2

3Earl Nicholson Sr.: ...at that time, because ya know they, they put oil on the metal to keep it  
4 from rustin'. And as you weld, a spot gun hit that, that metal, that oil  
5 burned and I'm tellin' you smoke just, just come up everywhere, ya know,  
6 where you could see it burnin'. And I was lucky in the sense is that I made  
7 [inaudible 16:47] or somethin' other but I had a partner, uh, that he called  
8 a committee man about ev'ry day until we got a fan put up there to blow  
9 that smoke away.

10

11Doug Rademacher: That's, um, something you just referred to a committee man. Um, tell me  
12 the importance of getting 90 days in and, and tell me about a committee  
13 man.

14

15Earl Nicholson Sr.: Well the [important 17:14] was getting uh, uh, 90 days in. If you got 90  
16 days in, you got all your health benefits and, uh, you was, uh, uh, you – if  
17 you got laid off, you know, you had benefits and if you got called back  
18 before your 90 days was, was – had run out, you were still employed. And  
19 the committee man a-, at that time he was uh, uh, he was your life and soul  
20 even though that, at that time, the committee man did not have as much  
21 power that a committee man has now. Ya know? He, he could really, uh,  
22 uh, he could help ya, ya know. And this is what I cannot understand 'bout  
23 people with the, uh, uh, uh, shops that don't have no union because, uh, the  
24 company can perty well do what they wanna do. Ya know? They fire ya,  
25 you ain't got no recourse. Ya know? Because who, who, what ya gone  
26 do? Go out and hire a lawyer? And, I think that the committee man is  
27 really important person in the shop and i-, if I can elaborate on what I'm  
28 sayin' here...

29

30Doug Rademacher: Please do.

31

32Earl Nicholson Sr.: ...a bit. I worked in the, uh, body shop for 'bout 5 years and, uh, the, uh  
33 general, general supervisor he talked to me about goin' on supervision and,  
34 uh, he kept playin' around wit me and I got to know the, uh, the  
35 timekeeper that come out there. So one, one, one year at changeover time,  
36 I came in to fill out my, fill out my, uh... What you call it? The, uh,  
37 where ya self-pay. Fill out my self-pay, I don't know what they call that.  
38 And I says, I'm gonna put me a transfer into material control. So I put in –  
39 a transfer in and when we went back to work after the changeover, 2 or 3  
40 days later, I got a, uh, call to go to material control. And, uh, I was in  
41 material control for about, uh, drivin' powerlift truck, for about 5 years and  
42 I gotta 'nother call to go on supervision and I can't remember [car engine  
43 in background] the date. So I actually, all in all, I worked onl-, as the  
44 hourly worker for about 5 years and I spent almost 25 years on  
45 supervision.

46

1 Doug Rademacher: [20:17] Can you tell me, when you were selected to the...

2

3 Earl Nicholson Sr.: And by the way, I could say, 'bout [inaudible 20:23] I was the first black  
4 supervisor in material control. [inaudible 20:29]

5

6 [creaking]

7

8 Doug Rademacher: Oh yeah, that's, uh, after that I was curious when you were selected to go  
9 into material as a driver, [20:37] how many minorities were in – that, that  
10 drove at that time?

11

12 Earl Nicholson Sr.: Very few. Very few.

13

14 Doug Rademacher: [20:42] Were there any women?

15

16 Earl Nicholson Sr.: No women. No, no w – I can't even re – no women. No women period  
17 was in material control.

18

19 Doug Rademacher: [20:51] Any Hispanics that you remember?

20

21 Earl Nicholson Sr.: I don't, and I'm sure it might've been but very few because there was a  
22 Hispanic that worked right beside me on assembly line and he had been,  
23 he had put an appl-, had a app, application to go into material control for  
24 almost 5 years befoe he got in.

25

26 Doug Rademacher: [21:15] And you put yours in and got in before him?

27

28 Earl Nicholson Sr.: 'Cause I knew somebody.

29

30 Doug Rademacher: 'Cause you knew somebody. Well that's proven to be very important.  
31 [21:23] Um, and uh you worked in the material department in body?

32

33 Earl Nicholson Sr.: I worked uh, I worked everywhere. I worked in the body shop. I worked  
34 on 21 dock. I worked on uh, I think track 8. I worked the truck dock and I  
35 worked in trim, hard and soft trim.

36

37 Doug Rademacher: [21:47] I have a question, um, would you tell me, you'd spent your years  
38 in the body shop, what did ya think when you saw the trim shop? Did ya  
39 wonder about the disparity of the worker?

40

41 Earl Nicholson Sr.: Yes, yes I did. I, uh, I, uh, you walked through the, the uh, body shop and  
42 there was blacks and Hispanics all over the body shop and you go to the  
43 trim shop and it was very few blacks and Hispanic in, in the trim shop.  
44 Most of'm was Caucasian.

45

46 Doug Rademacher: [22:25] And what was the environment of the trim shop?

2Earl Nicholson Sr.: Uh, it was just like, okay after leaving [laughter] out of the body shop and  
3 going to trim shop it, it's just like [car engine in background] goin' to the  
4 newer, you know, its, its just, you know, you – it-, its cleaner. Ya know,  
5 you don't have all the dust and whatever else in, in the, an' uh, most of the  
6 women went to trim shop [laughter].  
7

8Doug Rademacher: [22:54] So there were women in trim?  
9

10Earl Nicholson Sr.: That's – yeah all them that was workin' that's where they was at. They  
11 just not, they just started sending women to the body shop more or less  
12 and the lady here say [inaudible 23:06] 'cause I don't – the women couldn't  
13 handle them, uh, them weldin' guns.  
14

15Doug Rademacher: Well finish out a little more of the trim picture. [23:15] Um...  
16

17 [sniffing]  
18

19Doug Rademacher: ...did you arrive there on foot? Did you drive your truck up in there and,  
20 was-, what was – was there, was there lighting? Was there ceilings? Wh-,  
21 what did ya have? I mean...  
22

23Earl Nicholson Sr.: Well, they had...  
24

25Doug Rademacher: [Inaudible 23:26]  
26

27Earl Nicholson Sr.: [Inaudible 23:26]  
28

29Doug Rademacher: ...a new world.  
30

31Earl Nicholson Sr.: [laughter] They had to have plenty a light. And they had lightin' in there  
32 but, uh, being in the trim shop they had the uh, – you had more light I say  
33 because you gotta git in and do this or you gotta do that, puttin' on metal  
34 par-, little metal parts that hold this on and hold the doors on. Uh, run  
35 wires and whatever like that. [car engine in background] Uh, but it, it  
36 wasn't down in the body shop where you gotta be pickin' up a piece of  
37 metal. You gotta have big gloves on to keep from cuttin' ya hands and, ya  
38 know, stuff like that.  
39

40Doug Rademacher: [24:00] And what did people wear compared to the body shop and the  
41 trim shop?  
42

43Earl Nicholson Sr.: They just wore – they, in the body shop as long a I remember, I wore  
44 coveralls. Ya know. Uh, I think I got uh, um, uh, uh, maybe 2 or 3  
45 changes of coveralls a, a week. Maybe, might've been more. Every, every

1 Monday you'd get coveralls to wear in the body shop. And in the trim,  
2 they just wore they regular clothes.

3

4 Doug Rademacher: [24:29] And in the summertime in the trim department, what else did they  
5 wear?

6

7 Earl Nicholson Sr.: Well... [laughter]

8

9 Jerri Smith: [laughter]

10

11 Earl Nicholson Sr.: Later uh, lat-, okay – when I started, I can't remember much but later on  
12 in, in my years in the trim shop, the guys, well they wore somethin' I don't  
13 think they shoulda wore.

14

15 Doug Rademacher: [24:47] Shorts,...

16

17 Earl Nicholson Sr.: Shorts...

18

19 Doug Rademacher: ...tank tops?

20

21 Earl Nicholson Sr.: ...and tank tops and all that.

22

23 Doug Rademacher: So the clothing, uh, they were comfortable.

24

25 Earl Nicholson Sr.: Yeah.

26

27 Doug Rademacher: Was there, uh, there was lighting...

28

29 Jerri Smith: [coughing]

30

31 Doug Rademacher: ...[24:58] was there music?

32

33 Earl Nicholson Sr.: Uh...

34

35 Doug Rademacher: [25:00] Could ya hear music if there was – was there music in the body  
36 shop?

37

38 Earl Nicholson Sr.: No, it – wasn't no music in the body shop. Somebody, maybe people  
39 mighta had a radio. I don't remember. I didn't have one. But in the trim  
40 shop, uh, about everybody got a radio or somethin' that was playin' or  
41 somethin' other.

42

43 Doug Rademacher: And, um, there was these, your breaks, you were allowed breaks. [25:25]  
44 What was it like to try to take a break in the body shop compared to  
45 someone up in trim?

46

1Earl Nicholson Sr.: Well I, I didn't, I didn't work in, in trim in the-, on assembly line. Uh, but,  
 2 you know, some, some – in, in the body shop, when I was there, you, if  
 3 you could, you had to work ahead if you could, to give yourself a chance  
 4 to run to the bathroom right quick and catch the next [yacht 26:02] comin'  
 5 down. Now trim, I, I don't know 'cause I never worked on assembly line  
 6 in trim, so I don't know how they done that. But they could work, because  
 7 of [inaudible 26:12] thing, I know that they could work further back up the  
 8 line to do somethin' to get a break. Because, if, if they had the same  
 9 problem in trim they did in the body shop, you had a hard time tryin' to get  
 10 relief. Ya know? You, if you wanted to go to th' hospital, you had to wait  
 11 til the committee man, uh, not the comm-, relief man, finish his, uh,  
 12 finished givin' relief, uh, get a break to give you time to go to the hospital  
 13 for a hospital call.  
 14

15Doug Rademacher: Earl, you mentioned the hospital. [26:46] Can you tell me, did you ever  
 16 get hurt or did you ever see anyone else get hurt?  
 17

18Earl Nicholson Sr.: Well I can't 'member gettin' – people got hurt, people got hurt all the time.  
 19 They got cut off and cut on metal 'cause [sleeves'd 27:02] get cut on metal  
 20 but the onliest thing I remember I-, getting' hurt on, I got a spark in my  
 21 eye and uh, uh come from spot welding. You know, the metal jump off  
 22 the [car engine in background] and got in my eye. And I, uh, I went to the  
 23 hospital and uh, the guy, the uh, doctor or whoever had to put drops in my  
 24 eye to turn it ova'. And, uh, he saw spots...  
 25

26 [door opening and closing]  
 27

28Earl Nicholson Sr.: ...back there and how'd they get back there I don't know. But, but I  
 29 remember he was talkin' 'bout it don't have to be a lumpa, lumpa coal to  
 30 hurt so bad and that really, it really hurt. And every time you move ya  
 31 eye, you'd feel somethin'.  
 32

33Doug Rademacher: [27:46] Well a, a weld spark is actually a piece of metal, isn't it?  
 34

35Earl Nicholson Sr.: Yeah.  
 36

37Doug Rademacher: Cheryl McQuaid.  
 38

39Cheryl McQuaid: Mr. Nicholson, you mentioned the, um, after doing the job in the body  
 40 shop when you got home, you were just draggin'.  
 41

42Earl Nicholson Sr.: Yeah.  
 43

44Cheryl McQuaid: [28:01] How long, for the 5 years that you worked there, did you always  
 45 drag at the end of the day? Did your body get used to it? What was the –  
 46 what was it like er...?

2Earl Nicholson Sr.: So, lemme, lemme, lemme, uh, I don't [inaudible 28:20] necessary to  
3 clarify anything but bein'...

5 [door opening]

7Earl Nicholson Sr.: ...one of the first employees in 1960, when they started hirin' in 1960,  
8 seniority give you some kind of, of, uh, a little privilege. So, in working  
9 down...

11 [paper rustling]

13Earl Nicholson Sr.: ...in the body shop doing, uh, spot weldin', uh, I had the opportunity to  
14 replace the re-, relief man when, when he was-, he went on sick leave.  
15 Okay, and then he come back and again, havin' seniority, uh, they  
16 introduced, uh, the, uh intermittent relief man. And he – the guy that done  
17 his job, he either left or quit or somethin' other and I had enough seniority  
18 to get his job. And that's where I worked at the intermittent relief man  
19 when uh, I, I be-, before I left and went to material control. Now, I really  
20 liked the intermittent relief man but people got where they abused it. And,  
21 uh, they liked – they had somebody to call in that they needed to go home  
22 and, uh, I gotta run the job til they find somebody else to come down and,  
23 and, uh, and – to put on the job, uh, as they, they go to the hospital, stay 2  
24 hours at the hospital. And the job got just, where it was just payin', ya  
25 know, for all the abuse that, uh, employees put on it. And I'm not talkin'  
26 'bout uh, uh, from a, uh, uh supervisor point of view, I'm talkin' from my  
27 point of view. So that is 1 of the reasons why, when I got a chance, that I  
28 thought about it and I went to the personnel office and put in me a transfer  
29 to material control because that job had just got [car engine in  
30 background] really abusive.

32Doug Rademacher: Okay. [30:35] Did you enjoy the material department as a driver?

34Earl Nicholson Sr.: Yeah I, I did after learnin' how to drive a fork truck at, uh, – it really was a  
35 different world.

37Doug Rademacher: Okay. I'm gonna ask about your family. [30:53] Did you have...?

39Earl Nicholson Sr.: Lemme, lemme...

41Doug Rademacher: Oh, go ahead.

43Earl Nicholson Sr.: ...go a little further and say at the time I went in material control there was  
44 very few, uh, few blacks or Hispanics in, in material control and, uh, uh,  
45 it, it just – at the time that I went in material control and just another thing  
46 that I say people that don't care about the union. Uh, when I went in

material control, I had a hard time getting material control. And I could go even further an' talk to ya after I got on supervision, how they fought certain ideas. Now, one of the things is, that the union did, the union stopped Fisher Body from hirin' people off the street to go right to material control. They had to take transfers and, and I – to – after awh-, ya know, this went on for a while; it wasn't right away but the union was strong enough to say to the management at Fisher Body, "Hey nobody else is gonna hire off the street and go into material control. What you gotta do is that you gotta s-, send me a tran-, take transfers to go in material control." So that's when the uh, the uh, the uh, uh, face of material control changed is when the mana-, uh, union fought management off.

And a lot of people that was in material control, they had to go to the – go back somewhere in the body shop, trim or somewhere else because, uh, one of the things bein' on, bein' in supervision and you set in, in, in the room and listen to the people talk and even though the, now, you guys, [laughter] even though I was on supervision, I am a union person, ya know? 'Cause, uh, some of the things, ideas that they'd come up with, I couldn't do anythin' about it but I didn't agree wit it. And they did but I'd want, uh – to get anybody, you had people in Fisher Body that had, and I say white and black, Hispanics, that had 25 or 30 years or 20 years or betta', they didn't want nobody in material control that had high seniority. They wanted to get [inaudible 33:27] people, ya know?

[33:30] And why do you think that is?

I, I can't – why they [throat clearing] they didn't want that, uh, uh – I can't 'member exactly why they wanted dat but they just didn't want nobody in, in material control that had high seniority.

[33:50] Did the higher seniority people, uh, stand up for themselves and were combative with management? Was that possibly the reason?

Y-yeah. Yes. That was the [throat clearing]...

Harder to control.

Ya answered it right there, but one of the thangs is, with that is that [clearing throat] okay you had people in material control, uh, that hardly had 5, 10 years seniority, something like dat, that had hired in [inaudible 34:19]. They don't want no high seniority people 15 or 20 years because just as soon as they have a cut back, those people are gone. Once you get in material control and establish your seniority in there, anybody that has less seniority [you 34:35], when they have a cutback, a lay off or somethin', you gone. And a lot of'm left. And they – most of'm didn't get

1 back, them that had uh, 2 or 3 years seniority. They was bumped out and  
2 they didn't get back.

3

4 Doug Rademacher: So, they actually had to go back and go to the assembly line rather...

5

6 Earl Nicholson Sr.: Go to as...

7

8 Doug Rademacher: ...then, then, uh enjoy that...

9

10 Earl Nicholson Sr.: Yeah.

11

12 Doug Rademacher: ...what took you, uh, all a period of hard labor to get to.

13

14 Earl Nicholson Sr.: Yes.

15

16 Doug Rademacher: I wanna ask about family in the plant. [35:06] Did you have any relatives  
17 in the plant? And, up to your day of retirement, tell me about what you,  
18 uh, have as far as relatives that...

19

20 Earl Nicholson Sr.: Well I had, um, I was the, um, first in , in the group to hire in 'cause I had  
21 worked there in 1960. And uh, I went back in '63 and I had been back in  
22 '63 about 2 or 3 weeks and my brother came home, [inaudible 35:38]  
23 Nicholson, came home from, from the army. And, uh, I told him they  
24 hirin' at Fisher Body and he went ova there and got hired. Uh, we got – I  
25 think I got laid off befoe he did or he got laid off with me and we both  
26 [laughter] uh, he was called back befoe I did and somehow or 'nother, we  
27 got the same seniority date. And I was there about 3 weeks befoe he did.  
28 And then my, my son, he uh, graduated from, from Sexton High School  
29 and, Earl Jr., and, he don't like that, Earl the second and uh, he uh, he was  
30 gonna go to school down in Ohio, some trade school and we went down  
31 and he didn't like it.

32

33 So he came back here and he found a job uh, at Trust Company up on  
34 Grand River. And then they announced in the thing that they were gon-,  
35 gonna start takin' applications at Fisher Body. So I said to him, I said,  
36 "Earl." I said, "They takin' applications at Fisher Body." I said, "Go ova  
37 and put ya application in." An' he went ova there and I think the line was  
38 clear down to Sexton and, uh he finally got in there and whoever was  
39 takin' applications saw'm, looked at'm and said, "You must be – You Earl  
40 Nicholson's son." He went to work the next day.

41

42 Jerri Smith: [chuckle]

43

44 Earl Nicholson Sr.: So it pays to know [laughter] somebody.

45

46 Jerri Smith: [laughter]



1

1

2Earl Nicholson Sr.: And then my brother's son...

3

4Jerri Smith: [coughing]

5

6Earl Nicholson Sr.: ...uh, [inaudible 37:16] Jr., he got hired on, later on. So that's the only s-,  
7 uh, uh, 2 even though I had a nephew, Robert Nicholson, that came ova  
8 there and worked but he, he, he was workin', I think he worked at the part  
9 plant.

10

11Doug Rademacher: Okay.

12

13Jerri Smith: Good.

14

15 [tape clicking]

16

17Doug Rademacher: Earl you had spoke about being recommended for the uh, supervision role.  
18 [37:48] Can you tell me what that was like, uh, for that matter, for, uh,  
19 black or for anybody?

20

21Earl Nicholson Sr.: Well if I say its, uh, um, uh people ha-, supervision had talked about me,  
22 management had talked about me goin' on supervision but I'd never put  
23 too much weight on it. And 1 day I walked into shop and uh, uh, 1 of the  
24 supervisors brought me down an envelope wit a application to go on  
25 supervision and I don't know who sent it. And, um – but as I said, Larry  
26 [Fister 38:30] uh, uh, he, he did ask me about it several times, about goin'  
27 on and I don't know why he didn't hardly have no...

28

29Male: [chuckle]

30

31Earl Nicholson Sr.: ...no uh, uh, uh input on it. And uh, uh, so I, I went on – I didn't have to  
32 go through – most of the people had to go through somethin'. I didn't have  
33 to go through no trainin'. I just went up to personnel and signed some  
34 papers and done this and next thing that I know that I was called in – I was  
35 called an' went in to material management and they said, "Well we'll give  
36 ya a call." In about a m-, next week they called me an said – tole me, it  
37 was on a Friday; they tole me – he says, "Uh, when ya come in Monday,  
38 have on a white shirt and tie." [creaking in background] Well, I had been  
39 ova on track 8, workin' ova there. 'Cause I was, I was on nights and I left  
40 nights an, and they called me ta come to days. So I worked a week on  
41 days before I went on supervision.

42

43Male: [chuckle]

44

1Earl Nicholson Sr.: An' I was workin' on track 8 foe a week an' then on Monday, the next  
 2 Monday, I walked down wit a, wit a tie, white shirt and tie on and, ya  
 3 know – you can imagine what I had to go through.  
 4

5Doug Rademacher: No tell us. [39:56] What did you have to go through?  
 6

7Earl Nicholson Sr.: Well one of the thangs is that people who, uh, that worked there was upset  
 8 that [chuckle] I worked wit'm a week and I didn't tell'm I was goin' on  
 9 supervision. And, uh, I can't remember who, who the supervisor was at  
 10 the time but any time that I reached down to pick up a, a crowbar or  
 11 anything outta the ordinary that I shouldn't done, they had the committee  
 12 man down there writin' me up. Which the guy that was breakin' me in,  
 13 they never wrote him up. Ya know and I got a call from management  
 14 tellin' me that I was gonna have ta stop gettin' wrote up. [Inaudible  
 15 40:46] I probably have to be taken off or somethin'. And then, uh, I can't  
 16 remember who, who the person was at that time but 1 of the guys, which  
 17 was Caucasian, he said to the group, he says that, "You don't write this  
 18 other supervisor up." He said, "You need to get off Earl's back." And that  
 19 was uh, beginnin' of, of change for me. Ya know? And, and, and, uh,  
 20 people respected me bein' on supervision because they had never been  
 21 supervised by a black person before.  
 22

23Doug Rademacher: Would you briefly explain, you said you would reach down for a  
 24 crowbar...  
 25

26 [paper rustling]  
 27

28Doug Rademacher: ...uh, and union – the people called the union on you. [41:43] What's-  
 29 what do you mean by that?  
 30

31Earl Nicholson Sr.: Well [throat clearing] yeah at the time that they, uh, and – which is, is that  
 32 uh, the uh, agreement 'tween union and management is that no supervisor  
 33 can do any physical labor. All you do is push a pen. And, uh, that was the  
 34 big thing back the-, in that time was to catch the supervisor doin' somethin'  
 35 so they could write'm up.  
 36

37Doug Rademacher: [42:12] And why would the supervisor do somethin'?  
 38

39Earl Nicholson Sr.: Well o-, occasionally you had to do somethin'. Somethin' was goin' down  
 40 the line, uh, um, somethin' ain't right, you gotta jump in there to give a  
 41 helpin' hand, ya know? Uh, somethin' other ya know. And uh, uh, you  
 42 don't have enough manpower, uh, uh somethin' is wrong that you gotta,  
 43 you gotta do somethin'.  
 44

45Doug Rademacher: So, uh, comin' from the line you saw somethin' needed to be done you  
 46 jumped in to do it and it, it cost you uh, a written reprimand.

2Earl Nicholson Sr.: Yeah.

4Doug Rademacher: [42:44] Can ya tell me, what was it like to get into management? How'd  
5 ya pull that off and, and was that somethin' anybody could do?

7Earl Nicholson Sr.: Uh, I, I would uh, uh, say that gittin' into management was a buddy-buddy  
8 system, ya know, your buddy got you on; that buddy got somebody else  
9 on. Uh, as I was 'splainin' my, my, uh, my brother, he got to be friends  
10 with, with his supervisor and his supervisor pushed him to get on. And  
11 uh, more or less it was – with me, and the sense is that, uh, and I don't  
12 know how to phrase this. [car engine in background] Um, I think one of  
13 the things is that moe black supervisors got on was, uh, the Civil Rights  
14 Movement. Martin Luther King was, was uh, was uh, uh demonstratin'  
15 and whatever, ya know, about, uh civil rights and whatever else and I, I, I  
16 think personally, myself, is that uh, this helps me-, helped me along with  
17 some other people to get on supervision. And at that time, they put a lotta  
18 moe black people on supervision after, after that. And uh, I don't, I don't  
19 know who, who was – is that uh...

21 [knocking]

23Earl Nicholson Sr.: ...uh, what, what program it was, some government program, that you had  
24 to list the amount of minorities, blacks, Indian, Hispanic or somethin'  
25 other, in your department. 'Cause what they was doin', they was tryin' to  
26 figure out what you were discriminatin' against somebody or not, ya know.  
27 And um, I remember like I was sayin' in material control, I heard'm, uh, uh  
28 try to say, "Well let's put him down. He's a Indian." Ya know, to have...

30Male: [chuckle]

32Earl Nicholson Sr.: ...some-, have, have, have, uh, different ethnic groups in, in, in material  
33 control or, or supervision or whatever else.

35Doug Rademacher: I don't know if it was, uh, called something different in the past but it  
36 became to be known as affirmative action where uh, uh, a certain portion  
37 of the work had to be done by minorities or women, um...

39Earl Nicholson Sr.: And, yeah, and, and, and uh, affirmative action and that's where the  
40 women...

42 [beeping]

44Earl Nicholson Sr.: ...got the big push to, comin' from the same...

46 [creaking]

2Doug Rademacher: Would you, um, oh Jerri Smith.

4Jerri Smith: Yes. I'd like to know; you were sayin' that you're on supervision. [45:39]  
5 Where were you supervisor most of your time while you were in the  
6 plant?  
7

8Earl Nicholson Sr.: Well, um, as I started out as supervision in material control, I was on uh, I  
9 was on track 8, which is right back here, used to be right back here. They  
10 might be – ya know, right there train goin' [inaudible 45:59]. I, I started  
11 out there and then I went to, I think I went to 21 dock. I left 21 dock and I  
12 went up in the 3X and uh, occasionally I went to buildin' 15 and to, to uh,  
13 uh, um [car engine in background]...  
14

15Jerri Smith: But I mean it was always in material.

17Earl Nicholson Sr.: Always in material. No you didn't, you didn't go back and forth. It was all  
18 in material, somewhere in...  
19

20Doug Rademacher: Mm-hm.  
21

22Earl Nicholson Sr.: ...material control.  
23

24Jerri Smith: So but-, you just went to different buildings...  
25

26Earl Nicholson Sr.: Diff-...  
27

28Jerri Smith: ...in material.  
29

30Earl Nicholson Sr.: ...different, different departments and different parts of the buildin'. And  
31 when I retired, I was uh, supervision in uh, uh, 3X trim.  
32

33 [car engine in background]  
34

35Doug Rademacher: Doug Rademacher. [46:53] Earl, did you v-, view you coworkers as  
36 brothers and sisters? And, did you establish some sort of a family feeling  
37 in the facility?  
38

39Earl Nicholson Sr.: Um, and that's hard, hard to say but in, in the early parts of being on  
40 supervision. But after I had been on supervision for probably 5, 10 years,  
41 people got to know me and know, ya know, that I was not a thing t – I got  
42 where that I could, ya know, we'd laugh and talk and, and, and, uh, ya  
43 know? Communicate with each other and, uh, – so I, I got, got along very  
44 good.  
45

1 Doug Rademacher: I guess I'll go back to the early days then. Uh, your first 5 years. [47:49]  
 2 Did your coworker alongside you – was, what was that camaraderie like  
 3 compared, on the assembly line, compared to being in management?  
 4

5 Earl Nicholson Sr.: Uh, you talkin' 'bout after I got on supervision?  
 6

7 Doug Rademacher: [48:02] Well, no like when you worked the assembly line in body shop,  
 8 did you count on your worker? Did they – did ya hang together? Was it  
 9 tight? Was there a family bonding...?  
 10

11 Earl Nicholson Sr.: Well, we...

12  
 13 Doug Rademacher: Were workers...?  
 14

15 Earl Nicholson Sr.: ...we all [laughed 48:14] to talk with each other when we had a chance  
 16 and new each other but it, for me, uh, it wasn't goin' out and hangin' out at  
 17 uh, the bars and stuff like that. 'Cause I, I didn't do – I did some but I  
 18 didn't do much a that so, um, that. So I knew some people there but not  
 19 hangin' out wit'm.  
 20

21 Doug Rademacher: Okay. I'm wondering about um, the struggle to stay up with the assembly  
 22 line. You said it was hard doin' that uh, 1 car per minute. I was just  
 23 wondering, [48:48] did, did your coworker help you? Did ya – could ya  
 24 count on'm when you're on the assembly line? What was that like? And  
 25 then when you were in management, could you count on people to help ya  
 26 there, uh, that were in management?  
 27

28 Earl Nicholson Sr.: Well in, in the body shop, [throat clearing] on assembly line everybody  
 29 got they job to do. And if you got behind or somethin' broke down, or you  
 30 missed somethin', nobody would pick it up for ya. They had to get uh,  
 31 somebody else, uh, uh, management, uh I mean, not management but  
 32 hourly worker, somebody somewhere to go down and weld this. And  
 33 even, in some cases, they might have pulled a car off the enda the line to  
 34 get somethin' welded that wasn't welded.  
 35

36 Doug Rademacher: Okay. [49:39] When you were in management and you found yourself  
 37 with questions or trouble, did ya have – could ya count on someone to  
 38 help ya or did ya have ta work through it?  
 39

40 Earl Nicholson Sr.: Well [throat clearing] in management, most the time if I had a problem,  
 41 um, I had the, uh, my general supervisor. He kinda worked wif me. Uh,  
 42 what I'm sayin' is that he was, to me, he was a okay guy, ya know? But  
 43 then, my other general supervisor, if I went to him and says I gotta, had a  
 44 problem, he would more or less take care dat problem. Even though that,  
 45 that I didn't have the, the camaraderie wit him that I had with the other  
 46 guy. He was strictly business, ya know? If I had a problem, I went to

1 him, he'd try to straighten that problem out. I don't know what – ya wanna  
2 know his name? [laughter] [Inaudible 50:56]...

3

4 Doug Rademacher: Fine. That's fine. Its facts so. The plant's gone as we know now and uh,  
5 if that's what – if you like to share the facts and the names, that's fine.  
6 Um, can you say...? Jerri Smith.

7

8 Jerri Smith: Alright now we've discussed that you were on the line for 5 years and you  
9 went into supervision. [51:16] Which was more stressful, the line or  
10 supervision?

11

12 Earl Nicholson Sr.: Well, I could say supervision was more stressful for maybe the first 5 or  
13 10 years I was in-, on supervision. But after you get to know, know the  
14 uh, uh, the games, and I don't like to say dat, to play, ya know? Uh, it  
15 begin to get betta', ya know? One of the things bein' on supervision is that  
16 you gotta think. And, at da time, uh, uh, I don't think uh, uh, the factory  
17 now..

18

19 Male: [coughing]

20

21 Earl Nicholson Sr.: ...is, is as, is as bad as it was, I don't like [car engine in background] to  
22 say bad but is the uh, the atmosphere was as bad now [until 52:15] then.  
23 And uh, one of the things with me is that uh, it was hard for me because I  
24 had never worked in a factory befoe, uh, comin' from Tennessee on the  
25 farm. And, after I had been on supervision for 5 or 10 years, and goin'  
26 through classes; they put ya through classes in, in the shop. Ev-, every  
27 week or so we gotta go to a class or somethin' other. Uh, try to update ya  
28 on somethin' or give you some idea of uh this, that and th' other. But as I  
29 grew, I began to think for tomorrow instead of today. Because when I had  
30 an employee come to me about a problem, complainin' about a job or  
31 somethin', that's somethin' I thought about 2 weeks ago. So when they  
32 came to me, I had a answer foe'm, ya know. So that was one of the things  
33 that helped me just to think ahead. Don't be thinkin' for today. You think  
34 about what's gonna happen tomorrow. Uh, next week, what they gon' do  
35 next week and you try to figure out well if dis happen, what am I gonna  
36 do?

37

38 Doug Rademacher: Doug Rademacher. Earl, you said uh, when we, when we didn't have the  
39 tape runnin', something about goin' on management used to be somethin'  
40 special. [53:44] Can you describe what ya meant by that and tell us a  
41 little story about that?

42

43 Earl Nicholson Sr.: Well bein' – when I went on uh, uh, management that's – I hired in 1963, I  
44 must've went on management in 1969 or 1970, somewhere along there.  
45 And then goin' on supervision was somethin' special because you had your  
46 own parkin' lot to park your car in. You had your own cafeteria to eat in.

1 Uh, anythin' that the union got, the managers got betta'. Ya know? The  
2 union'd negotiate with management.

3  
4 Jerri Smith: [coughing]

5  
6 Earl Nicholson Sr.: Uh, say costa livin' um, I-, we got costa livin' every 3 months. And I-, my  
7 costa livin' for uh, for th-, for that month must've run 7 or \$800 somethin'  
8 like that, I can't remember exact figure. But then management changed  
9 and they wanted to make General Motors and Fisher Body to, to be moe  
10 conductive with, uh, hourly rates. You want-, they want ta think that  
11 hourly rates is on the same page wit management. So all these benefits  
12 was, was takin' away and uh, so you got – to eat ya have ta go in the  
13 hourly cafeteria or the cafeteria to eat and all uh a, ya know, the other  
14 privilege was [most less 55:31] taken away. Um, where is that, uh, if, if,  
15 uh, hourly rate got a raise, you almost got twice that much. And, uh, after  
16 this was – tryin' to make management just be a person, ya know, uh, that  
17 uh, worked alongside his employees, all of these benefits [squeaking in  
18 background] went away.

19  
20 Doug Rademacher: Earl, I wanna ask you, the-, you, you spoke how you valued the union and  
21 how important it was. The union continued to fight for the worker to be  
22 treated fairly. Um, this idea of management becoming an equal with the  
23 worker, that came from the corporation. [56:21] How did that feel? How  
24 did man-, how did the uh, supervisors feel about that?

25  
26 [paper rustling]

27  
28 Earl Nicholson Sr.: I think the...

29  
30 [paper rustling]

31  
32 Earl Nicholson Sr.: ...the uh, supervisor at the time an', uh, they felt like, more or less, like  
33 they was bein' betrayed. Ya know? They are the, they are the ones that  
34 take the brunt of uh, all-, everything that goes on. You got the supervisor,  
35 line supervisor, he's takin' all the slack. He gets it from the hourly rates  
36 an' he gets it from upper management and he's squeezed right in the  
37 middle. And uh, the uh, benefits that he would get-, he was getting' at the  
38 time, was somethin' that he could use as I, I get this for my service. I get  
39 that for my service. Now that's all taken away from him and uh, he's, he's  
40 sayin' to hisself, ya know, I don't know why I do this.

41  
42 Doug Rademacher: Okay. The, uh, Fisher Body Plant, as we know it, has changed names a  
43 number of times and came a time when uh, uh, they decided to merge 2  
44 supervisions, 1 from Fisher Body and 1 from Oldsmobile. [57:48] Do you  
45 remember that time?

46

1Earl Nicholson Sr.: Yes.

2

3Doug Rademacher: [57:50] Can you share a little story 'bout that?

4

5Earl Nicholson Sr.: Well I, I [throat clearing] I don't know who was playin' manager when that started because 1 of the things [throat clearing] uh, General Motors Corporation done was that we, we had, at the time, we had 2 different organizations. We had the body shop and the um, uh...

9

10 [chair squeaking]

11

12Earl Nicholson Sr.: What'd they call it?

13

14Doug Rademacher: Chassis.

15

16Earl Nicholson Sr.: And the ch-, body shop and the chassis plant. And uh, you had uh, a general-, had a general manager at the chassis and a general manager at, at uh, Fisher Body. In order to try to streamline the area or save money or somethin', the corporation went wit 1 manager for both body and chassis. Okay then they went even further is that where you have uh, a superintendent on the day shift that's the superintendent for the body shop and the chassis shop. If he was, he was, uh, in trim, he was the super-, superintend-, uh, uh, superintendent [inaudible 59:04]. Then he had a uh, uh, uh, a night shift superintendent and a day...

25

26Male: [coughing]

27

28Earl Nicholson Sr.: ...shift superintendent who worked under him dat ran da bidness. And uh, uh, that's when uh, uh, things kinda changed is they, they inst-, instead of the, the uh – I don't know where, where management at the chassis was but at Fisher Body, we had underground parkin'. So they u-, they [chuckle] the manager, upper management, they'd [ruther 59:42] come, make Fisher Body the headquarters because they'd come right in and park. [laughter]

35

36John Fedewa: [Inaudible 59:49] [laughter]

37

38Doug Rademacher: [laughter]

39

40Earl Nicholson Sr.: Get outta da rain and whatever like that.

41

42Doug Rademacher: Um, Jerri Smith.

43

44Jerri Smith: I'm gonna stop...[tape clicking]

45



1Doug Rademacher: Mr. Nicholson, we're talking about supervision. The uh, time when the  
2 corporation decided to merge the 2, uh, supervisor staffs. [1:00:13] Um,  
3 again, would you share again that feeling um, and were you jeopardized in  
4 your position when they, when they brought the other supervisors over?

5  
6Earl Nicholson Sr.: Uh, [throat clearing] no [throat clearing] I wasn't. [throat clearing] I  
7 remember back...

8  
9 [knocking]

10  
11Earl Nicholson Sr.: ...awhile, uh, some time ago, and the process is that, uh, when we had a  
12 lay off and uh, me bein' the uh, only black supervisor, uh, wit any  
13 seniority in material control that when they had a cutback, they cut some  
14 people out that had less seniority than me [car engine in background] but  
15 had not had much, ya know, had been on supervisor longer than I had but  
16 didn't have as much seniority as I had.

17  
18 [creaking]

19  
20Earl Nicholson Sr.: And, some of'm really didn't like when they uh, the announcement came  
21 down who was gon' get laid off or whatever. Uh, summa the people didn't  
22 really like it. They thought that, that they had been there longer than I  
23 have and I shoulda been gone or whatever else but I, I never was laid off  
24 or anything out of material control. Um... [inaudible 1:01:34]...

25  
26Doug Rademacher: Well I'm just – we were uh, we're talkin' about the feeling of betrayal as  
27 the, uh, corporation started, uh, reducing um, what I guess would be the  
28 perks of being a, uh, a supervisor and uh, as time went on the whole, the  
29 whole, uh, process of moving into management changed. [1:01:57] Um,  
30 do you know any stories about that an'...?

31  
32Earl Nicholson Sr.: Well one of the, one of the things is that, uh, uh, that changed once – when  
33 they, uh, uh, merged both sides of chassis and the body shop. [car  
34 engine] Uh, they had, uh, uh, supervisors, and we're talkin' 'bout the  
35 supervisor again, that um, some went to the chassis to work, some from  
36 body went to chassis to work 'cause they probably wanted to get away  
37 from summa the management ova there. And some from chassis came  
38 ova to Fisher Body to work. And, uh, I worked at – I never went  
39 anywhere. I stayed at Fisher Body the whole, uh, 30 years that I was  
40 there. And I, I was on, uh, supervision and material control foe  
41 somewhere like 24, 25 years. But, so – I never, I never went anywhere  
42 [car engine in background] uh, had an inklin' to go anywhere. Ya know?  
43 Once I got to, to uh, uh, got the ins and outs and knows of whatever else,  
44 ya know, I really loved, uh, uh, liked Fisher Body. Ya know?

45

1 Uh, goin' back, a while back is that, I was sayin' that, 'cause I, I lived on a  
 2 farm and I was able to come and go as I want to. An' then when you got  
 3 [chuckle] got into [car engine in background] Fisher Body, its like bein' in  
 4 prison, ya know? And uh, I went down and put me in – took, uh, a test to  
 5 go to the post office. And I passed and uh, the post office called me to go  
 6 to work but the guy says that I didn't have uh, uh, I didn't have a  
 7 permanent job. I was on-call. I might work today, tonight, tomorrow,  
 8 whatever else. An' the moe he talked about it, the moe I, I uh, [car engine  
 9 in background] started hedgin' on it because I had a wife and 3 kids. And,  
 10 later on down the line, uh, that is one of the greatest uh, um, uh, the most  
 11 thing that I really think [car engine in background] about myself is that I  
 12 didn't leave Fisher Body and go to the post office. I got where I really uh,  
 13 thought Fisher Body was my home, more or less, 'cause I spent moe time  
 14 there than I did at home.

15  
 16 Doug Rademacher: We've a lot of interviews um, tryin' to do 125 of them. Um, a lot of times  
 17 we had the worker and we asked what made a good supervisor and what  
 18 made a bad supervisor. [1:04:50] Can you tell us, as a supervisor, what  
 19 made a good employee and what made a bad employee?  
 20

21 Earl Nicholson Sr.: Well uh, em-, employee, uh, is, is, is a person that would do his job. And  
 22 if he got a problem, he'd come to you and you'd try to work it out. And y-  
 23 ya know, and he says, "Well, I'll, I'll do this." Or somethin' or other, we'd  
 24 compromise, ya know, or, or somethin' ya know, that, "I got too much  
 25 work. Can you do this?" Or whatever. But then, you got the other  
 26 supervisor that when you come to him and says, "Look this is gonna be  
 27 part of your job." And he says, "When you bring it to me, bring the  
 28 committee man along wit ya." He never attempted to do the job. He, 'foe  
 29 he could even perform the work, he was uh, uh, uh, callin' committee man  
 30 to write up, um. What did you call it? Uh...

31  
 32 Doug Rademacher: 78...  
 33

34 Jerri Smith: 78...  
 35

36 Earl Nicholson Sr.: ...write up a 78 on the job or somethin', ya know? And uh, even going  
 37 further than that, well, he let parta the job go down the line, ya know?  
 38 Run outta stock or do this because, ya know, he's tryin' to prove a point  
 39 that he don't have time to do it. And then, a-, as I was sayin' before that I  
 40 was on, uh, in management but I was a labor person; summa the things  
 41 that management tried to do was just absolutely ridic'lus. Ya know? They  
 42 asked too much for, for somebody an' it just, uh, – like any, anything else  
 43 in the world, the one that hollas get mosta the benefits.  
 44

45 Doug Rademacher: [1:06:43] Can you give a scenario to go around that particular comment?  
 46

1Earl Nicholson Sr.: Well I, uh, okay. Goin' back, uh, I was the, uh, supervision on, uh, um, I  
2 think was track 5 and, and dis always rings in my mind, that I had a guy  
3 that stocked, uh, sealers and other stuff, uh, down on the floor, up in, uh,  
4 up-, upstairs in, in hardware ya had another little elevator to get up there.  
5 So me an' my superintendent, we got into it. And, uh-, 'cause they'd be  
6 hollerin' for stock and, uh, he was 'bout the, 'bout the first time dat I really  
7 got mad at him and, and maybe said somethin' I shouldn'ta said. But he  
8 said to me, "He ain't got enough work. You know, you make him do it."  
9 Okay.  
10  
11John Fedewa: [chuckle]  
12  
13Earl Nicholson Sr.: I don't know what you guys remember him I, [Delbert Platty 1:07:43], I  
14 think he passed away, somethin' like – but he was doin' the job [car engine  
15 in background] and he had a [turn 1:07:53] a seniority. And I think his,  
16 his, his brother was on supervision somewhere, over in the trim shop or  
17 somewhere else. But apart from that is, somewhere down the line, he got  
18 smart and he went on ta...  
19  
20 [door opening]  
21  
22Earl Nicholson Sr.: ...he went on-, he got him a, a transfer in and went...  
23  
24Jerri Smith: [coughing]  
25  
26Earl Nicholson Sr.: ...to day shift. So the guy dat, dat took his place, [footsteps in  
27 background] just as soon as he took his place, he called the committee  
28 man and [time stood 1:08:28] guy and less than a week or 2 weeks or  
29 whatever, halfa dat job was gone. Now the thing I'm sayin' is that  
30 management knew the man had too much work but they don't, they don't  
31 care who they push or, um, uh, they might cut my pension off if they...  
32  
33Jerri Smith: [laughter]  
34  
35Earl Nicholson Sr.: ...they don't...  
36  
37John Fedewa: [laughter]  
38  
39Earl Nicholson Sr.: ...they don't care who dey punch or whatever. I believe that a man should  
40 do a job. But I, also, I believe that, that he shouldn't have to go home and,  
41 and set, and set down and rest for uh, uh, all night to come back next day  
42 to do the same job.  
43  
44Doug Rademacher: Alright. Um, you said that they had a special cafeteria for the supervision  
45 when you first went on. [1:09:25] Was the food better? You, uh, [car

engine in background] was there somethin' special back [inaudible  
1:09:29]?

3

4Earl Nicholson Sr.: I, I think they, if I remember right, they probably served the same-, some  
5 of the same food in the, in the cafeteria that – it was bof cafeterias, but one  
6 of the things you had uh, uh, ya had moe, ya almost had waitress waitin'  
7 on ya in, in there, ya know. And uh, uh I think the food was the same but  
8 som-, occasionally you might've had somethin' a little different 'cause you  
9 don't have as many people to feed, ya know, like ya do in, in, in the hourly  
10 cafeteria. And, uh, so that mighta been, been it and that, that was hard for  
11 me, uh, bein' on supervision in the sense that you, you, you take the ups  
12 and downs and this was one of the perks you got, ya know. Um, 'nother  
13 perk that, that I kinda – I really missed, and that was the parkin' lot. Ya  
14 know? When they, they uh, uh, took our parking space away from us.  
15 And then that made me have ta get to work 30 minutes early an' get me a  
16 parkin' [chuckle] space up front.

17

18Doug Rademacher: [laughter]

19

20Earl Nicholson Sr.: Ya know? Uh, sometimes I was late and I gotta park out'n the back 40  
21 somewhere. And I gotta be on the job befoe you do. And, uh,  
22 occasionally my superintendent used to get – "You need to get here 30  
23 minutes aheada time." Ya know, and he was right. But uh...

24

25Doug Rademacher: [1:11:07] Earl, what is one of your best memories of Fisher Body?

26

27Earl Nicholson Sr.: Well... And I, I don't know how to phrase this, I, I really like Fisher  
28 Body. And I like the people that wor-, most people I – a lotta people I got  
29 to know. But, uh, you said best memories?

30

31Doug Rademacher: We'll do that first and you can go the other way...

32

33Earl Nicholson Sr.: Well, one of the, one of the best memories that I have of Fisher Body and,  
34 and, when I got seniority an' that, was knowin' that I always had a job.  
35 'Cause I was a new breed that came in, in 1963 and, uh, I, – the, the  
36 knowledge that I know that I had a job if the plant stayed open. Ya know?  
37 Because I had seniority to carry me, uh, so that, that is, uh, that, that is the  
38 memory that I had bein' able to – not bein' well educated but goin' through  
39 the process, ya know, that uh, uh, I had a job.

40

41Doug Rademacher: [1:12:34] And you referred to it a number of times but who made that 90-  
42 day window uh, uh, something that was cherished?

43

44Earl Nicholson Sr.: UAW International.

45

1 Doug Rademacher: [1:12:49] And, um, can you share – what was one of your saddest  
2 moments at Fisher Body?

3

4 Earl Nicholson Sr.: Well I didn't, I, I didn't have a lot of sad moments. I had some  
5 disagreement with employees. But one of the things that uh, that  
6 distressed me and caused my departure was that when General Motors  
7 decided that Toyota and Honda was runnin' about 18 man hours per car.  
8 Ford and Chrysler was runnin' about 24 and General Motors was runnin'  
9 'round 30. And General Motors says, "We're gonna cut dis, dis man per  
10 hour car down." So what they done, they started doin' ev'rything they  
11 could to get the manpower down to, uh, uh, close to, uh, Ford and  
12 Chrysler whatever. And, uh, I was, uh, uh, most the time that I could say  
13 is that after change-, after gettin' my jobs and things set up, after  
14 changeover [basely 1:14:24], I was, I was kinda...

15

16 [paper rustling]

17

18 Earl Nicholson Sr.: ...stress free.

19

20 [paper rustling]

21

22 Earl Nicholson Sr.: Ya know. Until the next – occasionally somethin' changed...

23

24 Jerri Smith: [coughing]

25

26 Earl Nicholson Sr.: ...but – until the next changeover. But when General Motors decided to  
27 do, uh, get they man hour-, man per hour per car in order, uh, production  
28 would come in. Here I have fought and argued with my employees to get  
29 my job set up and whatever else, and then I go home and come back d'next  
30 day and, and like she was talkin' 'bout here, they done changed it again. If  
31 dey didn't change it during the day, dey changed it at night when I went  
32 home. An' den I gotta come back da next day and start arguin' all over  
33 again, wit, wit, wit the employees about, uh, they job. Ya know? They  
34 done moved somethin' around. Uh, they done took somethin' outta this  
35 area and moved it over in dis area and this guy, "I'm not gonna do that."  
36 Ya know. And, and so forth and so on and, and this went on for, for a  
37 coupla years I guess; I was havin' this trouble.

38

39 So they, they, uh, management came in and asked me, "Did I wanna  
40 retire?" Uh, in January of, uh, somewhere in J-, January of '92? And I  
41 told'm no. And after goin' through the process for, uh, that year, in 1993,  
42 they came back again in, in December of 1993, November, and asked me,  
43 "Did I wanna go?" And I-, again I told'm no. Then I went home and  
44 thought about it. My wife was in Detroit. I called her and tell her, "I'm  
45 goin'. I don't care what I have to eat, beans and bread every day. I'm

1 goin'." [footsteps in background] I signed the papers, went out first in '93  
2 and that's history for me.

3

4 Doug Rademacher: [1:16:44] Earl, Lansing was known across the United States, and possibly  
5 around the world, as the Capital of Quality, why do you think it was called  
6 that?

7

8 Earl Nicholson Sr.: I know why it was called that. It, it was called that because, uh, uh  
9 management and union, and I never worked at another plant but I listened  
10 to other people, had a good relationship. Management and union in Fisher  
11 Body, uh, uh, I don't know about chassis, had a good relationship on work  
12 ethics and, and workin' problems out, ya know? Ya know, they weren't  
13 aware that, uh, people uh, takin' off so many days or somethin' like that  
14 automatically...

15

16 [door squeaking]

17

18 Earl Nicholson Sr.: ...got uh, a reprimand or discharge or 3 days off or somethin' or other like  
19 that. And...

20

21 [creaking]

22

23 Earl Nicholson Sr.: ...I, I said that because of ,uh...

24

25 [creaking]

26

27 Earl Nicholson Sr.: I guess it was [inaudible 1:17:48] either close the plant down or somethin'.  
28 And people came from these plants and they came to Fisher Body, and  
29 they decided that Fisher Body-, people at Fisher Body's doin' too much  
30 work. They tried to take ova the union and they tried to do a lotta things  
31 that, that wasn't good for Fisher Body or the union. And they cannot  
32 realize that's the reason why General Motors closed down the plants in  
33 Fisher Body-, uh, in, in, [inaudible 1:18:32] in the first place because they  
34 couldn't get the people to do a quality job. [car engine in background]

35

36 Doug Rademacher: That's, uh, a wonderful explanation of that, uh, appreciate that. Um, you  
37 were in the union for a period of time. [1:18:51] Did you attend union  
38 meetings when you were young?

39

40 Earl Nicholson Sr.: Uh, no. I, I don't remember atten-, attendin' union meetins'. [chuckle] I  
41 remember walkin' the pa-, uh, the picket line. [laughter] I think I was on –  
42 in the 5 years that I was on, uh, I worked in hourly rate 5 or 6 years, I  
43 don't know exactly. I think I worked on the-, or walked on, the picket line  
44 twice. I 'member the first time I worked on the, on the – getting' laid off.  
45 Uh, uh, I went out'n bought me a big freezer, filled it up with food,

1 cleaned it out during the, during the, uh, the uh, delayed strike and never  
2 filled it up again. [laughter]

3  
4John Fedewa: [laughter]

5  
6Doug Rademacher: [1:19:40] Are you active in your community?

7  
8Earl Nicholson Sr.: Uh, not, not, not much. Um, we don't have much goin' on in th'  
9 community. Uh, uh, uh, [car engine in background] occasionally they did  
10 have a night watch but, uh, I think they finally dropped that so, nothin' – I  
11 got summa the great-, best neighbors in the world.

12  
13Doug Rademacher: [1:20:07] What do you think about the importance of voting and do you  
14 vote in [clinical process 1:20:10]?

15  
16Earl Nicholson Sr.: I vote a, mosta da time. And, uh – well I don't care. I vote straight  
17 democratic. I've no-, I go-, have nothin' against summa the other people  
18 but, ya know, I, I can't-, we gettin' political now. Its somethin' that I can't  
19 understand how it is that people-, how dey think and the sense is that  
20 anything that has changed in Washington, if, if, if, the administration say,  
21 "We gon' cut dis out." People seem to think that dis is a great thing  
22 because [electronic vibrating] I don't have to pay this. What they don't  
23 realize is, whatever they cut in Washington, you gotta pay down here.  
24 And I just can't understand why people don't understand that. Right, now  
25 the cities, uh, – when Clinton was in, you didn't hear the arguments about  
26 schools or financin' and other stuff and just as soon as this administration  
27 get in there [car engine in background] you-, they worry about everything.  
28 You gone cut this out. Gonna do that, ya know? I categorize, uh, I ain't  
29 gonna call it a name, but I was just talkin' to my wife the other day. I  
30 categorize this administration as bein' worse than Jesse James. Jesse  
31 James robbed the rich and gave to the poor. These people rob the poor  
32 and give to the rich.

33  
34Jerri Smith: [whispering]

35  
36Doug Rademacher: Okay. Um, you've retired now. [1:21:50] Can you share what is your  
37 most appreciated benefit that you retired with?

38  
39Earl Nicholson Sr.: Well, then again, I could go back-, I went out-, retirement on a special.  
40 They offered me a special goin' out...

41  
42Doug Rademacher: [1:22:03] What is that?

43  
44Earl Nicholson Sr.: ...so. Well, a special is that they gave me moe money than, than I  
45 probably shoulda got. And, uh...

46

1Jon Fedewa: [laughter]

2

3Jerri Smith: [laughter] That's a good one. [laughter]

4

5Earl Nicholson Sr.: ...and, uh, I had to, uh, uh, in goin' out I...

6

7Jerri Smith: [coughing]

8

9Earl Nicholson Sr.: ...had to sign a letter or somethin' other that I'd ne-, I would not sue  
10 General Motors, which don't mean nothin'. And uh, um, so, uh, dat was  
11 summa, summa the ben-, benefits and also is that, that one mistake I  
12 probably made and, and I couldn'ta changed it because I went out on  
13 special on salary, but I-, maybe I shoulda throwed all that out wit da wash  
14 and went back to the hourly befoe I retire.

15

16Doug Rademacher: [1:23:00] And do share why, why do you say that? Now 'cause that needs  
17 to be understood also.

18

19Earl Nicholson Sr.: Okay. And, and I want, I want to corroborate. I retired. I went out of, uh,  
20 uh, General Motors. I got, uh, a bonus, same as you guys, for the first year  
21 \$500 for Christmas or somethin' like dat. I also got a raise, about a \$31 a  
22 month raise or somethin' like that. And that was in – I went out in '93 and  
23 I think that was about in '94. Now, I been out somewhere like 12 years or  
24 betta somthin' and I had-, I tell y-, one thing, time they was, uh, gettin' on  
25 General Motors about not givin' salary anythin' and they said that they  
26 found some money somewhere. So they gave salary...

27

28Male: [chuckle]

29

30Earl Nicholson Sr.: ...another \$500. And that was probably in '94 or '95 somewhere like that.  
31 Beside that, I have never got a penny raise from General Motors since. I  
32 been out [car engine in background] 13 years, uh, goin' on 13 years, and I  
33 have never got anythin'. These people don't give you anythin', um, the, uh,  
34 uh hourly rates, the union negotiate for, for retirees, ya know?

35

36 [paper rustling]

37

38Earl Nicholson Sr.: They get, uh, bonuses at the enda the year. They get this. They get that.  
39 And uh, we don't get nothin' but the time a day. If we don't watch it, we  
40 won't get that.

41

42Doug Rademacher: [1:24:41] And, in actuality, haven't you lost some of your benefits since  
43 you've went out? Or, had an increase in [inaudible 1:24:47]...

44

45Earl Nicholson Sr.: Well, I haven't lost any benefits. The onliest thing that I lost was that, uh-,  
46 that happened is that, that, that General Motors does pay my Medicare.



1 Uh, when I was-, I w – in 62 when I went out and I, when I went out they  
 2 wrote me a letter and said-, asked for me-, told me to join Medicare 'cause  
 3 General Motors, anything that, uh, they could do to save money, they do.  
 4 So, I, I called'm back-, "You gone pay for-," They said, "Yes." And, and  
 5 even though they paid around 90 some dollas a month, uh...

6  
 7Male: [coughing]

8  
 9Earl Nicholson Sr.: ...saves them a lotta health insurance money. But, uh, what happened is  
 10 with, with, with the hourly rates you went out-, I don't know what they  
 11 payin' now. They just-, I know they just got in, ya know, got into ya to  
 12 pay'm somethin'. But foe different Medicare, uh, health benefits, uh, for  
 13 me an' my wife, I pay about \$180 a month; almost \$2400 a year. Where, I  
 14 doubt the, uh, the hourly rates pay \$1000 a year and probably don't pay  
 15 that much prescription drugs, probably about \$5 or some number, [car  
 16 engine in background] but I, you know, I know they done got'm now.  
 17 They got ya now so. [laughter]

18  
 19Doug Rademacher: Well, now we're about at the end of the interview. Would you tell me as  
 20 we, uh, sit here today and, uh, you, you referred to over there, over your  
 21 shoulder, a couple of times during the interview, um, over there, the Fisher  
 22 Body plant is now being tore down.

23  
 24Jerri Smith: [coughing]

25  
 26Doug Rademacher: [1:26:37] Can you tell me what the means to you, and, uh, and what are  
 27 you feelin'?

28  
 29Earl Nicholson Sr.: Well, I, I, I feel that, uh, that, uh, its, uh, uh, I don't know how to put it.

30  
 31 [paper rustling]

32  
 33Earl Nicholson Sr.: I feel that this, uh, somethin' that had to be. Ya know? In this modern day  
 34 and time, this-, its sad to see it go. Ya know? But in these modern days  
 35 and time, any [manufacturer 1:27:11] concern, if he don't keep up wit da  
 36 time, he's goin' under. And, uh, the Fisher Body Plant have outlived its  
 37 life. And, uh, its sad to see it go but you got to move on wit da time.

38  
 39Doug Rademacher: Okay, um, we've been very blessed, General Motors has decided to invest  
 40 in, uh, Lansing again, with a brand-new delta facility. [1:27:42] Um, what  
 41 do you tell, the people that listen or read this at Michigan State, what do  
 42 you tell them about [ car engine in background] workin' for General  
 43 Motors and the future? Do ya have any words of wisdom?

44

1Earl Nicholson Sr.: I, uh, the thing I have with the, with General Motors, workin' at General  
2Motors for 'round 30 years. General Motors have givin' me a really good  
3way of life and that ain't the way I'd like to phrase it but...

4  
5[creaking]

6  
7Earl Nicholson Sr.: ...ya know, they paid you well. They, they, you had the benefits and, uh,  
8no matter what you think about General Motors and whatever else, it have  
9really been a wonderful place to work. Uh, ye-, I would, I would l-, I  
10hesitate to say this but I would – I'll say it to give you how I feel. When I  
11first retired, I had a bad case of [inaudible 1:28:51] and as I start drivin' in  
12this area, I turned and go the other way. And then one day somethin' hit  
13me and it says, "Earl, Fisher Body, General Motors was good to you.  
14They took care of you, your family, your so-." And I s-, started thinkin' to  
15myself is that General Motors, Fisher Body, was a wonderful place to  
16work.

17  
18[car engine in background]

19  
20Doug Rademacher: That was a excellent interview. I wanna thank you for your time.  
21[1:29:31] Is there anything I didn't ask you that you'd like to share?

22  
23Earl Nicholson Sr.: I don't think I, I, I don't think-, the onliest thing I think you didn't ask me is  
24what-, how ol' my wife was. [laughter]

25  
26Jerri Smith: [laughter]

27  
28John Fedewa: [laughter]

29  
30Cheryl McQuaid: [laughter]

31  
32Doug Rademacher: [laughter] And you wouldn't tell me that anyway 'cause she, she'd  
33[inaudible 1:29:42]...

34  
35Earl Nicholson Sr: She would...

36  
37Jerri Smith: [laughter]

38  
39Cheryl McQuaid: [Inaudible 1:29:45]

40  
41Earl Nicholson Sr.: She would...

42  
43John Fedewa: Thank you.

44  
45Jerri Smith: Thank you.

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