

1 **MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY – SHAWN NICHOLSON**
2 **SCOTT PENNINGTON DISCUSSES THE WORK OF MATRIX ABOUT THE UNITED**
3 **AUTO WORKERS LOCAL 602/GENERAL MOTORS ORAL HISTORY PROJECT**
4

5
6 [recorder clicking]
7

8Doreen Howard: Hi. This is Doreen Howard. It is [clanking] Friday, October 21, 2005. We
9 are at the Michigan State University auditorium. [tsk] And we will be
10 interviewing S-...

11
12Female: Scott...

13
14Doreen Howard: ...Scott...

15
16Scott Pennington: Scott Pennington.

17
18Doreen Howard: ...Pennington. [tsk] Um, eh, we will go around the room and everyone can
19 introduce themselves and, um, Scott, when it gets to you, if you could, um,
20 say your name and s-, please spell your last name for the record...
21 [clanking]
22

23Scott Pennington: Sure.

24
25Doreen Howard: ...and, and your address, please, for the record [inaudible 0:38].
26

27Linda Johnson: I'm [clanking] Linda Johnson.

28
29Doug Rademacher: Doug Rademacher.

30
31Michael Flemming: I'm Mike Flemming.

32
33John Fedewa: [cough] Excuse me. John Fedewa.

34
35Marilyn Coulter: And Marilyn Coulter.

36
37Doreen Howard: [Inaudible 0:46].
38

39Scott Pennington: And I'm Scott Pennington, P-E-N-N-I-N-G-T-O-N. Uh, office address is
40 310 Auditorium, Michigan State.

41
42Doreen Howard: [Inaudible 0:55]. Um, [papers rustling] [clicking] Scott, you're with the
43 MATRIX Corporation.
44

45Scott Pennington: Right.
46

1Doreen Howard: [1:04] Can you tell me when did you start working for the company and a
2 little bit of background on MATRIX?
3

4Scott Pennington: I've been here – [clanking] gosh – so let me think. I've been in Michigan 9
5 winters and I've been here [clanking] 7 of'm, so, um, I started – when we
6 started, it was a small place with about 4 or 5 of us and, uh, we only had,
7 what, the first 2 floors here. Well, excuse me, the fourth and – third and
8 fourth floor. Uh, we refer to'm as floor 1 and 2 [crinkling] 'cause we don't
9 like to think about all the stairs we climb every day. [laughter]
10

11Earl Nicholson: You said you've, um, been here 9 winters. [1:42] Where'd ya, where'd
12 you originate [inaudible 1:43]?
13

14Scott Pennington: Uh, the Bronx.
15

16Doreen Howard: Wow.
17

18Earl Nicholson: [1:46] And would you explain where [laughter] that might be? [laughter]
19 The Bronx.
20

21Scott Pennington: Uh, rural South Carolina. Uh, it's a standing joke. Uh, [tsk] uh, rural South
22 Carolina, a farming community called Allendale, about a 15-minute
23 horseback ride from Savannah River.
24

25Earl Nicholson: Mm-hm. [2:02] Uh, do you have any children?
26

27Scott Pennington: No. [crinkling] No.
28

29Earl Nicholson: [2:05] Are you married?
30

31Scott Pennington: Nope.
32

33Doreen Howard: Mm-hm. Okay. [crinkling] [2:08] Uh, what's your formal education?
34

35Scott Pennington: [tsk] Uh, did my undergraduate work at Citadel. It's a military school in
36 South Carolina... [papers rustling]
37

38Doreen Howard: [Hm 2:14].
39

40Scott Pennington: ...and my graduate work at University of South Carolina and [tapping]
41 Citadel.
42

43Earl Nicholson: [tsk] Sounds like a very interesting place. [2:22] The Citadel, that is a,
44 [clicking] um, an all [clinking] male facility if I'm not mistaken?
45

1 Scott Pennington: It was when I went to school there. Right. Um, [clanking] they've since
2 adjusted the school's policy to match the state laws as they should have, I
3 think, a long time ago [clanking] but that makes me a little different
4 [papers rustling] than much of my, my graduating friends. But, uh, yeah, it
5 was an interesting place to go to school.
6

7 Doreen Howard: [2:47] What was your degree in?
8

9 Scott Pennington: English literature.
10

11 Doreen Howard: English [background noises] literature.
12

13 Scott Pennington: Which has a lot to do with, uh, what I do now. [laughter] [tapping]
14

15 Doreen Howard: Very common amongst most people that graduate. They tend not to be
16 employed in anything they graduated. [laughter]
17

18 Scott Pennington: I think you're right, yeah. [laughter]
19

20 Doreen Howard: Yeah.
21

22 Scott Pennington: Yeah.
23

24 Doug Rademacher: [3:06] Scott, did you follow up the Citadel with any [papers rustling]
25 military background?
26

27 Scott Pennington: No. Um, [clicking] it's a state school without official federal ties. There's
28 only ROTC programs and everybody has to go through 8 semesters of
29 ROTC but you don't have to go to the military when you finish. And, uh, I
30 had flirted with the navy. I did 2 years of training to go to submarines
31 and...
32

33 Doreen Howard: [Hm 3:29].
34

35 Scott Pennington: ...uh, [tsk] in the end just decided I didn't wanna float around underwater
36 for 6 months [background noises] outta every year. [laughter]
37

38 Doug Rademacher: [3:35] Would you please share your age?
39

40 Scott Pennington: Oh, I'm 35.
41

42 Female: Oh, [inaudible 3:39]. [background noises]
43

44 Doreen Howard: [3:42] So what does MATRIX do? [engine humming]
45

1 Scott Pennington: We are, um, [tsk] the Center for Humane Arts, Letters, Social Sciences,
2 uh, online, which means that we work with faculty and humanities,
3 traditionally nontechnical-type, [background noises] um, [tsk], research
4 and studies to bring both material from that, uh, academic background
5 [background noises] online for use, uh, [thumping] and also to help
6 [clanking] folks who are in that line of academia, uh, better make use of
7 the internet and internet resources. Uh, and that encompasses a lotta
8 things. We do everything from data collection, um, with, uh, oral history.
9 Uh, we do a lotta video history. Uh, [tsk] uh, [engine humming] we also
10 work with, um – leaving [clanking] this afternoon, I'll be in Ghana in West
11 Africa for, uh, 8 or 9 days and then Senegal, uh, for 10 or 12 days. And
12 we've been working out there for 4 or 5 years now, particularly in Senegal.
13
14 Uh, it used to be the capitol of French West Africa, uh, located in Saint-
15 Louis and then in Dakar, so they have all the archives. Um, [squeaking]
16 [tsk] and we're working the archives – what was the French West Africa
17 Archive, which is now the Archives of Senegal, uh, in preservation. We
18 have some digitization projects going on there and we're, uh, hoping to get
19 [engine humming] the same sorta thing started in Ghana. [engine
20 humming] Uh, we just got a grant called the Diversity Intolerance of Islam
21 and Christianity, uh, where we're studying how – Senegal is about 90
22 percent Muslim and 7 or 8 percent Christian and the rest is sort of
23 traditional religions and Ghana is almost the opposite. And it's been
24 peaceful communities for as long as you can stretch back and, uh, we're
25 studying why these communities get along so well.
26
27 Doreen Howard: [Hm 5:36].
28
29 Doug Rademacher: Scott, I wanna take you back for a moment. [background noises] [5:38]
30 Would you tell me what brought you to Michigan State University and
31 would you share your [thumping] first day arriving here on campus?
32 [clanking]
33
34 Scott Pennington: Uh, yeah, the Writing Center – right across the street in Wesley Hall there,
35 I came up to work at the Writing Center and, uh, [tsk] [inaudible 5:52]
36 moved to Michigan. Man, [while 5:54] I drove that beat-up Penske van,
37 um, flat tire coming through the mountains of Kentucky. It was a great trip
38 up. [laughter] Um, [inaudible 6:04] some of the folks in the Writing
39 Center came over and helped me move in. And, um, [engine humming] I
40 had [laughter] – I fixed barbeque and coleslaw for everybody that came
41 over to help [laughter] and I thought well it's probably the end of my
42 barbeque sauce for a while. It turns out y'all know how to make it too,
43 [tapping] so it's all right. [laughter]
44
45 Earl Nicholson: So it sounds as though [clanking] you came in [throat clearing] a warmer
46 [thumping] time of the year. [6:25] What [inaudible 6:26]?

1
2 Scott Pennington: Oh, yeah, I did. I came up, [throat clearing] uh, end of May or early June
3 [inaudible 6:29].
4
5 Earl Nicholson: [6:29] What was it like when you got to December?
6
7 Scott Pennington: I froze. [laughter] I kept buying progressively larger and heavier coats.
8 Yeah. [laughter] Yeah, eh, w-, [cause 6:38] South Carolina, a, a winter
9 coat is like a, um, [tapping] uh, like a leather jacket. You know? No
10 [thumping] hat, gloves, scarf, any of that mess, so [inaudible 6:48]. You
11 know, golf is a year-round sport down there, [clanking] so. Uh, [inaudible
12 6:53] so I still cheat with a 4-wheel drive vehicle. [laughter]
13
14 Doug Rademacher: No. That's considered intelligence in this state.
15
16 Scott Pennington: Right. Yeah. Okay. [laughter] Yep.
17
18 Doreen Howard: [7:06] W-, what is the relationship between MATRIX [clinking] and
19 [engine humming] Michigan State University? [7:11] Are you a
20 contractor?
21
22 Scott Pennington: We are a...
23
24 Doreen Howard: [7:15] [Inaudible 7:15] university or what's the connection?
25
26 Scott Pennington: Yeah. It's an interesting relationship. Uh, [tapping] a lotta universities do
27 this in that we're an independent research center...
28
29 Doreen Howard: [Inaudible 7:23].
30
31 Scott Pennington: ...which means we get some of our funding from the university but the
32 majority comes from our ability to, to secure grant work. Um, so we do a
33 lot of, uh – I mean Michigan State is a, uh, land grant university, so one of
34 its main missions is outreach.
35
36 Doreen Howard: [Inaudible 7:41].
37
38 Scott Pennington: Um, [tsk] and that gels perfectly with our mission to, uh, to work off
39 campus, um, helping to bring resources on [thumping] on campus. Um, so
40 we're independent from the university in some ways in that we can sort of
41 set our own research agenda, um, but we're also very dependent on the
42 university for faculty, for...
43
44 Female: [Inaudible 7:59].
45

1 Scott Pennington: ...you know, a building, [tapping] um, so it, it makes for a nice
2 relationship.
3

4 Doug Rademacher: Scott, would you share – you – you’ve heard this morning what the Fisher
5 Historical Preservation Project is. [8:12] What's your thought of that,
6 [clinking] just, uh, [clanking] for the record? [tapping]
7

8 Scott Pennington: Um, my thought is, is, uh, generally what it is in most of these situations
9 and that it's probably something in a few years you're gonna be really,
10 really glad you did 'cause as folks start to fan out and [clanking] move into
11 different jobs and communities, you lose a sense of cohesion. Right? And
12 if you can grab that early on, uh, when these [tapping] memories are fresh
13 and when people are excited to talk about it, it's a fantastic thing to get
14 down on the record. The Fisher Body Plant, I, uh – I can tell you all a
15 funny story. [8:44] Did everybody in here work for Fisher? [8:46] All
16 y'all?
17

18 Marilyn Coulter: Everyone works for Fisher. [clanking]
19

20 Scott Pennington: Uh, I grew u-, [throat clearing] I told you I grew up in [Inaudible 8:48],
21 South Carolina, [thumping] and, uh, all Chevy pickups and they all had
22 [tapping] that carriage [stamped] [inaudible 8:56] and as a kid, eh, I don't,
23 I don't remember, uh, why I was so fascinated by it but I always wanted
24 one of those as a toy, uh, from that – [laughter] you know, the thing they
25 stamp [tapping] in the, in the bottom...
26

27 Male: Body...
28

29 Scott Pennington: ...on the door.
30

31 Female: Coach.
32

33 Male: Body by Fisher.
34

35 Scott Pennington: Right. Yeah. [throat clearing] Exactly. Body by Fisher.
36

37 Female: [Inaudible 9:10].
38

39 Scott Pennington: [9:10] And, um, [clinking] they're the carriage, right?
40

41 Doreen Howard: Yep.
42

43 Scott Pennington: Yeah.
44

45 Female: Mm-hm.
46

1 Scott Pennington: Yeah. Exactly. That's it. [papers rustling] [tapping] And, um...
2
3 Female: [Inaudible 9:17].
4
5 Scott Pennington: ...so it's, uh, it's – I, I – [tapping] w-, you know, when Doug called, it's
6 nice to be working with y'all. I appreciate the opportunity.
7
8 Female: [Yeah 9:25].
9
10 Doug Rademacher: Well, for your information, it's changed names many times but it's always
11 Fisher...
12
13 Female: Fisher Body.
14
15 Doug Rademacher: ...Body [throat clearing] [inaudible 9:30] Fisher to us also.
16
17 Female: [Yeah 9:31].
18
19 Earl Nicholson: Oh, certainly. And, uh, Scott, it's been a wonderful, uh, interview with
20 you. [9:36] Uh, is there anything that you'd like to, uh, talk about MSU or,
21 or g-, uh, you know, eh, are you into the sports here at all?
22
23 Scott Pennington: I'm starting to be a little bit. Yeah. I still miss Clemson but, um...
24 [laughter]
25
26 Earl Nicholson: [9:49] So you're beginning to become more green and white every day,
27 [huh 9:51]?
28
29 Scott Pennington: Exactly.
30
31 Earl Nicholson: [Okay 9:52].
32
33 Scott Pennington: Exactly. I'm getting a little more into Big 10.
34
35 Earl Nicholson: [Inaudible 9:54]. [laughter] Well we thank you.
36
37 Scott Pennington: Thank you.
38
39 Marilyn Coulter: [Hm 9:58], [tapping] thank you.
40
41 Doug Rademacher: Thanks very much, Scott.
42
43 Female: [Inaudible 9:59].
44
45 Marilyn Coulter: Thank you for coming. [throat clearing] [recorder clicking]
46

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2/10