

**Thomas Pizzo discusses his career as a production worker and  
UAW member at the Fisher Body plant in Lansing, MI**

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2  
3  
4  
5 Marilyn Coulter: [recorder clicking] [background movement] Um, today is October 31st,  
6 [background movement] Monday at 10:15. We're the Fisher Body  
7 Historical Team. Today we'll be interviewing Mr. Tom Pizzo. Uh,  
8 [background noises] before we get started, we'll say the names of the other  
9 interviewers. Um, my name is Marilyn Coulter.  
10  
11 John Fedewa: John Fedewa.  
12  
13 Doug Rademacher: Doug Rademacher.  
14  
15 Marilyn Coulter: And today we're here with Tom [papers rustling] Pizzo. [0:25] Tom, can  
16 you please, um, say and spell your name for us, please?  
17  
18 Thomas Pizzo: Thomas Pizzo, P-I-Z-Z-O.  
19  
20 Marilyn Coulter: [0:31] And your address, please?  
21  
22 Thomas Pizzo: 1705 South Genesee Drive.  
23  
24 Marilyn Coulter: And naturally, you're a male. [0:39] Uh, oh, Genesee's in Lansing, correct?  
25  
26 Thomas Pizzo: Yes.  
27  
28 Marilyn Coulter: [0:43] And your marital status?  
29  
30 Thomas Pizzo: Uh, widower.  
31  
32 Marilyn Coulter: You're a widower, okay. [tapping] [0:47] And do you have any children?  
33 [tapping]  
34  
35 Thomas Pizzo: Uh, 3.  
36  
37 Marilyn Coulter: 3? [tapping] [0:52] Boys? Girls?  
38  
39 Thomas Pizzo: Uh, 2 boys and a girl.  
40  
41 Marilyn Coulter: Alright.  
42  
43 Thomas Pizzo: I had another boy but he drowned up north, so.  
44  
45 Marilyn Coulter: Okay. [1:00] And, um, your education level?  
46

1 Thomas Pizzo: Uh, 2 years a college. [background movement] Community college.  
2 [background movement] But...  
3  
4 Marilyn Coulter: Can you.  
5  
6 Thomas Pizzo: ...no graduate. [background movement]  
7  
8 Marilyn Coulter: [1:09] Oh was there anything in pacific that you studied?  
9  
10 Thomas Pizzo: Industrial management.  
11  
12 Marilyn Coulter: Oh. [tapping] Okay, and [tapping] military service? [tapping]  
13  
14 Thomas Pizzo: Uh, [chair squeaking] 12 years U.S. Army.  
15  
16 Marilyn Coulter: Oh, 12 years? Oh. [tapping] [1:26] And, um, what was your rank in arm-, in  
17 your 12 years?  
18  
19 Thomas Pizzo: Sergeant.  
20  
21 Marilyn Coulter: Sergeant. [tapping] Oh, okay. [1:32] And, uh, now, Pizzo, does that mean  
22 you're of Italian descent?  
23  
24 Thomas Pizzo: Uh, Italian, Sicilian primarily. Primarily Sicilian.  
25  
26 Marilyn Coulter: Sicilian. Oh, okay. Great. [1:41] Well, Tom, can you tell us, um, what date  
27 did you hire in?  
28  
29 Thomas Pizzo: [coughing] 9/14/70. [tapping]  
30  
31 Marilyn Coulter: So, um, [tapping] can you tell us, [tapping] uh, what department you hired in  
32 at? [tapping]  
33  
34 Thomas Pizzo: Uh, Material Control.  
35  
36 Marilyn Coulter: Material Control. [tapping] [1:55] Can you tell us what that first day was  
37 like?  
38  
39 Thomas Pizzo: [background movement] [chair squeaking] Yeah. Uh, I'd had the UAW  
40 experience before, so when I hired in, [tapping] uh, I was already a union  
41 member [tapping] and, [papers rustling] uh, [tapping] they told me that I  
42 wouldn't be workin' very long that day; they were goin' on strike, um,  
43 [tapping] that night. That's when we out for 30 and out. [tapping] And, uh,  
44 [tapping] all I had to do was reinstate myself by paying my initiation  
45 [tapping] down at the Union Hall [papers rustling] and then, uh, [papers  
46 rustling] [throat clearing] so I did that [papers rustling] and [papers rustling]

1 [inaudible 2:38] workin' up on the line, a feed-, and there's a line feeder,  
2 [tapping] uh, putting in, uh, headliners into the headliner [throat clearing]  
3 rack. [tapping] And, uh, we ran out. [tapping] Uh, I didn't know what to do.  
4  
5 Meanwhile, they shut the line down, [tapping] and my uncle happened to be  
6 General Foreman up there [background movement] at the time, [Joe Pizzo  
7 3:06] [background movement], and, uh, [tapping] he came down and tried to  
8 give me the riot act and cuss me up one side and down the other, and I says,  
9 "Are you done?" and I proceeded to lay into him with the same language he  
10 used on me [tapping] and, uh, [tapping] by that time, my supervisor got up  
11 there and say, uh, [tapping] "What do ya mean ya stopped the line for him?  
12 [tapping] We're not even running that color anymore." [tapping] I was set  
13 up. [laughing] [tapping]  
14  
15 After that, though, I never had any problems with any a the foreman.  
16 [tapping] And, uh, [tapping] [background movement] for those that know  
17 me, uh, [tapping] uh, through the past in the Plant and everything, [papers  
18 rustling] uh, [background movement] [coughing] I showed up every day, but  
19 I wasn't always here to work; I was here to have a good time, [tapping] and  
20 I made the, eh, the 30 years I was on the line, I made the most of the  
21 [tapping] having fun [tapping] and making fun [tapping] for everybody else  
22 around me. [tapping] Uh, go ahead. Say, ask me somethin'.  
23  
24 Marilyn Coulter: [4:19] N-, what I wanted to ask you is that first of all you said you had the  
25 UAW experience before so did, were you hired in here before or were you at  
26 another plant?  
27  
28 Thomas Pizzo: I was here before but I was, uh, [tapping] fired for, uh, [tapping] fighting.  
29 [tapping]  
30  
31 Marilyn Coulter: Okay. And how long.  
32  
33 Thomas Pizzo: And I had to [throat clearing] go out on probation for a year and half before  
34 they'd hire me back in, [tapping] [background movement] and when they  
35 hired me back in, that's the night we went on strike.  
36  
37 Marilyn Coulter: [4:45] So the first time [inaudible 4:44] was in '68?  
38  
39 Thomas Pizzo: Yeah, I was, uh – [tapping] what was I doing then? Oh, I was working in  
40 the, uh, Cushion Room. [tapping]  
41  
42 Marilyn Coulter: Oh.  
43  
44 Thomas Pizzo: The old Cushion Room when it was here. [tapping]  
45  
46 Marilyn Coulter: [4:57] How long had you worked in there?

1  
2 Thomas Pizzo: [writing] Less than 90 days.  
3  
4 Marilyn Coulter: Less than 90 [background movement] days? [5:03] And so then you went  
5 out and then you got rehired [tapping] in the '70s?  
6  
7 Thomas Pizzo: Yes.  
8  
9 Marilyn Coulter: Okay. [tapping] [5:07] And so, now what was it like to come in and the very  
10 day that you [tapping] came in was the same day [tapping] that they were  
11 gonna go out and strike? [tapping]  
12  
13 Thomas Pizzo: It was like coming in on a vacation. I, uh, [tapping] had been working in a,  
14 uh, [tapping] well, for a lawn and garden company, [tapping] [throat  
15 clearing] and, uh, [tapping] I knew they were goin' on strike, so I didn't –  
16 long as you're callin' me into work, I'm comin' in that day. [tapping] But I  
17 hadn't quite my other job yet. [tapping] So between pullin' picket duty, um,  
18 [tapping] back in '70, [tapping] and I had a pickup truck, so I, uh, was on  
19 the night shift and we hauled, uh, [tapping] the coffee urns and the, uh,  
20 donuts around to various, uh, sites during the night. [tapping] [background  
21 noises] [tapping]  
22  
23 Marilyn Coulter: [background noises] Okay.  
24  
25 Thomas Pizzo: [throat clearing] And, uh, [tapping] and then after picket duty, I went to do  
26 my day job, and, uh, I told them, [background movement] I said, "As soon  
27 as this strike is over," I says, "that'll be my last day." [tapping]  
28  
29 Marilyn Coulter: Now, you said for 30 and out. For those people who don't [tapping] know  
30 what 30 is out is, could you please [tapping] explain that? [tapping]  
31  
32 Thomas Pizzo: 30 and out is 30 years, uh, you get 30 years' seniority in the Plant, you're  
33 eligible to retire.  
34  
35 Marilyn Coulter: Mm.  
36  
37 Thomas Pizzo: And, uh, then they said ya had to have, uh, [tapping] from there they went to  
38 the point system; [tapping] [background conversation] you got so many  
39 years' seniority, [tapping] you did your years and you get points for those  
40 other years or somethin'. I don't know how the point system works, [throat  
41 clearing] but [tapping] you had to have 80 points to return. [throat clearing]  
42 [coughing] Yeah, and I got my 80 points about the same time I got my 30  
43 years in, so. [tapping]  
44  
45 Marilyn Coulter: Okay. [6:55] So, um, do you [tapping] remember how long the strike was?  
46

1 Thomas Pizzo: Pardon?  
2  
3 Marilyn Coulter: Do you remember how long the [tapping] strike was? [tapping]  
4  
5 Thomas Pizzo: [tapping] Uh, I think it was 79 days.  
6  
7 Marilyn Coulter: 79 [tapping] days. [tapping] Okay. [tapping] [7:07] Um, so, [tapping] eh,  
8 you were out for your 79 days and then you came [papers rustling] back in  
9 and you hired in? [tapping]  
10  
11 Thomas Pizzo: Uh, I got back and I got, uh, a line job. Uh, [tapping] well the only reason I  
12 got on Material my first night back was they didn't have any place else to  
13 put me, [tapping] but when I came back off the strike there, I got put into  
14 the, uh, [tapping] working for [Rocky Rogerman 7:35] [tapping] installing,  
15 uh, third seat boxes in the old, uh, Vista Cruiser station wagons. [tapping]  
16 And then I had to put in the, uh, [tapping] trim on the, uh, Skylights in the  
17 back. [tapping] Well, I did that job for about 2 years, [tapping] and then I  
18 did other, then I worked all the way down the line [tapping] to I ended up on  
19 Utility, [tapping] but that took me about 4 years to get there.  
20  
21 Marilyn Coulter: [8:06] And what is Utility?  
22  
23 Thomas Pizzo: Utility is where you can do every job in the Department [tapping] and also  
24 you can, uh, [background movement] [tapping] if you're low on the  
25 seniority list on Utility, you get shipped out to other pe-, departments that  
26 need help [tapping] and you're supposed to be able to learn that job within 3  
27 [tapping] working jobs of, uh, [coughing] productions until you can do it by  
28 yourself. [tapping] [coughing]  
29  
30 Marilyn Coulter: [8:37] Tommy, you said you didn't come here to work; you came here to  
31 have fun. You wanna explain that to me? [tapping]  
32  
33 Thomas Pizzo: Well, I had a g-, ya know, I had a goal in life, uh, that I, that I was  
34 predisposed with [tapping] that, uh, [tapping] I wanted to make sure that, uh,  
35 [tapping] I tried to make people laugh either with me or at me; make one  
36 person smile per day. [tapping] And, uh, [tapping] I think in the 30 years I  
37 worked in here, [tapping] I didn't have one day that was a failure..  
38  
39 Marilyn Coulter: [tapping] Mm. So you.  
40  
41 Thomas Pizzo: ...and so, in turn [background movement] everything was, uh, [tapping]  
42 [background movement] ya had to have a great sense a humor and [tapping]  
43 I feel that every day I built up on that humor here, [tapping] at my expense  
44 or at the expense of others who were at the end of my wrath, [tapping] and,  
45 uh, [tapping] few times I was told that I was stepping over the line, [tapping]  
46 and, uh, Marilyn can attest to that. What I did one day, came up with a song

1 that, uh, stepped over the line with'r, [tapping] and, uh, the people that were  
2 around me that heard that song at that day knew at that point that I'd stepped  
3 over the line, [background movement] [tapping] and I didn't cross that line  
4 again.  
5  
6 Marilyn Coulter: Nope, ya didn't. [tapping]  
7  
8 Thomas Pizzo: But, uh. [tapping]  
9  
10 Marilyn Coulter: [10:13] What are some a the other kind of pranks that you might've seen  
11 [tapping] or, or been a part of when you first hired in? [tapping] Or while  
12 you worked here?  
13  
14 Thomas Pizzo: Pranks? [tapping]  
15  
16 Marilyn Coulter: You didn't pull any pranks?  
17  
18 Thomas Pizzo: Mm, I don't really understand the question, I guess, uh. [background  
19 movement]  
20  
21 Marilyn Coulter: Did you pull any [throat clearing] jokes? Were there any types of things that  
22 said that you did to pass the time? Outside of making improper song with  
23 people?  
24  
25 Thomas Pizzo: No, [laughter] not really. I, uh, [coughing] had a few, towards the end there I  
26 had, uh, [coughing] this one song that I danced to, and, uh, I had one a the  
27 girls say that, uh, she was, uh, sexually offended by it. [tapping] And that's  
28 where I first got my, uh, first reprimand for sexual harassment. [tapping]  
29 Everybody else...  
30  
31 Marilyn Coulter: Mm.  
32  
33 Thomas Pizzo: ...thought it was funny. [tapping] This was the same woman that brought,  
34 uh, [tapping] [throat clearing] [tapping] pictures of her, uh, [tapping]  
35 daughter from the time she was born until she was 18 years old [tapping] on  
36 a bearskin rug, nude, and, uh, thought nothing about that, [tapping] but my  
37 gyrating hips, uh, [tapping] she, uh, found offensive. [papers rustling]  
38 [tapping]  
39  
40 Marilyn Coulter: [11:35] Okay, um, [tapping] now, [tapping] ha-, [tapping] what department  
41 did you work in? [tapping]  
42  
43 Thomas Pizzo: Uh, I started out, like I say, in, uh, Material. [tapping] When I came back  
44 and worked in, uh, [background movement] Trim, [tapping] and, uh, after  
45 Trim, [tapping] I went on to the Cushion Room [background movement]  
46 [tapping] and then from the Cushion Room I went back, uh, at the end of

1 another strike I came back [tapping] and they put me in the Body Shop.  
2 [tapping] I was out there for, uh, 89 days [tapping] and they felt they had  
3 enough employees come back that they put me back up on Trim again,  
4 [tapping] uh, [tapping] mainly 'cause my supervisor up there wasn't  
5 releasin' me back to the Body Shop so I could stay there. [tapping] Uh.  
6

7Marilyn Coulter: [12:32] S-, so you pretty much worked in every department with the  
8 exception [tapping] of Paint? [background noises]  
9

10Thomas Pizzo: I worked in Paint for, uh, [throat clearing] [background noises] had a job  
11 come open at the end a the line [tapping] and the inspector [tapping] and I  
12 worked up there for, uh, [tapping] about 6 weeks and I started having, uh,  
13 [tapping] lung problems, uh, breathing...  
14

15Marilyn Coulter: [tapping] Hm.  
16

17Thomas Pizzo: ...and I got a permanent restriction out of, uh, Paint Department from the  
18 Medical Department. Uh, [tapping] [throat clearing] due to respiratory  
19 reasons, I couldn't, uh, [tapping] handle the paint fumes. [tapping]  
20

21Marilyn Coulter: [tapping] [13:10] Out of all those departments that you worked, was there  
22 one that you preferred [tapping] over the other? [tapping]  
23

24Thomas Pizzo: Oh, Quality Control.  
25

26Marilyn Coulter: [13:20] What's Quality Control?  
27

28Thomas Pizzo: Quality Control is the [tapping] cream a the crop; uh, a run of all the jobs  
29 they have over there. [tapping]  
30

31Marilyn Coulter: [13:29] What'd you do as part of Quality Control?  
32

33Thomas Pizzo: You, uh, [papers rustling] basically check everybody else's work for, uh,  
34 [tapping] jobs that are done wrong, uh, so that by the time the job gets at the  
35 end a the line, [tapping] all the repairs are made on it that need to be,  
36 [tapping] all the wrong parts are, uh, [tapping] replaced. [tapping] And, uh, I  
37 know from working on the line prior to this job, [tapping] it was not that  
38 hard to make a mistake sometimes. Uh, sometimes [tapping] you didn't  
39 realize it and they had matrixes on the side a the car where you wrote up  
40 where you did somethin' wrong. [tapping] Uh, [tapping] usually on the t-  
41 on the [tapping] Quality Control, we found an error [throat clearing] and like  
42 the wrong piece a stock or [tapping] a shortage, you'd notify that department  
43 [tapping] that you got job so-and-so goin' down the line with the wrong  
44 part, [tapping] so to give their Utility and Repair people a chance to get it  
45 before it got to the end a the line. [tapping] And, uh, [tapping] I looked as,  
46 uh, an inspector as part a my job was to [writing] not [tapping] find fault

1 with the worker on the line but to help him [tapping] [coughing] in case he  
2 didn't make a mistake.  
3  
4 Marilyn Coulter: Mm-hm.  
5  
6 Thomas Pizzo: And, uh, [tapping] there I got, I was on the job, and I hired in on that job as  
7 on Utility [tapping] where I had to learn all the different, uh, u-, uh, Quality  
8 Control stations in the Plant. [tapping] And, uh, if we had enough extra  
9 people on a certain day, [tapping] ya got to go out and, uh, refamiliarize  
10 yourself with the different jobs of the, [tapping] your area. [tapping] And  
11 that was by, uh, going on and, uh, meeting the people that I used to work  
12 with on the line [tapping] where I'd have time to stand around and talk to'm.  
13 [tapping] And my boss'd come walking by sometime and say, "What are  
14 you doing?" I said, "Well, I'm makin' sure they're doin' the job right."  
15 [tapping] Part a my job, you know. [tapping] He'd say, "Okay, keep up the  
16 good work." [laughter] [tapping]  
17  
18 And, uh, [tapping] there were times when, uh, [tapping] I had no problem  
19 with going down on the line, [background movement] uh, in the different  
20 inspection stations and sayin' to somebody, uh, [tapping] "Here, go take an  
21 extra 5-minute break or somethin; I'll do your job." [tapping] And later on,  
22 later on when they were gone doing, [tapping] during the break they didn't  
23 ask for, [tapping] I was also getting hands-on experience on their job, so  
24 [tapping] that when I, if I ever did have to be called to any job, I could do it  
25 without [tapping] having to have a break-in time. [tapping]  
26  
27 Marilyn Coulter: Mm. [16:29] So, [tapping] um, [tapping] because you worked here and you  
28 [tapping] saw and you worked in so many different places here, [tapping]  
29 how has the population changed [tapping] in terms of havin' female  
30 [tapping] and gender [tapping] or race [tapping] here in the workplace? Has  
31 it changed a lot? [tapping] From when you first hired in?  
32  
33 Thomas Pizzo: Well, when I first hired in, uh, [background movement] [tapping] I was very  
34 good with ethnic, uh, [background movement] jabs, [tapping] uh, [tapping]  
35 black and white, Mexican, [tapping] um, [tapping] just different things I'd  
36 call a person, uh, whether they were Mexican or [tapping] a color, a person  
37 of color. Um, [tapping] I got away with it...  
38  
39 Marilyn Coulter: [tapping] [17:17] Did you get...  
40  
41 Thomas Pizzo: ...and.  
42  
43 Marilyn Coulter: ...along with the other people?  
44  
45 Thomas Pizzo: Huh?  
46



1 Marilyn Coulter: Did you get along with the other people? [tapping]  
2  
3 Thomas Pizzo: Oh yeah. I mean, I considered'm friends, eh. [tapping]  
4  
5 Marilyn Coulter: [tapping] [tapping] Mm.  
6  
7 Thomas Pizzo: N-, nothing was meant in, uh, [tapping] as a discrimination type a thing; it  
8 was just ethnic, uh, fun.  
9  
10 Marilyn Coulter: Mm.  
11  
12 Thomas Pizzo: And, uh, [tapping] back in nineteen [tapping] eighty – [tapping] I wanna say  
13 1990, 1995, [tapping] something happened in the workplace that, uh,  
14 [tapping] and it was an overnight type a thing where [tapping] you started  
15 getting people crying sexual harassment, [tapping] and, uh, [tapping] things  
16 I used to say to people were [tapping] put down as sexual harassment. I just  
17 had a hard time coping with that, uh.  
18  
19 Marilyn Coulter: [18:21] Where there [tapping] many women in the '70s working here when  
20 you hired in?  
21  
22 Thomas Pizzo: [tapping] I really don't know, uh, the ratio, uh, when I hired in.  
23  
24 Marilyn Coulter: [18:32] Do, do you, did you feel that...  
25  
26 Thomas Pizzo: Um.  
27  
28 Marilyn Coulter: ...maybe that the more women who started working here, the more things  
29 needed to change?  
30  
31 Thomas Pizzo: I don't feel qualified to answer that question.  
32  
33 Marilyn Coulter: Okay. That's fine.  
34  
35 Thomas Pizzo: Um, [tapping] and I don't, like I say, it was in the latter part of my  
36 employment here that, uh, [tapping] they came up with sexual harassment  
37 and, uh, [tapping] it always came to the people like me who just had to  
38 watch where we were putting our toes [tapping] and, uh, [tapping] finding it  
39 better to keep one's mouth shut rather than saying what we were thinking,  
40 and [tapping] it became harder to make one person smile a day. [tapping]  
41 And when I had a chance to [tapping] retire at the age of, uh, [tapping] 62,  
42 [tapping] [coughing] I took it. Never been sorry for it since, but [tapping]  
43 that was about 9 months shy of having a full 30 years in, so.  
44  
45 Marilyn Coulter: Mm-hm. [tapping]  
46

1 Thomas Pizzo: There was no overtime, looking forward to any no overtime but the time  
2 and, uh, [tapping] big difference in, uh, loss of pay wasn't that great, so  
3 [tapping] I, uh, retired.  
4

5 Marilyn Coulter: [19:57] What year, what day was, [tapping] what sh-, what day was your  
6 last day a working here? [tapping]  
7

8 Thomas Pizzo: Uh, June 30th, nineteen, uh – [tapping] in 2002.  
9

10 Marilyn Coulter: [writing] [20:08] In [tapping] 2002?  
11

12 Thomas Pizzo: Yeah.  
13

14 Marilyn Coulter: Was your last day? Yeah, okay. [tapping]  
15

16 Thomas Pizzo: I, uh – [tapping] June 26th was my birthday, [tapping] but I retired, uh, 4  
17 days after that.  
18

19 Marilyn Coulter: Oh, okay. [tapping]  
20

21 Thomas Pizzo: And, uh. [tapping] For tax purposes, [background movement] I shoulda  
22 stayed for the extra 2 weeks [laughter] for 4th a July but I didn't, so.  
23 [background movement]  
24

25 Marilyn Coulter: [20:33] So you were here, eh, through the name [tapping] changes of Fisher  
26 Body, BOC, Lansing Car Assembly?  
27

28 Thomas Pizzo: Oh yeah.  
29

30 Marilyn Coulter: [20:39] Um, how'd [tapping] you feel about those name changes? [tapping]  
31

32 Thomas Pizzo: Fisher Body will never die. Uh.  
33

34 Marilyn Coulter: [20:47] Why do [tapping] you say that? [tapping]  
35

36 Thomas Pizzo: We – people, when they worked for the Fisher Body took pride in their  
37 work. You could say you were from Fisher Body, Lansing [tapping] and you  
38 were known all over the country. [tapping] You could say you retired from  
39 BOC, [background movement] [tapping] and they'd say [chair squeaking]  
40 "Where's that?" [chair squeaking] Uh, but you say "Fisher Body,"  
41 [background movement] [tapping] Lansing, [tapping] you were known all  
42 over, all over the world, I think, as having the highest quality of, uh,  
43 automotive manufacturing [tapping] in the world.  
44

45 Marilyn Coulter: Mm.  
46

1 Thomas Pizzo: And the people that worked here had pride in that. [tapping] And, uh,  
2 [tapping] General Motors is known all along, but, uh, [tapping] Lansing is  
3 the Capital of Quality, and that was our logo for a long time, [tapping] that  
4 the Lansing worker [background movement] [tapping] has pride in  
5 workmanship, [tapping] and I felt a part of that, and I still do.  
6

7 Marilyn Coulter: [Inaudible 21:51]. [tapping] [21:52] So, now, you, you live in Lansing now.  
8 [tapping] D-, were you raised in Lansing? [tapping]  
9

10 Thomas Pizzo: Born and red-, born and raised, yep.  
11

12 Marilyn Coulter: And what high school did you go to? [tapping]  
13

14 Thomas Pizzo: Lansing Everett.  
15

16 Marilyn Coulter: Lansing Everett. [tapping] [22:03] So, growing up, [tapping] since we're  
17 talkin' about Fisher Body, [tapping] growing up, what'd you think about  
18 [tapping] Lansing Fisher Body?  
19

20 Thomas Pizzo: Great place to visit but I'd hate to live there.  
21

22 Marilyn Coulter: You didn't wanna live [tapping] there. You didn't...  
23

24 Thomas Pizzo: I, uh...  
25

26 Marilyn Coulter: ...[inaudible 22:17].  
27

28 Thomas Pizzo: ...my dad worked there, my uncles worked there. [tapping] They put, put me  
29 through school. [tapping] And my dad did everything he could to keep his  
30 son from gettin' [tapping] a job at Fisher Body [tapping] or with General  
31 Motors. [tapping] "Go out and make something of yourself." So I went, uh,  
32 first of all and put, uh, [tapping] 12 years in the military, [tapping] then  
33 came out, did some odd jobs. [tapping] Um, [tapping] the only reason why I  
34 didn't reenlist again was 'cause I knew I was goin' to Vietnam but I didn't  
35 wanna go. [tapping]  
36

37 Marilyn Coulter: [22:59] So why did ya come here?  
38

39 Thomas Pizzo: I came here because, uh, [tapping] out of all the jobs that I had after getting  
40 out of the Service, I had 11 full-time jobs in 2 years. [tapping] Uh, [tapping]  
41 General Motors, that was the only company with a [inaudible 23:21]  
42 [background noises], uh, package in the wage, [tapping] uh, for, uh,  
43 [tapping] myself and my new family. I had a wife a child at the time.  
44 [tapping] I was, I was even, uh, [inaudible 23:35], uh, Lansing fireman, so.  
45 [tapping] And then I got the job at GM and I didn't, when I was released  
46 from the Fire Department for, uh, [tapping] let's say it's a lack of interest,

1 meaning I didn't learn all the different streets or intersections, [tapping]  
2 which I was required to know if, if I wanted to be an engineer or a driver of  
3 an ambulance. [tapping] At the time, I had less than 90 days and I didn't  
4 care whether I [tapping] knew all the streets or not, and I had a couple a  
5 supervisors at the time sayin' I showed a lack of interest and I was let go.  
6 [tapping] And if you had less than 90 days, uh, [tapping] you don't need a  
7 reason, so. [tapping]  
8  
9 Marilyn Coulter: And.  
10  
11 Thomas Pizzo: So I, uh, put my application in here at the Shop and [tapping] I told my dad  
12 what I done and [tapping] he seen, uh, somebody in the Employment Office  
13 and they called me in [background movement] [tapping] and, uh,  
14 [background movement] that was the first time I hired, when I worked out in  
15 the [tapping] Cushion Room.  
16  
17 Marilyn Coulter: Mm-hm. [tapping]  
18  
19 Thomas Pizzo: And I got in a fight with one a the truck drivers out there. We had, uh,  
20 gasoline powered, uh, [tunnel 25:01] trucks at the time, [tapping] and what  
21 they'd do is they'd leave their, uh, [tapping] engines running when they  
22 made their delivery [tapping] and the Cushion Room, that was when they  
23 closed the building, poor ventilation. [tapping] And uh, [tapping] I  
24 [inaudible 25:23] reach into the, uh, truck and turned it off and the, uh,  
25 [background movement] the driver a that truck proceeded to beat on me and  
26 I beated on him back and we both got fired. Well, he got 2 weeks off and I  
27 got dismissed. [tapping]  
28  
29 Marilyn Coulter: [25:39] Because you didn't [tapping] have your 90?  
30  
31 Thomas Pizzo: 'Cause didn't have 90 days in. [tapping]  
32  
33 Marilyn Coulter: [25:43] So what did your father do here?  
34  
35 Thomas Pizzo: Pardon?  
36  
37 Marilyn Coulter: What was your father, your f-, your f-, [inaudible 25:47].  
38  
39 Thomas Pizzo: My father started out in, uh, Production and then during World War II he  
40 worked on the assembly line building, uh, parts for tanks, [tapping] and  
41 from there, he, uh, got a job in the, uh, [tapping] powerhouse and [tapping] I  
42 don't know exactly what he did for the few sh-, few f-, first few years, but  
43 he ended up, uh, [tapping] being an engineer over there, which was one step  
44 down from bein' a supervisor.  
45  
46 Marilyn Coulter: Oh, okay. [tapping]

1  
2 Thomas Pizzo: And uh, [tapping] he also was a, uh, [background movement] journeyman  
3 welder [tapping] and, uh, [tapping] when the boilers, uh, had a breakdown  
4 over there, they usually call for dad to, uh, go in and he was a welder  
5 repairman [tapping] and, uh, there wasn't a thing about those that he didn't  
6 know. [tapping] He took some college courses and, uh, [tapping] got a  
7 journeyman's card as a, [tapping] [background movement] uh, boiler  
8 repairman. [background movement] [tapping] He said, "When I retire," he  
9 says, "that's what I'm gonna do when I retire." Well, when he retired, his  
10 health was so bad that he couldn't. [tapping] [coughing] [throat clearing]  
11  
12 Marilyn Coulter: You need a break? [recorder clicking] [throat clearing] [27:15] You need  
13 some more coffees? This is a warm one. [throat clearing] Need a tissue?  
14  
15 Thomas Pizzo: No, I got it. [background movement]  
16  
17 Marilyn Coulter: Here. I'm gonna let him use [inaudible 27:22]. [throat clearing] Here, hold  
18 on a sec.  
19  
20 Thomas Pizzo: Yep. [throat clearing] [background movement]  
21  
22 Doug Rademacher: Now, [inaudible 27:27] take a breather?  
23  
24 Marilyn Coulter: That coffee just hit ma bladder.  
25  
26 Doug Rademacher: That was Mr. [Dennis 27:31], [background movement] so I probably...  
27  
28 John Fedewa: Oh.  
29  
30 Doug Rademacher: ...wants to know why [background movement] I want that microphone back.  
31 [laughter]  
32  
33 John Fedewa: Oh, for the how-, for the.  
34  
35 Doug Rademacher: Did you, I told ya.  
36  
37 John Fedewa: Oh, for the, yeah.  
38  
39 Doug Rademacher: Woulda plugged in the front.  
40  
41 John Fedewa: See, we did the one – I know it.  
42  
43 Doug Rademacher: The back's for battery pack. That's why when you said.  
44  
45 John Fedewa: That's the one you plugged into ch-, the...  
46

1 Doug Rademacher: The 4-prong on the back?  
2  
3 John Fedewa: ...[tapping] for the chart, that's what that's for.  
4  
5 Doug Rademacher: It's for a, it's for a nickel [tapping] cadmium. [tapping] You couldn't run  
6 that...  
7  
8 John Fedewa: [Inaudible 27:53].  
9  
10 Doug Rademacher: ...on battery.  
11  
12 John Fedewa: Oh, so you just plug that in? [tapping] Oh, okay. [tapping] [background  
13 movement]  
14  
15 Thomas Pizzo: [Inaudible 28:08]. [tapping] [background noises] [tapping]  
16  
17 John Fedewa: [tapping] She's probably jumpin' around.  
18  
19 Thomas Pizzo: Yeah, she is.  
20  
21 John Fedewa: [Inaudible 28:16].  
22  
23 Thomas Pizzo: She's not dumb, [background movement] [inaudible 28:17]. [papers  
24 rustling]  
25  
26 John Fedewa: Nope. [tapping] [28:46] Where were you at in, uh, [tapping] 1979? [papers  
27 rustling] [throat clearing] Were you still in Trim or? [tapping]  
28  
29 Thomas Pizzo: [tapping] Probably.  
30  
31 John Fedewa: 'Cause I started out in the, on the Cutlass line in '79, [tapping] puttin' in, uh,  
32 [tapping] the little windows that they had on the back [tapping] doors, on the  
33 4-doors.  
34  
35 Thomas Pizzo: Oh, okay.  
36  
37 John Fedewa: [throat clearing] It was kind of an off-line [tapping] job but it was also an  
38 on-line job. That's where I started at. And I remember s-, [tapping] seein'  
39 you down there. I don't know if you were down there as [tapping] Utility or  
40 what. But that's where I started at.  
41  
42 Thomas Pizzo: Probably. [tapping]  
43  
44 John Fedewa: [throat clearing] [Inaudible 29:22]...  
45  
46 Thomas Pizzo: [Inaudible 29:22].

1  
2John Fedewa: ...short period a time and then I went up to, [tapping] uh, 3X after.  
3  
4Thomas Pizzo: [Inaudible 29:28] 3X.  
5  
6John Fedewa: [tapping] I subbed there for a long time, [tapping] puttin' in, uh, [tapping]  
7 rear seats. Nobody liked, everybody hated that [tapping] job, but the guy  
8 across from me and me liked it. [tapping]  
9  
10Thomas Pizzo: Good team.  
11  
12John Fedewa: There was a good, uh, [tapping] [throat clearing] we could read each other's  
13 movements [tapping] and everything.  
14  
15Thomas Pizzo: I did that job, uh, [tapping] with a short guy. [tapping] He's studying to be a  
16 pilot. [tapping] And, uh, [inaudible 30:04] airplane and, uh, [tapping]  
17 [inaudible 30:10] [tapping] [background movement]  
18  
19John Fedewa: If, yeah, if you [tapping] knew what you were doin', you could, you could  
20 [background movement] actually...  
21  
22Thomas Pizzo: And then...  
23  
24John Fedewa: ...do the job and...  
25  
26Thomas Pizzo: ...then I started in...  
27  
28John Fedewa: ...sit around.  
29  
30Thomas Pizzo: ...then I started installing [background movement] the front seat.  
31  
32John Fedewa: Oh, that was [inaudible 30:17].  
33  
34Thomas Pizzo: [Inaudible 30:19] [background movement]  
35  
36John Fedewa: Yeah. [tapping] [background movement]  
37  
38Thomas Pizzo: And, uh, [background movement] one night I got my hand [tapping] hung  
39 up between the bold like this.  
40  
41John Fedewa: Uh oh.  
42  
43Marilyn Coulter: Ooh.  
44  
45John Fedewa: [tapping] [Inaudible 30:29]? Uh-oh.  
46

1 Thomas Pizzo: Yeah. [tapping] And I didn't have any reverse on my gun.  
2

3 Marilyn Coulter: Oh no.  
4

5 John Fedewa: Whoops. Bet that hurt.  
6

7 Thomas Pizzo: And here I am walking down the side a the line backwards yellin' out  
8 "Help!" [laughter] And, uh.  
9

10 John Fedewa: I didn't like the front seats.  
11

12 Thomas Pizzo: In the Utility, you had a come down and, [background movement] or the  
13 repairman, and he says, "What's wrong?" and I says, "I'm bolted to the  
14 floor." He says, "Well pull it out." I says, "I don't wanna leave my hand  
15 there."  
16

17 John Fedewa: Don't wanna leave your fingers in there. That happened more than once.  
18

19 Thomas Pizzo: So he got, so he got his gun and, uh, reversed it.  
20

21 Marilyn Coulter: That was my first job, boltin' down seats.  
22

23 John Fedewa: That happened more'n once, though.  
24

25 Thomas Pizzo: Oh yeah.  
26

27 John Fedewa: I remember seein' that.  
28

29 Marilyn Coulter: Boltin' down s-...  
30

31 John Fedewa: 'Cause you had...  
32

33 Marilyn Coulter: ...boltin' down...  
34

35 John Fedewa: ...'cause you had to hold the...  
36

37 Marilyn Coulter: ...front seats.  
38

39 John Fedewa: ...bolt there to put...  
40

41 Thomas Pizzo: Right.  
42

43 John Fedewa: ...to put the thing in if ya did...  
44

45 Marilyn Coulter: Mm-hm.  
46



1John Fedewa: ...if ya did pull it out quick enough, that would zip that bolt in there. [throat  
2clearing] That was a, that was a, I liked rear seats better.  
3

4Marilyn Coulter: Front seats were horrible. I had that, that's my first job here, and [tapping] I  
5mean [throat clearing] back then, the guys are whoppin' me down with their  
6arms and stuff, and back then...  
7

8Thomas Pizzo: Yeah.  
9

10Marilyn Coulter: ...I didn't weigh 2 spits back then, and I'm goin' tryin' to put it in and it was  
11like I thought I was gonna die. I, I th-, I, I said, because you had to put on  
12the 2 track c-, you had to bolt down the f-, you had to slam the seat down,  
13bolt down the two front seats...  
14

15John Fedewa: [Inaudible 31:32].  
16

17Marilyn Coulter: ...put the track covers on. Then you had to put the trash can in, then you had  
18to put the trunk liner on, and ya had to do somethin' else, and all I knew was  
19[tapping] "This is ridiculous." And I said, I...  
20

21John Fedewa: [Inaudible 31:42].  
22

23Marilyn Coulter: ...remember tellin' my mom, I said, "Mom, I think I made a big mistake  
24goin' in there." That's all I could think was I made the biggest mistake of  
25my life goin' in there, [tapping] 'cause I said, "This is crazy for people to  
26work like this," [tapping] and the person who hired me in, he was a  
27worthless piece a shit. [laughter] 'Cause he, he, I mean, [laughter] and the  
28thing about him is...  
29

30Thomas Pizzo: I know. I know [inaudible 32:00]...  
31

32Marilyn Coulter: ...Harada was tellin' him to break me. Harada was telling them...  
33

34John Fedewa: [Inaudible 32:04].  
35

36Marilyn Coulter: ...Manuel Harada told them...  
37

38Thomas Pizzo: Mm-hm.  
39

40Marilyn Coulter: ...to break me.  
41

42Thomas Pizzo: Oh yeah.  
43

44Marilyn Coulter: But they didn't. But...  
45

46John Fedewa: He, uh...

1  
2Marilyn Coulter: ...he was such a shit.  
3  
4John Fedewa: ...I remember I actually used my arm. If you were, if you were strong  
5 enough, you could put, [tapping] you could just put your arm down and do a  
6 zip-zip and [inaudible 32:14]...  
7  
8Marilyn Coulter: That's what the guys did.  
9  
10John Fedewa: If you weren't strong enough to do that...  
11  
12Marilyn Coulter: And I had no upper body...  
13  
14John Fedewa: ...then you had to keep...  
15  
16Marilyn Coulter: ...strength [door closing] for that.  
17  
18John Fedewa: ...strugglin' to go down the line and everything else.  
19  
20Doug Rademacher: Well that's good.  
21  
22John Fedewa: Rear seats were easy.  
23  
24Marilyn Coulter: He's gonna make it happen.  
25  
26Doug Rademacher: We're gonna get this equipment. I told'm to order the battery pack and, uh,  
27 if he couldn't find an on/off microphone [papers rustling] to go [tapping]  
28 ahead and keep the one we've got.  
29  
30Marilyn Coulter: [tapping] Okay. [tapping]  
31  
32John Fedewa: Now we know how to plug it in there. [background movement]  
33  
34Marilyn Coulter: So [inaudible 32:35].  
35  
36Doug Rademacher: Yeah, now we're gettin', I'm gettin', I'm gettin' smarter as I go.  
37  
38Marilyn Coulter: So...  
39  
40Doug Rademacher: I didn't know how to.  
41  
42Marilyn Coulter: ...any...  
43  
44Doug Rademacher: It, it looks simple, but. [tapping]  
45  
46Marilyn Coulter: ...any particular direction you wanna go in from there? [tapping]

1  
2John Fedewa: He was lookin' at supplements.  
3  
4Thomas Pizzo: I looked at your thing there.  
5  
6Marilyn Coulter: Which one?  
7  
8John Fedewa: Tryin' to see where you were at. [papers rustling]  
9  
10Doug Rademacher: Did you sh-, did you show'm the other side?  
11  
12Marilyn Coulter: Yup, [papers rustling] and there's the other side, too.  
13  
14Doug Rademacher: This...  
15  
16Thomas Pizzo: Oh lord.  
17  
18Doug Rademacher: ...this is where we're headin' to. [tapping]  
19  
20Marilyn Coulter: Yeah.  
21  
22Thomas Pizzo: Oh. Well.  
23  
24Doug Rademacher: This is all. [tapping] [papers rustling]  
25  
26Thomas Pizzo: I didn't [papers rustling] look over there.  
27  
28Marilyn Coulter: Mm.  
29  
30Doug Rademacher: [papers rustling] This starts getting into the fun. [papers rustling] They  
31 wanna know about did ya ever go, what'd ya do on your lunchbreaks and  
32 did ya, did you, [papers rustling] uh, leave the Plant and, [papers rustling]  
33 and did you, uh, [papers rustling] uh, participate in the s-, uh, the  
34 hootenannies, the bible studies, the, the dinners, stuff like that. We're gonna  
35 get into some a the s-...  
36  
37Thomas Pizzo: The dinner [inaudible 33:08].  
38  
39 Marilyn Coulter: Mm-hm.  
40  
41Doug Rademacher: ...some a the stories about [throat clearing] [background movement]  
42 [inaudible 33:12]. Now, you used to, you never took the grease gun and, or,  
43 and squirted someone's glove full a grease [inaudible 33:17]? [tapping]  
44  
45Thomas Pizzo: Oh, no. No.  
46

1 Doug Rademacher: No, never.  
2  
3 Thomas Pizzo: Never.  
4  
5 John Fedewa: [Inaudible 33:20].  
6  
7 Marilyn Coulter: Lie.  
8  
9 Doug Rademacher: And you never, [laughter] you never...  
10  
11 John Fedewa: "Lies." [laughter]  
12  
13 Doug Rademacher: ...are you tryin' to tell me you never put anything on the boss's telephone  
14 and called him?  
15  
16 Thomas Pizzo: No, not me, no.  
17  
18 Marilyn Coulter: You lie, Pizzo!  
19  
20 John Fedewa: Never done that before. [background movement]  
21  
22 Thomas Pizzo: I never done that.  
23  
24 Marilyn Coulter: Yeah, he'd pull all sorts a [papers rustling] pranks.  
25  
26 Doug Rademacher: I was, when you, when you were diggin' through pranks...  
27  
28 Marilyn Coulter: I.  
29  
30 Doug Rademacher: ...and he said no, I thought [background movement]...  
31  
32 Marilyn Coulter: He...  
33  
34 Doug Rademacher: ..."Now come on."  
35  
36 Marilyn Coulter: ...he's a bald-faced liar. I know it. He used to, I mean, he used to keep  
37 [tapping] shit goin' all the time.  
38  
39 Doug Rademacher: Ah, well. [tapping] Well, you were always, [tapping] like you said.  
40  
41 Thomas Pizzo: I, I never done the greases.  
42  
43 John Fedewa: Oh I've done [background movement] [inaudible 33:43].  
44  
45 Thomas Pizzo: I've suggested it plenty a times.  
46

1 Doug Rademacher: [papers rustling] Didn't ya hate it, though, when one a the, uh, remember Al  
2 the, all the air guns ran by those [tapping] oil...  
3  
4 Marilyn Coulter: Yeah.  
5  
6 Thomas Pizzo: Yes.  
7  
8 Doug Rademacher: ...and those things would break and you'd get covered in that black.  
9  
10 Marilyn Coulter: Get that stuff all in your hair.  
11  
12 Doug Rademacher: Aw, it stunk.  
13  
14 Marilyn Coulter: Mm-hm.  
15  
16 Doug Rademacher: Oh, I hated that.  
17  
18 Marilyn Coulter: Greasy. [tapping]  
19  
20 John Fedewa: [Inaudible 33:59]...  
21  
22 Doug Rademacher: That really, that...  
23  
24 John Fedewa: ...clothes. [tapping]  
25  
26 Doug Rademacher: ...that really would, that [tapping] was one a the breakers. I hated that.  
27 [tapping]  
28  
29 Marilyn Coulter: I hated that too.  
30  
31 Thomas Pizzo: I remember...  
32  
33 Doug Rademacher: [Inaudible 34:05].  
34  
35 Thomas Pizzo: ...I remember wearin' the first pair a shoyt-, shorts in, um, Production.  
36 [tapping]  
37  
38 Marilyn Coulter: [34:08] You wore [tapping] the first pair a shorts in Production? [tapping]  
39 What happened?  
40  
41 Thomas Pizzo: I had a pair a coveralls and, uh, I cut'm down 'cause it was so hot in here,  
42 [tapping] and, uh, [background movement] well, they were ready to send me  
43 home to get dressed, [tapping] and, uh, [tapping] [Andy Aizza 34:29] was  
44 the General Foreman, and he says, [tapping] "If he doesn't cut himself, he  
45 can stay; if he cuts himself, he's fired."  
46

1Doug Rademacher: [tapping] [34:39] That was in Trim or Body?  
2  
3Thomas Pizzo: Trim.  
4  
5Doug Rademacher: I was gonna say. 'Cause you, uh...  
6  
7Marilyn Coulter: Mm-hm.  
8  
9Doug Rademacher: ...couldn't, yeah, you couldn't do that down there.  
10  
11Marilyn Coulter: The Body Shop you couldn't.  
12  
13Doug Rademacher: But [tapping] I was gonna say, you musta looked like, uh, one a Spanky and  
14 the Kids.  
15  
16Thomas Pizzo: Yeah I did.  
17  
18Doug Rademacher: I've, that's what I saw when you just said that. I had that [laughter] picture  
19 in my mind.  
20  
21Marilyn Coulter: Ah, yeah. Um.  
22  
23Thomas Pizzo: But I was comfortable.  
24  
25Doug Rademacher: Oh, I'll bet you were.  
26  
27Marilyn Coulter: Okay.  
28  
29Doug Rademacher: And those things breathed too; they were baggy.  
30  
31Marilyn Coulter: Okay.  
32  
33Doug Rademacher: You ready to...  
34  
35Marilyn Coulter: Okay.  
36  
37Doug Rademacher: ...you got next question you're gonna lead at it? [tapping]  
38  
39Marilyn Coulter: Um, yeah. Uh, you wanna go into [tapping] [background movement] what it  
40 was like? 'Cause when you hired in, actually, [tapping] it was 2 floors on  
41 the same f-, on the same line [tapping] and then it went over – haven't  
42 talked about some a the things [tapping] like changeover.  
43  
44Thomas Pizzo: Oh, 2 lines, but we had, uh...  
45  
46Marilyn Coulter: And the lunch.

1  
2Thomas Pizzo: ...2 floors.  
3  
4Marilyn Coulter: Yeah.  
5  
6Thomas Pizzo: Yep.  
7  
8Doug Rademacher: Did ya, [tapping] did ya get to what made a good and bad supervisor?  
9  
10Marilyn Coulter: Nope. And that's the next one, too.  
11  
12Doug Rademacher: Okay.  
13  
14Marilyn Coulter: Okay. Feel free to chime in...  
15  
16Thomas Pizzo: Then we should...  
17  
18Marilyn Coulter: ...whenever. [papers rustling]  
19  
20Thomas Pizzo: ...then we should get that [background movement] [inaudible 35:30]. [papers  
21 rustling]  
22  
23Doug Rademacher: Why? The only ones gonna hear it are the kids at Michigan State. [papers  
24 rustling]  
25  
26Thomas Pizzo: [Inaudible 35:37].  
27  
28Doug Rademacher: Well, what made a good [papers rustling] [inaudible 35:41].  
29  
30Marilyn Coulter: What made a good supervisor for you. [throat clearing] Okay?  
31  
32Doug Rademacher: You wanna start on that?  
33  
34Marilyn Coulter: Sure. [tapping]  
35  
36Doug Rademacher: Are we recording?  
37  
38Marilyn Coulter: Oh, uh.  
39  
40Doug Rademacher: Yes, we are.  
41  
42Thomas Pizzo: Yeah, okay.  
43  
44Marilyn Coulter: Oh, we...  
45  
46Thomas Pizzo: That's okay.

1  
2Marilyn Coulter: ...we never quit? [tapping]  
3  
4Doug Rademacher: Yeah, we did, but I...  
5  
6Thomas Pizzo: We did, but you musta turned it on when you came back...  
7  
8John Fedewa: [Inaudible 35:54] back, turned back on.  
9  
10Thomas Pizzo: ...in. That's okay.  
11  
12Marilyn Coulter: Well...  
13  
14Doug Rademacher: Well, we are rollin'.  
15  
16Thomas Pizzo: [Inaudible 35:56].  
17  
18Marilyn Coulter: ...that's, that's interesting. [laughter] [tapping] Well then, we've...  
19  
20John Fedewa: [Inaudible 35:58].  
21  
22Marilyn Coulter: ...we've, we've covered [tapping] some stuff then.  
23  
24Doug Rademacher: We'll have to edit this, okay.  
25  
26Marilyn Coulter: Yeah.  
27  
28John Fedewa: Did you turn it off?  
29  
30Doug Rademacher: I did. You saw me do it.  
31  
32Marilyn Coulter: I, I didn't touch it.  
33  
34Thomas Pizzo: You turned it off and turned it back on [inaudible 36:06].  
35  
36Marilyn Coulter: But it's recording.  
37  
38John Fedewa: You turned it on when you came back in, though.  
39  
40Doug Rademacher: Well, no, when we, um, [tapping] I musta bumped it [tapping] because...  
41  
42Marilyn Coulter: You musta bumped it when you came back in.  
43  
44Doug Rademacher: ...'cause it was at, [tapping] it was almost at 20 minutes [tapping] before you  
45 took that last break and now it's at 27. [tapping]  
46



1 Marilyn Coulter: Oh.  
2  
3 Doug Rademacher: So it's been recordin' since I left. It's got you too, probably.  
4  
5 John Fedewa: Oh, [that's fine 36:19].  
6  
7 Marilyn Coulter: Whatever you all were talkin' about when we were gone, that'll be  
8 interesting.  
9  
10 Thomas Pizzo: Oh lordy.  
11  
12 John Fedewa: Oh, it's [inaudible 36:23]. [laughter]  
13  
14 Marilyn Coulter: We'll have to go back and see that.  
15  
16 Doug Rademacher: Well that'll be edited out, we can.  
17  
18 Marilyn Coulter: But...  
19  
20 Doug Rademacher: No problem.  
21  
22 Marilyn Coulter: ...but we were talkin'...  
23  
24 John Fedewa: We'll take that out.  
25  
26 Marilyn Coulter: ...we, we were talkin' a minute ago and, about you, you've worked in a  
27 [tapping] lotta different departments and things like that. [tapping] [36:35]  
28 What made a good supervisor [tapping] for you in those departments?  
29  
30 Thomas Pizzo: Well, the, uh, I've been across different supervisors and, as ya all have, and,  
31 uh, [tapping] [sniffing] some a them used to play it by the book and that was  
32 it, there's – it's all black and white and no gray in between, but the good  
33 supervisor's the one that, uh, he was your dad. [tapping] Um, he was, uh,  
34 concerned about you, about, concerned about you bein' able to do your job,  
35 uh, [tapping] come down and ask ya questions if you're havin' problems  
36 with it or maybe ya need some training on how to maybe do it easier.  
37 [tapping] Um, ya know, a lotta the things that, uh, was done [tapping] as in  
38 practical jokes and things, uh, [tapping] he'd look the other way, [tapping]  
39 or if he seen somethin' happen he'd grin along with the people it would  
40 [papers rustling] happen to, uh. They were, uh, [papers rustling] thing that  
41 [tapping] made life on the line bearable.  
42  
43 Uh, [tapping] if you were in violation a the rules, [papers rustling] uh,  
44 [tapping] and he had to take disciplinary action to maintain order, then  
45 [tapping] you were comfortable in getting disciplined by this person for  
46 [tapping] something you did. I mean, [tapping] there were other times when,

1 uh, [tapping] he'd want Labor Relations and everybody else present when  
2 they got ahold a one a these gung ho supervisors. Uh, [tapping] no one,  
3 nobody can do ya any good because it's your word against his, but  
4 [inaudible 38:40]. [tapping] And if you had a good committeeman, he could  
5 usually talk you out of getting' [tapping] the bad discipline. [tapping] And a  
6 lotta times discipline would be, uh, 3 days off, no pay. Uh, [tapping] there's  
7 a lotta times super-, a committeeman could get you down for, uh, [tapping]  
8 3 days unpaid or no time missed. [tapping]  
9

10 And, uh, [tapping] I can remember one time where, uh, [tapping] I was  
11 involved in the PTA at, uh, one of the, uh, the grade schools. [tapping] This  
12 was back in the '70s. And, uh, [tapping] 3 months in advance, I'd asked for  
13 this particular, uh, Friday night off, it was the night of the school carnival,  
14 [tapping] and I was in charge of, uh, the kitchen, [tapping] and, uh, my wife  
15 and I, [tapping] and [tapping] supervisor always kept sayin', "Well, keep me  
16 informed, keep me updated, and the way it looks now, you're gonna have  
17 that night off no problem." [tapping] Uh, [papers rustling] right up until the  
18 night before the, the event, the Thursday night, I ask again, I says, uh, "So  
19 it's okay for tomorrow night? I got tomorrow night off, right?" Says, "No,  
20 I'm gonna need you in here," and I said, "Well, I won't be here. [tapping]  
21 And, uh, [tapping] I'm tellin' you that right now, I've made this  
22 commitment that I'd be at the, uh, PTA and I'm gonna be there." [tapping]  
23 He goes, "Well, if ya come into work, we'll get ya out." I says, "No, I'm not  
24 playin' those games." You knew if they got you in, you didn't go nowhere.  
25 [tapping] They'd let somebody else go home first. [background  
26 conversation] [tapping] And, uh, I didn't come in that Friday, and first thing  
27 Monday night when I came in, [coughing] [background conversation] the  
28 line hadn't even started yet.  
29

30 Well, as soon as it did start, they had a Utility man on my job and they had  
31 me in the office. [tapping] And, uh, at the time, [tapping] I was up for 2  
32 weeks off for disciplinary action, and, uh, [tapping] committeeman talked'm  
33 down to, uh, 2 weeks on paper. I says, "Oh no. No, I'm not in agreeance to  
34 that. I'll take the 2 weeks off." [tapping] And he says, "I already got you a"  
35 – I says, "I don't want it. [background movement] [tapping] I want the time  
36 off." [tapping] I said, "Go, go with me on this." And so the committeeman  
37 just, "Okay, he wants the 2 weeks off, give it to'm," [tapping] and they did.  
38 [tapping] I went to the school board, said General Motors was punishing me  
39 for taking the night off and working the PTA [papers rustling], and [tapping]  
40 they want me to get involved in community affairs. My dad, who was  
41 [inaudible 42:10] at the time, uh, [tapping] knew some men that were  
42 stockholders in the company through, uh, profit sharing and all that.  
43 [tapping] They got, uh, management here got letters from, uh, stockholders  
44 [background conversation] [tapping] complaining as to why can't people get  
45 time off of work to get involved in community affairs. [tapping] [throat  
46 clearing]

1 So when I came back at the end a 2 weeks, [beeping] I'd known all this stuff  
2 was goin' on with them, never said a word. [tapping] And I reported to my  
3 job and was doing it and they had got somebody to come up and do my job,  
4 and back to the office I go. [tapping] And, uh, [tapping] the supervisor asked  
5 me, "What can we do to make this go away?" [tapping] And I says,  
6 "Cleared pay with a verbal apology, and, uh, the verbal apology has to be  
7 made in front a my peers." [tapping] And, uh, "Well, we can go with that,  
8 but not the cleared pay." I says, "Well, [inaudible 43:26]." [tapping] I got,  
9 uh, my record cleared, I got paid for the 2 weeks I was off, [tapping] and I  
10 got my verbal apology in front a my peer group. [papers rustling]  
11  
12Marilyn Coulter: Mm.  
13  
14Thomas Pizzo: And at that point, that was the last night I worked in, uh, C Trim. [tapping]  
15 Next thing I knew I was workin' down in the, uh, Body Shop. [background  
16 conversation] Didn't care, 'cause I my point. [tapping]  
17  
18Marilyn Coulter: Well, that's, um, so, uh, some a the things that make a [papers rustling] good  
19 committeeperson is a person who also, somebody who made things happen  
20 for you [papers rustling]...  
21  
22Thomas Pizzo: Yes.  
23  
24Marilyn Coulter: ...to. Um, [tapping] so, you said that, um, you were [tapping] community  
25 active. [44:13] Were there any other types things other than the PTA that  
26 you were active in in your community?  
27  
28Thomas Pizzo: I was involved in, uh, [tapping] cub scouts and boy scouts.  
29  
30Marilyn Coulter: Mm.  
31  
32Thomas Pizzo: Uh, [inaudible 44:25] divorce from my first wife.  
33  
34Marilyn Coulter: Mm. [tapping]  
35  
36Thomas Pizzo: Um. [tapping]  
37  
38Marilyn Coulter: [44:34] So now, um, [background movement] what – obviously you, you've  
39 had some interesting things, but what were some a your best memories  
40 inside a the Plant? [tapping] Winnin' that war was one of'm, I'm sure.  
41 [laughter]  
42  
43Thomas Pizzo: Oh, best memories. [tapping] Family, that's all I can.  
44  
45Marilyn Coulter: Now you – Doug?  
46

1 Doug Rademacher: [45:00] Tom, you said that, [tapping] um, there was the time when you had  
2 told'm ahead a time you needed that day off to be at PTA, [tapping] and it,  
3 obviously there was a [tapping] manpower problem. Can ya tell me,  
4 [tapping] when ya hired in, were there [tapping] people enough to run the  
5 line [papers rustling] and when did it change where there became a  
6 manpower [tapping] problem? [background movement]  
7

8 Thomas Pizzo: Manpower problem was really, uh, up in supervisor. Uh, I can't remember a  
9 time that we didn't have extra help to where somebody got to go home that  
10 night. [clicking] Uh, [tapping] even, like I say, with, uh, the night that I  
11 wanted off in question, uh, [tapping] there were, uh, times like, uh –  
12 [tapping] well, point in question, I was working, uh, C Trim at the time  
13 [tapping] and, uh, I don't remember what year it was. I'd say it was, uh,  
14 [tapping] '81. [tapping] We had a poli-, political rally out in Washington  
15 D.C., [tapping] uh, concerning the, uh, [tapping] air control supervisors or  
16 something, air controllers were going on strike and we were goin' there to  
17 [tapping] picketing the Washington [tapping] [inaudible 46:43] Court or  
18 somethin' like that, [tapping] and, uh, [tapping] that was memorable  
19 experience for me. I went with my, uh, wife's, uh, group. Uh, our, the ones  
20 from the local here were, uh, I guess the bus was all filled up or somethin'.  
21 Going with her local, uh, we drove about, the wife and I and the two kids,  
22 [background movement] we drove out there to the rally [background  
23 movement] and, uh, [tapping] ended up over by the Washington Monument  
24 as a rally point, and then there, from there, we went on, uh, a march on the  
25 D.C., [tapping] a flea on a do-, dog's back is what we felt like, ya know. So  
26 many brother and sisters out there. [tapping]  
27

28 And, uh, well, we drove out there Friday night after work and got there in  
29 time for the rally, and then on a Saturday, and then, uh, [background  
30 movement] we got back to the car and went out to the, drove out to the  
31 ocean. It was dark when we got there, so we all slept in the car, and then the  
32 next night, the kids got to run on the beach and we all waded in the ocean.  
33 That's the first time they'd ever seen the ocean. [tapping] [background  
34 movement] And then we drove back on Sunday back to Michigan, and we  
35 got in here about, uh, 4:00, uh, Monday morning. [coughing] [tapping] And  
36 so I just stayed awake and called in here to the shop, explained my situation,  
37 that we just got back from, uh, D.C., [tapping] if I could have the day off.  
38 Said, "No, you come on in. If we got the help, we'll let you go." [tapping]  
39 And I came in, [tapping] and as soon as I came in, they took the Utility man  
40 off the job that was assigned to my job to let him go and relieved so-and-so  
41 to have the day off, and I says, "Wait a minute. I thought you said I could  
42 have the day off if I came in." [tapping] "Well, he wanted the day off, so  
43 you stay here and work." [tapping] So, that's what made a bad foreman.  
44

45 [tapping] And, uh, [papers rustling] so I just, uh, I stayed, I did my job all  
46 that day, and I told everybody about the trip and that. They were askin',

1 "Well, what are you doing in here today?" I said, "The boss said to come in.  
2 If I came in, he'd get me out the door." [tapping] And at the end a the shift,  
3 the boss come around and apologize, I said "It's not accepted." I said, "You  
4 lied to me, you lied to everybody I know, as far as that goes. There's no  
5 getting out of it." [tapping] It was little things like that that, uh, are, uh,  
6 [papers rustling] um.  
7  
8 Marilyn Coulter: Are you done? Oh, okay.  
9  
10 Thomas Pizzo: No.  
11  
12 Marilyn Coulter: [Inaudible 50:31]. [recorder clicking] [tapping]  
13  
14 Thomas Pizzo: Yeah.  
15  
16 Marilyn Coulter: [Inaudible 50:32].  
17  
18 Thomas Pizzo: [tapping] No, I just don't wanted you to [tapping] stop in that line, I just  
19 didn't have any place to go. [recorder clicking]  
20  
21 Marilyn Coulter: [50:38] So Tommy, can you tell me what was your worst job you ever  
22 [tapping] did in the Plant? [background conversation]  
23  
24 Thomas Pizzo: Worst job.  
25  
26 Marilyn Coulter: Or one of'm?  
27  
28 Thomas Pizzo: The, the worst job. [tapping] Uh. I really didn't ever have a worst job  
29 [tapping] that I can look back on. I've had a lot of bad jobs. [tapping]  
30  
31 Marilyn Coulter: [51:01] Well, what was one a the bad ones that ya had?  
32  
33 Thomas Pizzo: Um, installing right wiper motors on the front end a the job where ya had to  
34 stand on the little piece of body carriage that stuck out, body hauler, and, uh,  
35 install the, uh, windshield wiper motors. [tapping] And ya had to be careful  
36 that ya didn't slip and hit the windshield that was already in place with your  
37 hand or you'd split it; [tapping] the windshield, that is. [tapping] You never  
38 knew who done that. Uh, or if ya slipped on the, uh, [tapping] usually that  
39 pad that stuck out was greasy and ya had to get on with your steel-toed  
40 shoes and if your feet got slippery on the bottom, hit the slippery surface,  
41 uh, like walking on ice.  
42  
43 Marilyn Coulter: Mm-hm.  
44  
45 Thomas Pizzo: And, uh, the same way with dismounting. Getting off, you had to be careful  
46 while ya got off 'cause you could slip and fall on the floor.

1  
2 Marilyn Coulter: Mm.  
3  
4 Thomas Pizzo: [tapping] And, uh, [tapping] back then, you had to sort your own, uh, wiper  
5 blades. They came in, uh, big, uh, metal containers, individually wrapped,  
6 and, uh, you had to take one out of each, uh, bin and take your two wiper  
7 motors and you had a pouch on that you put your, uh, screws into. Then you  
8 had to manhandle the gun to go along with this stuff, an air gun, we had. But  
9 the, yeah, [coughing] people that used to have the air guns knew how they  
10 worked. They used a electric-powered, it'd be you took the whole apparatus  
11 down and unhook it from the track and, uh, go around 3 people and put it  
12 back together and put your motor on the job and then go get your stock, then  
13 come back and do the job. Then you had so many [tapping] feet to do this  
14 job – 1 car-length I think it was, or sometimes, depending on the job and the  
15 teams working on the job. You had either, uh, 2 teams or 3 teams [tapping]  
16 doing the job, and [tapping] the teamwork thing was where you had to,  
17 [tapping] you start at point A and get out at point D, but meanwhile, for B  
18 and C, the other two people'd be workin' doin' their jobs. [tapping] You're  
19 just on a continuous motion of, uh, lying all the time, you'll never get ahead.  
20 [tapping] Never could work up the line, couldn't work down the line. Uh,  
21 that would be a bad job.  
22  
23 Being stuck in one job night after night I considered a bad job, 'cause the  
24 same thing day after day after day. I said, "This is not the life for me, no  
25 matter how easy the job is or how hard it is," and that's when I decided I  
26 was going on Utility the first time I went on, and I was up in C Trim and,  
27 uh, that's what I did. I went on Utility and I made it a point to learn every  
28 job in that Department, I made a point to learn all the jobs that they put me  
29 on afterwards, uh, because my next goal was to get on, uh, Repair, [tapping]  
30 which was a lower horseshoe area where all the repairs were. At the end a  
31 the line, they used to have an area they'd pull cars off the line to be repaired.  
32 They'd pull'm off into this, uh, horseshoe line and where the repairmen  
33 worked all the time. And, uh, man, those guys had it made. Get a 15-minute  
34 job and they ha-, it'd take'm about 45 minutes to do it, and, uh, get paid  
35 more to do it besides. And, uh, they usually had somebody else go run and  
36 chase the stock down for'm; they didn't even have to do that, so. [tapping]  
37  
38 Marilyn Coulter: Hm.  
39  
40 Thomas Pizzo: But I never had enough seniority to get the Repair job. Even by the time I  
41 retired I didn't have enough seniority.  
42  
43 Marilyn Coulter: [56:03] What type of seniority was in the Repair job?  
44  
45 Thomas Pizzo: Pardon?  
46

1 Marilyn Coulter: What type of seniority was at, did ya take to hold a Repair job?  
2

3 Thomas Pizzo: Oh, usually your people that were eligible to retire were pulling down the  
4 Repair jobs because they were so easy.  
5

6 Marilyn Coulter: [56:21] So you talk 30-plus then?  
7

8 Thomas Pizzo: 30-plus. 25, 30.  
9

10 Marilyn Coulter: Okay.  
11

12 Thomas Pizzo: Usually by the time somebody got 25 years in here, uh, they'd found a job  
13 that they were happy with and didn't really want Repair.  
14

15 Marilyn Coulter: Mm.  
16

17 Thomas Pizzo: Um, like I say, when I got on the Quality Control, [background  
18 conversation] I – like I say, that was a job I enjoyed the most. Uh, [tapping]  
19 [background movement] you could almost set your own hours on that job if  
20 you were an extra person.  
21

22 Marilyn Coulter: Mm-hm.  
23

24 Thomas Pizzo: [tapping] And, uh, [tapping] you had no problems with, uh, giving a person  
25 extra time off, uh, to do their job. I did the same thing when I was on Utility.  
26 If, uh, the supervisor kept me around as an extra person during the day, I'd  
27 let, [tapping] uh, go down and make sure I knew jobs by just doing the job  
28 while someone gave an emergency relief they didn't ask for. Emergency  
29 relief is where if somebody had a potty call, uh, [tapping] or get a cup a  
30 coffee or somethin', you'd let'm go do it. And back when I hired in, the  
31 only place you could get a cup a coffee was in the cafeteria. They didn't  
32 have coffee pots in every department.  
33

34 Marilyn Coulter: They didn't. [57:46] When did they bring the machines down to the floor?  
35 Do you remember?  
36

37 Thomas Pizzo: Oh, god. 1990? '85, '90, before we had b-, uh, negotiated break areas where  
38 you could, uh, had your vending machines, uh, that dispersed the, uh, pop  
39 and the coffee. A smoking area, really, is what they were designated.  
40 [tapping]  
41

42 Marilyn Coulter: Mm.  
43

44 Thomas Pizzo: And, uh, depending on your area a the floor, uh. [tapping]  
45

1 Marilyn Coulter: [58:19] So you talked about smoking. Now, wa-, was smoking allowed  
2 when you first came in...  
3

4 Thomas Pizzo: Oh yeah.  
5

6 Marilyn Coulter: ...the Plant?  
7

8 Thomas Pizzo: Yeah.  
9

10 Marilyn Coulter: [58:24] How did you – um, [tapping] and I take it you're a smoker? Were  
11 you a smoker?  
12

13 Thomas Pizzo: I was a smoker for, uh, 35 years.  
14

15 Marilyn Coulter: Now, I know [tapping] later on, um, in the, what, early 2000s, we got the  
16 smoking ban where you couldn't. How did that affect you in your job?  
17 [tapping] [Inaudible 58:45]?  
18

19 Thomas Pizzo: No, smoking ban came after I retired.  
20

21 Marilyn Coulter: Oh, after you left. Okay, well that was good, after you had. [tapping] Well,  
22 now.  
23

24 Thomas Pizzo: We had smoking, uh, in designated areas when I left, uh, [tapping] and, uh,  
25 sometimes if a person made it known to a supervisor that smoking, uh,  
26 bothered them on the line, you couldn't smoke within so many feet of the.  
27

28 Marilyn Coulter: Mm-hm.  
29

30 Thomas Pizzo: [tapping] And, uh, there was no smoking in the bathrooms anymore, uh,  
31 because that was considered a confined space. [tapping]  
32

33 Marilyn Coulter: Okay.  
34

35 Thomas Pizzo: I, uh, my last 5 years, uh, I was suffering from emphysema and didn't  
36 realize it, and, uh, [papers rustling] by the time I retired, I had ended up  
37 having to be on oxygen, uh, 24/7 and, uh, that's when I started listening to  
38 the doctor, you know. "Yeah, you're sick, mister. You've got emphysema.  
39 You should quit smokin'." Well, it's, I've been out 3 years, but I can  
40 honestly say I've been 31 days without a cigarette.  
41

42 Marilyn Coulter: Well that's great. Finally.  
43

44 Thomas Pizzo: And, uh, [papers rustling] not that I don't want one. I've been told by my  
45 lung specialist that there won't be a day going on for the rest of my life that



1 I won't want a cigarette. But, uh, I can live with that. Besides that, a carton a  
2 cigarettes now is 44 bucks.  
3  
4 Marilyn Coulter: So you s-.  
5  
6 Thomas Pizzo: I'm, I'm on a fixed income; I can't afford'm. [tapping]  
7  
8 Marilyn Coulter: [60:48] So [tapping] can you tell me, what'd you used to do for lunch?  
9  
10 Thomas Pizzo: Lunch?  
11  
12 Marilyn Coulter: Yeah. [tapping]  
13  
14 Thomas Pizzo: I brought my lunch. Uh, I'd eat up in the cafeteria I think 4 times since I  
15 worked, began...  
16  
17 Marilyn Coulter: Mm-hm.  
18  
19 Thomas Pizzo: ...working here. [papers rustling] And I always felt that a half an hour was  
20 not enough time to go from your job site to the cafeteria, get something to  
21 eat, and run back to your job site. [tapping]  
22  
23 Marilyn Coulter: Mm. So.  
24  
25 Thomas Pizzo: Um, so [tapping] what I started doing is bringing in a thermos a coffee,  
26 [coughing] and, uh, couple a sandwiches, cookies, some fruit, [tapping] and,  
27 uh, that would last me all night. We used to have what they call a coffee  
28 wagon that came around, uh, once or twice a day to where they'd shut the  
29 line down and give ya time to, uh, get something off the coffee wagon and  
30 get an emergency relief if you needed one. [tapping] And, uh, then they did  
31 away with that and gave you, uh, that's when we got the 3rd break during  
32 the day, but when they did away with the coffee wagon.  
33  
34 Marilyn Coulter: Um.  
35  
36 Thomas Pizzo: And. [coughing]  
37  
38 Marilyn Coulter: [62:24] Did you participate in any a the dinners that they had in lunchtime  
39 sometimes were put together?  
40  
41 Thomas Pizzo: Any a the what?  
42  
43 Marilyn Coulter: Any a the dinners that were part-, that were put on by the departments. Did  
44 ya ever participate...  
45  
46 Thomas Pizzo: Oh, the dinners.

1  
2 Marilyn Coulter: ...[inaudible 62:34]?  
3  
4 Thomas Pizzo: Yeah, we – well, usually, [tapping] one a the dinners we had in here was  
5 retirement dinners when somebody finally retired, [background movement]  
6 and, uh.  
7  
8 Marilyn Coulter: [62:48] What about the holidays?  
9  
10 Thomas Pizzo: Holiday dinners we, usually the supervisor, uh, furnished the meat and, uh,  
11 everybody else brought things to, from home. Uh, some guys thought they  
12 were gettin' off on the cheap. The bachelors, ya know, they'd bring in, uh,  
13 chips and, uh, bologna and cheeses. [tapping] And, uh, but during the breaks  
14 was when we usually had those, and, uh, during the dinners, uh, sometime  
15 we had a main course would be a ham dinner or, uh, venison we've had a  
16 couple a times when the deer hunters would come in and bring some  
17 venison cooked up. Yeah, they'd get about 3 or 4 hunters bring in, uh, some  
18 venison and, uh, share it with the whole department. It was rare. I think it  
19 only happened once, but. [background movement] [papers rustling] And, uh,  
20 [inaudible 64:02] time, uh, a man and a woman [papers rustling] raised  
21 turkey and, uh, one Thanksgiving, they brought in, uh, 2 complete turkey  
22 dinners, [background movement] uh, or 2 complete turkeys for dinner.  
23 [tapping] And, uh, had the, he had all the trimmings and everything that  
24 went with'm. And he got that as a, uh, [background conversation] I think  
25 more or less for advertising, but he, uh, didn't charge anybody anything.  
26 [tapping]  
27  
28 Marilyn Coulter: [64:38] Did you, um, get any lasting friendships outta the Plant?  
29  
30 Thomas Pizzo: Nah, I think acquaintances.  
31  
32 Marilyn Coulter: Passing acquaintances.  
33  
34 Thomas Pizzo: I, uh, friends I made in here were in here. Um, as far as going to somebody's  
35 house and visiting, I've never done that, they've never been to my house.  
36 Believe it or not, I like it that way. Uh, couple a people, uh, we were gonna  
37 have a retirement dinner at my house, an open house, and then my wife was  
38 ill [tapping] health so we were not able to have that, [tapping] but there were  
39 2 people that, uh, I'd invited from the line that I felt real close to, and then  
40 since then I've talked with'm on the phone or I send'm Christmas cards or  
41 whatever. Uh, like I say, all a my friendships have been in the Plant, that  
42 stayed here. Uh, acquaintances, acquaintances. Uh, yourself, M-, Marilyn, I  
43 consider an acquaintance. Doug and John as friends, uh, in a roundabout  
44 way I guess we are, but, uh, we're more of a Fisher Body family that we are  
45 friends, I think. Um, [papers rustling] I feel more comfortable saying Fisher  
46 Body family rather than BOC because BOC is just a buncha letters thrown

1 in to make a statement. Fisher Body is Fisher Body, and that's what we  
2 were.  
3

4Marilyn Coulter: All right. [66:37] During your time there, can you tell me, were you active  
5 in the union at all? [background movement] Outside of the strikes and  
6 pickets.  
7

8Thomas Pizzo: Not really. Um.  
9

10Marilyn Coulter: Hm.  
11

12Thomas Pizzo: I ran for office a couple a [papers rustling] times but never got elected.  
13

14Marilyn Coulter: [66:53] So what office did ya run for?  
15

16Thomas Pizzo: I ran for committeeperson and had a, uh, [tapping] woulda won that except  
17 that the guy that was the incumbent found out my name was there and his  
18 wasn't. He had not planned on running again. [tapping] And so he ran  
19 against me and got elected...  
20

21Marilyn Coulter: Okay.  
22

23Thomas Pizzo: ...and, uh, [background movement] the other time was, uh, [throat clearing]  
24 uh, when I ran for Sergeant at Arms, which at the time I [papers rustling]  
25 started running for it was held by a retiree, and, uh, I felt that, uh, retirees at  
26 the time were retired, period. It was time for, uh, active, uh, working  
27 membership to, uh, [tapping] be, uh, running the union. Retirees had their  
28 chance and now they're retired, wasn't makin' the job open for, uh, active  
29 workforce.  
30

31Marilyn Coulter: Mm-hm. [tapping] Um.  
32

33Thomas Pizzo: I didn't get the job. Had a runoff election with another man, and the other  
34 man had, uh, less seniority [tapping] than I did and he had younger ideas,  
35 and that's what I was trying to infuse into the union at the time was to get  
36 the younger people involved in the union.  
37

38Marilyn Coulter: Mm-hm.  
39

40Thomas Pizzo: And so I stepped down, and I believe [Kevin Beard 68:33] was the man that  
41 was running for the position that time when I stepped down and, uh, signed  
42 off for him to win the election.  
43

44Marilyn Coulter: Mm. [tapping] [68:44] Out of all your bargained benefits, which one did you  
45 appreciate the most, would you say?  
46

1 Thomas Pizzo: My medical.  
2

3 Marilyn Coulter: Your medical?  
4

5 Thomas Pizzo: When I hired in, I was paying, uh, uh, a hundred-and-some-odd dollars a  
6 month for, uh, medical insurance and, uh, with a copay [tapping] with Blue  
7 Cross Blue Shield, and then I think it was the next contact, uh, after 30 and  
8 out that we got the, uh, full paid medical. [background movement] Um,  
9 [tapping] [background movement] and we've carried that right up onto to  
10 retirement, and now I don't know the whole story but there's rumor going  
11 on that, uh, the contract's been opened up and we've lost, uh, full paid  
12 benefits. That's just a rumor, uh, as far as I'm concerned, at this point.  
13 Nothing's in black and white. [tapping] But, uh, I've known for years that  
14 it's been coming down to the point of there's gonna be a give and take on  
15 the union's part as far as, uh, medical benefits, even the retirees, to where  
16 there has to be a higher rate a copay of some kind. Uh, you just can't keep  
17 on having people retired [tapping] and not the workforce to keep up the, uh,  
18 benefit. [tapping] Um, as far as the copay, I'm against it, but as fire as the  
19 higher rate on prescription drugs, I can get a 90-day supply for \$5 now, I  
20 would have no problem getting the same supply, 90 days, for \$15, [tapping]  
21 even though I, like I say, I'm on a fixed income, but, uh...  
22

23 Marilyn Coulter: Mm.  
24

25 Thomas Pizzo: ...I could make, uh, allowances for that, it's something I need, and, uh.  
26 [tapping] But I, I'm totally against the, uh, copay on the medical for retirees,  
27 and, uh, that's my saying.  
28

29 Marilyn Coulter: [71:19] Tom, you've been retired since 2002, you said. Can you tell us what  
30 the last day was like for you?  
31

32 Thomas Pizzo: Party time.  
33

34 Marilyn Coulter: It was party time? [laughter] What'd you do on your last day of work?  
35

36 Thomas Pizzo: Uh, first of all, there's a retirement dinner for ya held by your, thrown by  
37 your department. Uh, my wife was in a, uh, lo-, motorized wheelchair and  
38 so that [throat clearing] kind of, uh, limited, uh, the party time for me.  
39 Whereas ya get on take the Plant with, uh, other retirees and. [tapping] Or  
40 walk your, uh, family through into the different job sites, I didn't do that.  
41 All we did was came in for the dinner.  
42

43 Uh, I know in past retirements that I've gone around and I've enjoyed, uh,  
44 going around with buddies a mine that have retired, only because they  
45 worked there so long that they didn't have family anymore, some of'm 35,  
46 40 years. [tapping] And I said I'll never be one a those. You know, you

1 always try to tell somebody “Why don’t you retire? Why don’t you retire?  
2 You got the seniority,” and they tell me “I can’t afford it. I can’t afford it.”  
3 Well what’s the sense in staying till ya got 35, 40 years and there’s just you,  
4 your family’s all gone, and you can’t work no more? W-, what is there for  
5 your quality of life now that you’ve given everything to the company but  
6 there’s nothing left for you on the outside? I made up my mind that  
7 [tapping] that was not gonna happen to me. [throat clearing] I retired, uh,  
8 became a full-time caregiver for my wife till she passed away, [tapping]  
9 and, uh, now I’m on retiring it. I’m enjoying every day of it. Some days are  
10 better than others, but there’s really no bad day.  
11  
12 Marilyn Coulter: Okay.  
13  
14 Thomas Pizzo: And, uh, just goin’ to the, uh, there are no bad days.  
15  
16 Marilyn Coulter: Well, Tommy, I wanna say thank you. [Inaudible 73:58]?  
17  
18 Doug Rademacher: Is there anything you’d say to – um, Doug Rademacher. [74:00] Tom, is  
19 there anything you’d say to someone with, uh, about 10 years and we hired  
20 a, a new batch of people in ’95. They’ve got about 10 years in now and  
21 they’ve got [throat clearing] 20 years, hopefully, to, to work. What do, what  
22 would you have to tell somebody that’s fairly new to the auto industry and,  
23 and, uh, about working for Lansing?  
24  
25 Thomas Pizzo: Well, yeah, I would tell what they told me for years: get an education, get as  
26 high as you can in the company. If you have an education, you get into a  
27 different field other than automotive production, [tapping] because  
28 automotive production is gonna be a thing a the past. There’s gonna be  
29 different types a vehicles made in the future where it’s not gonna be the  
30 combustible engine. Everything’ll be automated. And this is the world you  
31 have to prepare yourself and your children for, the automated world,  
32 [tapping] and the only way you’re gonna do that is with a higher rate of  
33 education. [tapping] [coughing]  
34  
35 There’s always gonna be the people with high school graduates. [tapping]  
36 They’re gonna come in and do the factory job, but even some a them are  
37 gonna be on the outside looking in. [writing] They’re all, they’re gonna be  
38 doing the, uh, other menial jobs what it takes for civilization to [papers  
39 rustling] grow upon, which is housing construction, maintenance on  
40 housing. [tapping] All your different trades are gonna be filled with, in the  
41 future, by high school grads and your college r-, graduates are gonna be in  
42 the upper-echelon jobs. [tapping] And, uh, this is where you want you and  
43 your family to be is in the upper-echelon.  
44  
45 If you say to yourself, “I’m not good enough to move ahead,” you won’t be.  
46 You should make a goal that “I wanna be better than I am now, and the only

1 way I'm gonna do that is to go to college." Uh, there's benefits out there for  
2 you to get paid to go to college if you complete [background movement] the  
3 course. [tapping] Um, [background movement] [tapping] I know GM and I  
4 know the union both encourage people to go out and get a higher  
5 [background movement] level [door closing] of education and [background  
6 movement] take advantage a these courses. [tapping] Don't be a stay-at-  
7 home stick in the mud. I'm satisfied with where I'm at, but don't ever cop  
8 that attitude. Don't ever be satisfied with where you're at when you could be  
9 better. [tapping] And if nothing else, at least make one person smile with  
10 you every day; if not with you, at you.  
11  
12Doug Rademacher: It's worked for you, Tom. It's been a pleasure with your interview today.  
13  
14Marilyn Coulter: Yup. [tapping]  
15  
16Doug Rademacher: [background movement] Thank you.  
17  
18Marilyn Coulter: Thank you, Tom.  
19  
20John Fedewa: Thank you, Tom. [throat clearing]  
21  
22Thomas Pizzo: You're welcome. [recorder clicking]  
23  
24  
25/rt