

# LANSING FISHER BODY HISTORICAL

4-28-06

9:00 am

Team

Interviewee - Jody Frasher (2) brothers

Interviewer - Doug Radmacher

Sexuality - G-16-877

Married - Yes Children (2)

Education - High School 1 yr College

Military = No

\* Born in Escanaba Michigan in the Upper Peninsula, about 490 miles away from Lansing Mi.

- Father worked for Escanaba schools.
- Mother worked at West End Drugstore.
- He was a joiner at Teamsters Local 378 from 11 years old until 18 years old.
- Escanaba was also know for the biggest crane built in Escanaba MI.
- Reason for hiring in Fisher Body, no jobs in Escanaba so he came to Lansing Jody stood in line for an application about a day and 1/2 to get hired in at Fisher Body Plant. He also stood in line for almost 1 whole day for an application at Fisher Body.

This was a long line to stand in for each place for an application.

\* First job was building leadlines Very heavy coming into a big city had large plant. There

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were not a lot of minorities in Escanaba. So that too was scary working around different types of people from different lifestyles. He needed his diploma from the U.P. and got this and was hired in the next day on the second shift.

★ There were approx 10-12 people who come in with Jody and were taken to the trim office. He was taken to the headliner job in the downstairs. He was excited when he arrived but he got lost trying to find his way. When he first hired in he began working 9 hours a day and 6 days a week. Once he got acclimated to the plant it was a great place to work.

# Starting from day one until 90 days you were a probationary employee and could be fired if you made a mistake.

★ At one day he almost quit and walked all the way to the gate but changed his mind and returned to his job.

★ On this headliner job Jody was rotating with 2 other people and Jody built one out of sequence and the line had to be shut down. One of the general foreman came to

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him and yelled at him for doing this and did not hesitate to fire.

Someone who made a mistake. This also was within his 90 day period.

\* Then Jody went to the T-Top job and sunroofs. He was able to work considerable overtime on this job.

\* Prokbas = sent him to get a bucket of steam - sent him to get these off named parts, getting locked into the trunk of a car, or go through water test and get wet inside the trunk. At this time the union was very strong.

Jody was very proud to working in a shop represented by the UAW.

\* Another thing that happened, Jody met his ~~2~~ wife and they were married, and they have been together ever since. There were also some co-workers that he has made friends with over the years.

\* In his early years there was discrimination <sup>on</sup> almost daily basis. Both then people thought this kind of behavior was O.K. to do to people.

\* Lunches - Breaks - Card playing, walking, drinking in the plant. There was almost anything you wanted in the plant. Alcohol, drugs, prostitution, barbers,

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gossiping, general stores with food cigarettes, alcohol etc. People also prepared dinners and all types of ~~re~~ celebrations to eat, all the time.

Also people were there to cash your checks for \$5<sup>00</sup> each right at work.

★ Breaks - During the shift you would get 14, 15, 17 minutes and a 30 minute lunch. Also there what was called a "wagon" which was a 7 minute breaks twice a day where employees brought milk, sandwiches, pop, juice etc.

= Holidays were also a big event where the entire group would bring a dish to pass and the supervisor would pay for whatever meat went into this dinner.

★ Good Boss = straightforward, truthful, honest, takes care of their own people. Take care of your pay each week.

★ Changeovers = This was a time when the shop would change the model of vehicle and sometime this would last a few weeks to 3 months long.

= Union = Jody was introduced to this on his T-Top job but his committeeman would say my hands were tied.

★ First Union meetings Jody didn't know the procedures for a Union meeting

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This went on for a while until Jody decided to get involved within the Union to try to change things. There were some people in bargaining that had the I, me, myself, mentality. So Jody ran for alternate committee, then on committee, then to job trainer then to safety trainer to his present day. Today he can see the benefits that the Union involvement has given him in the past.

# He started in there with two lines of production going side by side. Jody also feels that we have the best workforce in the world. General Motors has built in Lansing 2 new plants. They could have went anywhere in the US or the world but they come to Lansing MI because of the UAW and the people in the factories who worked here in the past years and have built a strong reputation for quality and teamwork.

# Passing time on the job - Radios were small in the beginning, but as time went on the "boom boxes" were introduced in to the plant. These were very large radios and loud music. "Radio Wars" then started in the plant. Suspension then came through

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God removed all the plugs in the plant. So ~~so~~ radios were a good way to make the shift go smoother.

\* Body shop was called the "jungle" this was very loud with coveralls and suits with air pumped into your work suit.

# Paint shop also had their own rules for clothing such as coveralls, certain types of deodorant, shampoo, perfume would cause problems in the paint on cars.

# Honey's Bar was across the street from the plant. Some people would eat there a couple times a day.

# Also back then supervisors and employees did not associate with each other outside the plant, but today this is all changed.

# Plant names, BOC UCA etc but Jody feels that this will always be Fiber Body to him. People ~~was~~ were proud of what they built and the quality of products.

# Jody also feels that he has been blessed by GM, for a paycheck since the age of 19, The Benefits from the company. Also all the vehicles that we have built in this factory

\* Best Memory - being elected for the first time in a union position as alt committee

\* Bad Memory - watching a corner in paint

fall on a woman in the paint shop  
and drag her down the line.

# Jody believes that Union people that  
fought for us in the past are really  
responsible for what we have today.  
Also people need to remember to give  
backs to the community because we  
are so fortunate to have what we have.

A Best Bargained Benefit = Health Care, Vacation,  
and ~~to~~ the total contract package.

\* Got work by skilled trades = Friends  
of his in trades would help him about  
99% of the time when asked for it.

# Plant Closing = Jody felt he would never  
see the day of the plant demolition.  
Very sad day in history but we have  
a new facility to go to in the future.  
The millions of cars we have built here.  
Jody thanked the Historical Team for  
an opportunity to give an interview.