

Interviewee Michael Huerta

Interviewer Doug Rademaker

Seniority - 7-28-97

Married - Yes 1 child on the way.

Military - none

Education High school and some college.

Born and raised in Leguinao Mi

Father retired from Buick in Flint

Mother was a migrant worker

Reason for hire = The benefit package.

Mikes brother put his name in for a referral job at Fisher Body plant.

Mike come in on first shift at age 26.

First Day = went to training at an off site location. The plant wasn't working ~~to~~

because they were out of parts. So the plant was idle and this was a different kind of felling because of no production.

First day of work he was very nervous because of the difference between how it was the first day and this day where it was very loud. His first supervisor was Carol Hill. Mikes brother was scared the first day because he had a 90 day probationary period and was afraid of being let go for not doing a good job. The first job he had was worker

panels. His partner had 32 years seniority and gave him some good advice, so as not to hurt his hands on every car.

Mike remembered that he had a very good "Team coordinator". This is a person who relieves you for bathroom breaks, etc. Mike also felt that the cars were moving fast. 90 days later he was bumped to second shift where he was a "utility" person. Which is a person who fills in for absenteeism, vacation, doct. appts, etc.

90 days seniority would signify that you were a full fledged union member. You had union representation, paid dues etc.

At the time of hire Mike was driving from Kalamazoo each day which was a very long drive, day after day.

Seniority on the second shifts was close to 200 other ~~is~~ in Fisher Body.

Thanks = Christmas Turkey, Filling your gloves with hand lotion.

There was an incident in the body shop where his sweatshirt and T-shirt were cut from moving steel from 1 job to the next.

Body Shop = very loud and lots of grinding, Robotic coarseness, a futuristic look, sparks flying everywhere. Mike got lost the first time he was in Body Shop.

(3)

Trim shop was easier because, cleaner and you could wear shorts and lighter clothes. Much work in Trim also.

Mike came into the shop with the intent of going to college and not staying long.

- # One good reason for his coworkers' closeness. ~~is~~ Taking care of him when his father passed away and they helped him.
- # Mike also met his wife at the plant and they were recently married.

Breaks + lunch = mostly with his now wife, read mostly, sometimes there were dinners for birthdays or retirements of people.

- # Rumors in the plant = Production breakdowns, layoffs, someone getting fired, all sorts of rumors. = "Radies" were a big hit in the plant, as they ~~to~~ helped the time go by faster.

Also there was a man who sold limos to people inside the plant and they were good.

- # Skilled Tradesmen = Mike really didn't know too many of them but they treated him very well.

Mike had a totally different view of the Union back then than he has today.

He was approached by Marta Bubbillo to sign up ~~do~~ for a workshop at Block Lake and took a Union Awareness class and was very enlightened by this class. Came

(4)

locks and started going to union meetings and getting involved with the union, serving the membership of Local 602; now plans to stay 30 years and continue to serve.

Good Supervisor = Respecting employees, working together to ~~to~~ solve problems calmly.

Bad Supervisor = They would use the job bonuses for firing up their own people.

* Best Memories = when he met his wife and eventually was married.

* Funniest Moment = The last 6-7 months of work the team that Mike was on ~~to~~ became close friends and that continues today.

Saddest Memory = The day he came to work when his father passed away.

* Discrimination = Mike never had it directly to him, but saw this quite a lot, racial slurs, this should never happen period. Also this was gender discrimination also.

* Injuries in the plant = a chair that moved in and out of every car, this gentleman looked as if he was hurt badly but was OK.

Capital of Quality = The workforce tells it all. The workforce is on older facility and still building quality cars every day.

* Union Involvement - Try to make every meeting attends meetings because he wants to.

(5)

- # Mike feels that some people don't care about the union and only about 100-100 show up, citizenship + legislation, Education, Election, Clubs, Ran for numerous elections but not yet elected. Always votes in all elections. Very involved in politics, working on different campaigns. Mike started working on a newsletter to let the membership know what's going on in their govt at home.
- * Most appreciated Bargained Benefit = Health Care, Tuition assistance Program where GM pays for college when members attend classes.
- * White Shirt Day = As Mike is a history buff this is a day to ~~wear~~ wear button down white shirt all day and remember the people who came before us and the benefits that were won for us in the early years.
- * Community Activities = Mike went to shovel sidewalks for the meals on wheels service. He also would work for them, and to this day still is involved with this charity.
- * Plant Closing = Very sad, a bizarre sight as it was being torn down, another plant gone it will be something when it is all torn down. Remarks = The new plant is amazing, most technological advanced plant in the world. Best ergonomics in the world also.

(6)

The difference between a 100 year old building and a new plant is amazing also. Mike felt that the plant was enormous, and exciting. People need to realize that everything is just not great as everyone seems to think.