



THE HENRY FORD

COLLECTING INNOVATION TODAY

TRANSCRIPT OF A VIDEO ORAL HISTORY

INTERVIEW WITH CARROLL SHELBY

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CARROLL SHELBY LICENSING

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CORRESPONDENT: BARRY HURD

PRODUCER: JUDY ENDELMAN

CAROLL SHELBY:

06:00:33;22

You know, a damn near miracle to build it as quick as they did and go out and win them all, you know, four straight times and against Ferrari and all of those other people that had been doin' it for many, many years. You know, when they pissed Henry off, well he just said, "Well, we'll just go do our own".

QUESTION:

06:00:51;12

Tell me a little bit, you know Henry pretty well. Tell me a little bit about him.

CAROLL SHELBY:

06:00:57;04

Well, he's to me, he cut through all of the BS. He just got down to what counted, and he didn't do a lot of talkin'. If he didn't like you, he'd tell you. And I can tell you that he really thought a lot of his children. Edsel did with me about four or five months, and he called three times a day to make sure, and I'm told that he did to his daughters the same way after his divorce. So there was a lot of things about him. I used to go out to his house and eat on Sunday,

when I was back in Detroit. He was always a straight up guy. He didn't get into the details a lot.

QUESTION:

06:01:53;10

But you said he got upset about somethin' and decided to push the racing program? Were you startin' to tell me that or...

CAROLL SHELBY:

06:01:58;28

Well, we were building a Cobra and what Henry did was, there was an agreement with all of the three big companies (Chrysler, Ford, and General Motors) that they wouldn't go racing. And General Motors kept breaking it, and finally he just said, "To hell with it. Let's go kick the hell out 'em". So they got into stock car racing business (NASCAR, at the time) and then they got into sport cars. And I told 'em, told Iaccoca that when he was sales manager at Ford...

CAROLL SHELBY:

06:02:48;09

And I went back there and they had a new little engine at Ford, a little V8 engine. And I said, "If you'll give me \$25,000, I'll build you a car

that'll kick the hell out of the Corvettes". And Iacocca said, "You better give that guy 25,000 before he bites somebody". And I didn't meet Henry for another year or so after that. But what happened: we were building the Cobras and winning everything, and Henry says to Don Frey, or Iacocca, or somebody, I think Don Frey, and he said, "Well, let's go see if we can buy a Ferrari". So, they went, Don Frey went over there, to see if they could buy it and the negotiation, I think, went on, you can check with Don Fry on this. He's still alive up in Chicago. And it fell through. He told me in 2000, he never told me why it really fell through. The bean counters got into it, and said the desk wasn't worth \$7.50, and the lathe wasn't worth \$3,000, because it had been built, been given to Ferrari by the Germans during the war; and it was old and worn out.

06:04:15;01

Well, what a bean counter never realizes, that you're buying the sizzle. You're not buying a

steak. So, it fell through. And when it fell through, I don't even think Henry knew why it fell through, really. And he says, "Well, let's just go build our own car".

06:04:31;26

So Hal Spurley and Ray Geddes and I went over to LeMans in 1963 and met with the fella that owned Lola, named Eric Broadley; and he had built a mid-shipped engine car with a little coupe with a Ford engine. And we put a deal together, went over to England with Eric and made a deal with John Wyer, who I had driven for and won LeMans as a driver in 1959. And we put a deal together that they would build a mid-ship engine sport car that we would take to LeMans. And about three months later, Eric Broadley pulled out of the deal, because he couldn't, he was a very simple person an engineer that just didn't want to fool with the politics at Ford. And so John Wyer built the car and then took it to LeMans in 1964 and it didn't do very good; and that's when they turned the program over to us in California. And

Ken Miles went back to...

CAROLL SHELBY:

06:06:01;08

So, in '65, a fella named Don Sullivan and Bill Innes was a chief engineer and some of the engineer guys decided, "Well, to win LeMans, we're going to build our own engine, own transmission". And they set up a dynamometer, a series of dynamometers, built the engine, and they would run ten LeMans, no problems with the engine. About ten days before LeMans in '65 they decided just to pull 'em down to see if anything had gone wrong with 'em, internally. And they found the head bolts had stretched just a few thousand, said, "Well, we might as well replace them".

06:06:56;02

We went to LeMans in '65. Led the race, out qualified everybody, and then all of the engines blew up, because the head bolts stretched. (LAUGHTER) They had got a bad set of head bolts. So in '66, we still had the engines, the 427, but we would run out of brakes, because the car

weighed 4,000 pounds and the kinetic forces on the brakes had just burned 'em out. They weighed 4,000 pounds with the driver and fuel in 'em, and that was a heavy racecar. And down that straight at LeMans, three and a half miles, when it came time to stop, you burned the brakes out right quick. So, about a month before LeMans as I remember it, Phil Remington, who was not an engineer, but probably superior to a lot of engineers, worked for us and he figured out a way to change the rotors in one minute. So, that's what won LeMans for us, as well as a lot of hard work as far as designing the car.

06:08:20;26

They were bullet-proof. And they had Holman and Moody run three of them, and we ran three of them. Ken Miles had already won Daytona and Sebring. He was leading by a lap and a half; and the aristocracy at Ford decided they'd have all three cars cross the finish line at the same time, because they were running one, two, three.

06:08:45;20

And LeMans have always thought they made the rule up that Bruce McClaren and Denny Hulme had started a little further back in the LeMans start. So, they said that they had run 50 feet further than the others. And if anything ever broke a man's heart, it was the fact that Ken Miles would have been the first and only person to ever win all three races in the same year. And then tragically a car was built back in Detroit by an outside vendor and Ken was killed in August of 1966.

06:09:25;16

So, he never got a chance at LeMans again, but we went and Foyt and Gurney did a tremendous job, a big duel with Ferrari, because Ferrari was really chapped that we won in '66. And then when they passed a rule at the end of '67 that none of the big, the seven liter engines could run.

06:09:52;02

John Wyer put together a racing team with Gulf Oil and they won in '68 and '69. And that ended, Ford says, "No more". We won it four straight

years and to put that program together inside a big company, it's the only thing, only program I've ever known that didn't have a budget, because Henry said we were going to do it. And when Mr. Ford spoke, suddenly the politics started, I mean, the politics stopped. And I remember when Mr. Lundy, who was the chief financial officer at the time, came to me and he said, "Shelby, we've spent \$200,000,000 and we're gonna break this goddamn company if somebody doesn't get this under control".

06:10:47;16

I said, "You go tell that to Mr. Ford, because I'm not (LAUGHTER) touching it". Well, there's no tellin' how much we spent, because everybody... I remember one time the windshields broke in April of 1966, the next morning in Orly, in Paris, a 707 arrived with six windshields.

06:11:15;23

So, it was that kind of a program. And I have so many memories of that, because since then, as before, there's never been a program like that.

And that's what Henry wanted; and I was so happy to see us do that. I thought it was a great accomplishment by everybody inside of Ford pulling together to make it happen. And then it went away, like everybody forgot. They gave the cars away. We had a half a dozen photographers all over the world that took pictures, and somebody decided that, I guess that it wasn't that important. It went away for 35 years before it came back and people recognized what the endeavor had been all about and what a terrific accomplishment it was.

CAROLL SHELBY:

06:12:40;28

...you have the '67 car that won.

QUESTION:

06:12:43;01

We'd like to ask you to sort of tell us a little bit more about that. And you made the statement with "the sizzle", tell us about some of the sizzle of the car, as well as why it won. A little bit more in depth story about that would help us with the exhibit.

QUESTION:

06:13:06;08

All right. Tell us, you know, we have the '67 car that's gonna be part of the exhibit. It won. Tell us a little bit more about that, the drivers, and you, and how that all came about.

CAROLL SHELBY:

06:13:15;15

A.J. Foyt was an excellent race driver all of his life, and he had just won Indianapolis in '67. He wasn't particularly experienced on road courses, but he was such a good race driver. And Dan Gurney was, we paired those two together. And everybody expected that car to be the one that blew up. Mike Parkes was in a Ferrari, and it was a duel all the way through the race. But the brilliant thing was the way Dan Gurney managed A.J. Foyt, because A.J. didn't have the experience on road courses. But naturally, their ego, a race driver's ego, will not let somebody else go faster than they went. So, Gurney just went at a normal pace all during practice. He worked with A.J. He showed them the ins and outs, and never got in competition with A.J. to

see how fast they go, because LeMans is an endurance contest. You gotta say, back then, now, it's just a sprint race. But back then, you had to save the brakes. You had to watch the transmission. You had, the engine wasn't as controlled, electronically, as it is now.

06:14:43;04

Now, it would be impossible to stress the engine, because you have the electronic controls and so forth. But that car would go down the straightaway there, that three and a half mile straightaway, 240 miles an hour. And it was very stable.

06:14:59;18

You always have a crosswind at LeMans. It was a car that, as far as I know, that had, we had more, we did more work in a wind tunnel with that car than ever had been done up to that time. But during the race, a funny thing happened. Mike Parkes had been just following right along behind Dan Gurney, with his lights right behind him. And Dan was driving to a pre-determined pace that

we knew the car would finish. And Mike was just buggin' him, and buggin' him, and buggin' him, acting like at the end of Mulsanne. He acted like he was going to pass him and use more brakes than Dan did.

06:15:46;09

Suddenly, at along about 14 or 16 hours, you should ask Dan about this, because it was brilliant. He just pulled over and stopped. (LAUGHTER) Nothing for Mike Parkes. Mike Parkes pulled over and stopped also. It was very interesting, them playing cat and mouse with each other.

06:16:05;26

Dan could have gone a lot faster than he had been going, but I'd like for you to talk to Dan tomorrow about that and really get him to explain it, because he can explain it much better than I can. But it was a brilliant move, on Dan's part. Anyway, we wound up winning the race and got outlawed from then on, the size of the engine. But it was a pushrod engine, and pushrod engines

don't put out near as much power as the four valve double overhead cam engines that Ferrari had. So, it was kind of a stupid move, as far as I'm concerned, for LeMans. I think they just didn't want an American company to come over there and win the race year after year, after year, although they permit Audi to do it now.

06:16:49;01

They permitted Porsche to do it for years. Ferrari won it for years. I can't explain their thinking of why they did it, but as I said, the old Ford GT, a lot of people called it the GT40.

06:17:03;02

It was never, the English press called it the GT40, just like they called the Shelby Cobra the AC Cobra, which that was never the name of it. So we won it the four years, and Mr. Ford says, "That's all. We're pulling out of racing completely". He had accomplished his goal of embarrassing GM.

QUESTION:

06:17:28;12

Before, you mentioned you worked with Lee

Iacocca. He gave you original engines. Was that for the Cobra that time? Or what was that for?

CAROLL SHELBY:

06:17:34;18

He gave me \$25,000 to build two prototype Cobras. And I went to England and had AC build the chassis, and we put the Ford engines in 'em. In 1962 we had a Ford dealer introduction, 4,000 dealers sitting there. They took the two Cobras out and were running it in front of 'em, and both of 'em got hot and blew up. (LAUGHTER) They held 'em up and hadn't been fully developed, one of the most embarrassing things that ever happened to me, but Lee stuck with me. And we won the national championship against the Corvettes for seven years, when in 1964, we were leading. We didn't start racing in Europe till June. We were one point behind for the last race of the season, which was at Monza. We had the six cars ready to kick the heck out of Ferrari. And what happened, politics again. He called, he had an automobile club in Monza call the race off. So, the next year we started early, and it was no contest. We

beat 'em for the world championship with a Cobra Daytona Coupe, which is still the only American car that ever won the world manufacturer's championship.

QUESTION:

06:18:56;11

So, he was a pretty good car and race supporter when you dealt with Iacocca. Tell me a little bit more about him.

CAROLL SHELBY:

06:19:02;04

Iacocca he was a strange duck. He lives right close to me now, and I see him very often. And when Mr. Lundy went into the Automotive Hall of Fame five or six years ago, I said, and Mr. Lundy was the financier. He was a guru. He was I think Henry's closest, Henry the Duece's closest person at Ford. And I said, "Mr. Lundy, Mr. Iacocca, said he was sorry he couldn't be here". "Lee", he said that and said, "Finest finance man that ever lived. Finest finance man that ever lived in the automobile industry". Well, I thought that was very strange, 'cause I had worked with him 40 years, nearly, then. He was

trained as an engineer. He went to work and the sales manager took a liking to him and moved him into sales.

06:20:06;07

He became a great salesman, although he was trained as an engineer, and they don't usually make very good salesman. But I remember when I worked very closely with him, about every February 1st, he would say, "Take another billion out".

06:20:23;11

And that's the thing that impressed Mr. Lundy, I guess, when he called him the "greatest finance man that ever lived", because when I worked with him, he was always going to run for President or clean up the Statue of Liberty, (LAUGHTER) whatever, he was always full of energy and always, Lee is a great American. I think he would have made a great President of the United States. I think he would have really gotten a lot accomplished, because he always balanced the budget and he always made sure he made money.

And I still see him, still think a lot of him, although he and Henry didn't get along.

QUESTION:

06:21:07;12 You wanna tell us a little bit about that?

CAROLL SHELBY:

06:21:08;19 Oh, I better not go there. (LAUGHTER)

QUESTION:

06:21:20;06 I'm gonna, I wanna ask you a little bit, since we're gonna see Parnelli Jones and...

CAROLL SHELBY:

06:21:23;24 Parnelli is a great racing driver.

QUESTION:

06:21:25;23 Tell us a little bit about A.J., too. So, tell us about those three drivers, Gurney, Foyt, and Parnelli Jones.

CAROLL SHELBY:

06:21:32;04 Well, Gurney, I was in the first big race against Gurney in 1957 and I spun out the first lap and lost 40 seconds. Finally, three or four laps from the end, I caught him and passed him; but I saw then there was a great talent.

06:21:49;08

And Phil Hill and I asked him to come to Europe, and we tried to help him get started over there. And he had a great career. In Formula One and in long distance racing, and all types of racing. He was an all-around driver.

06:22:08;09

A.J. was a great racing driver. He started out on the dirt tracks here when he was just a kid, and everybody knows what he accomplished. Parnelli, as far as I'm concerned, was one of the great American unsung heroes of, as a race driver. He was one of the most understated guys. He worked at Firestone. He was a Firestone distributor out here, and I was a Goodyear distributor. He drove a car for me in 1965 called a King Cobra with Firestone tires on it, and Goodyear damn near fired me. But before the race, I said, "If you'll drive for me Parnelli, you get to pick the tires, whichever you think is best".

06:23:01;23

Well, I had an idea that he was gonna use

Firestones, but my ambition was to win a race. And my first obligation was to Ford, as Ford was pickin' up part of the tab. And I can't think of anybody in racing that I think anymore of than, although we were on opposite sides of the fence in a rubber business and tire business for 35 or 40 years.

06:23:30;29

And he's a great friend. I admire him. As I said, understated, absolutely brilliant race driver. There's nobody that I know of that could drive around Parnelli in a race car, in equal cars.

QUESTION:

06:23:50;04

Let me ask you something else. We were talking before about how you could sing and they could fix your voice up. Do you have a favorite kind of music or a piece of music, a song, or something, that you like?

CAROLL SHELBY:

06:24:01;03

I was raised as a southern Baptist. Boy, I wasn't allowed to drink a Coca-Cola. I was only

allowed to drink water and milk on Sunday, and the worst whippin' I ever got was goin' fishing one Sunday. But I had to go to church, and I still enjoy gospel music, old timey gospel. I enjoy very much Artie Shaw, all of the, I think he was the last guy, Les Brown was a friend of mine. I enjoyed very much the Big Band era, and I have a great collection of that. I also have great admiration for all the old country singers of the '30's and Hank Williams. Some of those guys tellin' their mournful tales. When I can't sleep at night, I'll put them on and it will put me right back to sleep. So, those three types of music are my favorite.

CARROLL SHELBY:

07:00:49;13

Well, I was raised as a Southern Baptist. My mother and father were hard shell Baptists. I wasn't allowed to drink anything but water and milk on Sunday. But from the time I was baby, I was a baby, I had to go to church and I fell in love with Gospel music. And I can still sing a lot of those songs to this day, or parts of 'em

anyway.

07:01:11;26

And the other music that I enjoy very much is when I grew up in my teen years with the Big Band era. And after I moved out here, I got to know Les Brown, and several of the guys that were still alive, and Artie Shaw, I think just passed on and Julie London, some of those people. And I've known Jo Stafford, just passed away, and that was the music that I really grew up with and enjoyed listening to. And back in my teen years, I also enjoyed Hank Williams and Lefty Frizell, and all the country music guys.

07:01:56;01

And I don't care anything about modern country. I don't care anything about cross over or any of that. And modern music doesn't, there hasn't been 10 songs that I've liked the last 40 years, but my gospel, I still listen to it. I still listen to, thank God for XM now. You can punch a button and get anything that you want. And then the iTunes and all that stuff. So, anyway, I

like my music. And when I wake up at night and can't sleep, tryin to fix somethin that ain't broke, well I put some of my tapes on and listen.

QUESTION:

07:02:38;10

Perfect. Let's talk about racing, the business and performance, and this high speed, and the thrills. And obviously a dangerous sport as well. I mean, you were talking before about Ken Miles and then other people you've known who haven't made it through some of the things.

CARROLL SHELBY:

07:02:51;21

Sure.

QUESTION:

07:02:52;00

What is it about this speed and this excitement, and the thrill that attracts, and how do you go back to it after there's tragedy?

CARROLL SHELBY:

07:03:00;06

It's tough. But back when I used to drive race cars, the Grand Prix circuit, back in 1955, on the dirt tracks, I didn't drive on the dirt tracks, but I think they lost half of the stars of the racing here in the United States that

year. And it was not uncommon for us to lose four or five drivers a year back in the '50s and the '60s.

07:03:31;18

It's much safer now. But we used to live through it. If your time's up, we just figured it was up. And we didn't pay that much attention to it, because we knew that the danger was there. And now, Grand Prix car drivers hit the wall at 200 miles an hour, and jog back to the pits and get their back-up car.

07:03:56;19

And it's a lot safer now, which I'm thankful for. We would, we'll never know how to grade drivers though in this era as well as we could back in the era of the '50s, in my opinion. For instance, people will ask me who was the greatest driver you ever knew?

07:04:24;16

You can't say that, because in my era, Fangio was, without a doubt. Then there's an era where Senna was pretty dominating. Then we had an era

when Schumacher was dominating. We had an era at Indianapolis with a front engine roadster where there were five or six, seven, eight guys that could win a race when the flag dropped. So, you never knew who was best at, as far as the driver is concerned. And that's like, I was never interested in tryin to be world champion. If I had, I was goin' to Ferrari when he asked me four or five times to come to work for him.

07:05:11;04

But I was very happy with the Aston Martin team. We were comfortable with each other, although we weren't as fast as the Ferraris. We usually managed to finish a race. We got a good percentage of the wins in the world championship every year.

07:05:26;09

And in 1958, I developed a little heart problem, and I had to take a few nitroglycerin pills as a driver. But I won them all in 1958 with Aston Martin as a driver, and won the national championship in 1960, the world racing

championship. And suddenly, and I always knew that I wanted to build my own car, but at Laguna Seca in October of 1960, I was driving around the race track, had a little angina attack, popped the nitroglycerin pill. And I said, "This is kinda stupid. I think I'll pitch it in." I was 37 years old, and I didn't wanna see, didn't wanna be like a lot of athletes that I'd seen that went on and on after they had hit peaked.

07:06:22;02

So, I just quit and started trying to put the program together that turned out to be the Cobra. So, as I say, driving, I really enjoyed it. But it [was] always in the back of my mind, I wanted to build my own car. So, I thought it was time to do that.

07:06:44;24

And I had a bad heart, a little hereditary problem. And when they took my heart out in 1990, Dr. Trento at Cedars-Sinai said, "You've had 40 heart attacks." Says, "All you've got is a bunch, is a glob of scar tissue here." And I'm

told they still have my heart pickled there at
(LAUGHTER) Cedars-Sinai. It's really the worst
heart they ever took out of anybody. But I used
to get an angina attack, I'd just sit down and
rest for five minutes. And he said, "You were
having a heart attack all those, probably 40
times." So, I got a heart in 1990.

QUESTION:

07:07:27;09 Did you ever have a serious accident, and you
just...

CARROLL SHELBY:

07:07:29;01 Yeah. I had two or...

QUESTION:

07:07:29;07 ...jumped back in the car?

CARROLL SHELBY:

07:07:29;21 ...three of 'em.

QUESTION:

07:07:30;15 Tell me a little bit about that and how you...

CARROLL SHELBY:

07:07:32;06 Mexican Road Race in 1954, I was driving an
Austin Healy, and actually, I was going along
pretty good. I was keepin' up with the Ferraris,

and ahead of all the Lincolns in this little four-cylinder Austin Healy. And I came to a negative camber, and screwed up and hit a rock doin' about 130 miles an hour, and stopped in about 10 feet. And it hit so hard, the hickory handle, the knock-off handle broke, knocked off my elbow, and chopped up a little bit.

07:08:12;20

I went to the hospital at Pueblo and I had signed in for the car, into Mexico. And they held me up for four days before they let me out because a Mexican came along and stole everything. The wheels, the engine, there was nothin' except the shell there the next morning. So that was one accident and then I got 300 stitches in my face at Riverside in 1967, '57.

QUESTION:

07:08:44;01

But it didn't scare you enough to stop drivin?
It was...

CARROLL SHELBY:

07:08:47;12

No, I won the next race at Riverside. That was the race that Gurney, was his first big time

race. And...

QUESTION:

07:08:56;07

So, are race drivers immune to fear or what keeps 'em going? I mean, a normal person would...

CARROLL SHELBY:

07:08:59;28

Well, if you sat around and worried about it all the time, you wouldn't be a race driver. You just put it outta your head. That's what you chose to do as a career. You just go to work and you know that, excuse the expression, but shit happens.

07:09:18;10

And you don't worry about that, because your objective is to win the race if you're a decent race driver. And if something happens to ya, that's part of the game. And I never thought about that.

QUESTION:

07:09:30;21

Let me ask you this. Obviously you're on the track racin or building cars that others are driving. There's all kinds of fans watching, the fans enjoy it. Can you think of part of our

exhibit, we're gonna show some of the fans. Is there some experiences you've had or one fan that used to show up all the time or something you could tell us? Talk to us a little bit about that.

CARROLL SHELBY:

07:09:46;28

I could name a lot a characters that I knew over the years, and would show up sometimes here, and then I'd see them in Europe. I'd see them at races all over the country. And there's a lot a people that were such, they were so motivated as fans, they traveled all over the world. And course, most of those people have passed on now that I'm 85. And, but I still think about a lot of them all the time.

QUESTION:

07:10:16;23

Is there one in particular you could tell us a story about maybe? Do you remember?

CARROLL SHELBY:

07:10:19;18

No, we lost a good friend named Bernard Cahier not long ago, that was a journalist, and a crappy journalist. But he was a wonderful guy that

followed around and took pictures all the time. And his wife, Joanie used to have to write his articles. She was American, he was French.

07:10:43;13

And he was a real character. And when he passed away a month or so ago, Gurney and all of us, every racer driver new Bernard for 40 years. And thank God he had just done a book, and his son's carrying on as a great racing photographer.

QUESTION:

07:11:05;06

You know, you were tellin us a story of when they, I guess they pulled the plug on the racing program after that. Was it '67 or '68?

CARROLL SHELBY:

07:11:11;10

Yes.

QUESTION:

07:11:11;27

And then what did you do then?

CARROLL SHELBY:

07:11:16;19

Well, when Bunkie Knudson took over, I was out of business at Ford because he had been my nemesis for years. And we had beat him, and when he came in as President, I didn't say anything to

anybody. I just said, "My program's over. You guys can have it."

07:11:37;09

They wanted me to build what turned out to be the Pantera. That car was built. But in '68, I went to Africa and spent a couple weeks. I liked Africa. I went back down there and spent a month in 1969. And I decided to move there, and I spent nine months a year in Africa for 12 years.

07:11:59;15

And that's when performance went away in this country. In fact, a two-liter BMW was considered the ultimate sports car in this country, a little sedan. Because Detroit was forced to concentrate on safety and emissions. And that took all of their resources, their engineering resources. There wasn't anything racing. Performance went away in this country for 30 years. It started picking up a little bit in the '80s, and that's when I came back into it.

07:12:37;11

But actually, for about 12, 14 years there, they

were just sticking the hydrocarbons back in the engine, and hoped a little bit more of it would burn and they could pass the government mandates. Finally, electronics, variable valve timing and all of that stuff came along, and it moved very rapidly. And performance came back. And now, we're building better cars in this country and all over the world than we ever thought about building in what they call the golden era of the 1960's, when all the muscle cars, everybody was in a war.

07:13:17;23

Chrysler, Ford, General Motors, all had their muscle cars, and it's what the Baby Boomers retiring now, and they keep the price of these old cars way up there. I don't care about drivin 'em. I got a bunch of 'em. You see 'em sitting around here. I own a lot of them, but I prefer to drive the modern cars and the cars like we're driving now, because electronics, brakes, suspensions were developed during the '80s and '90s, and they're being developed every year.

You know, the automobile now is a much better product than it was back in the '60s.

QUESTION:

07:13:59;24

Let's talk a little bit of, you mentioned about you know, you traveled around the world racing. There's something about American racing that's different than the way they race other places. What makes, compare American racing to racing? And how is it different from racing in other parts of the world?

CARROLL SHELBY:

07:14:12;29

Well, it was racing, it was different. And it was dirt track racing, a sport car movement in the late '40s. The soldiers were over there, they saw the car, the little two place sport cars in Europe and they started bringing a few of them back. And it became a pretty big business. You know, Jaguars and Ferraris, and so forth became popular here in the United States.

07:14:37;08

And now racing here in the United States is about the same level that it is in Europe, except for

drag racing, which is very, very popular here in this country. It's pretty popular in Australia. It never caught on in Europe to the extent that it has.

07:14:58;00

But racing is pretty well worldwide now except for Formula One racing. And that's because these companies all got into it. And they spend four or five hundred million dollars a year on this. And you're not gonna see an American compa... shareholders that'd shoot the chairman if they started spending that kinda money going racing every year. So, but, actually, in Nascar now, they put Ford on one car and put Chevrolet on another, Toyota on another one, and Dodge on another one, and they're all the same. So, I wonder how that's going to play out. I wonder if the public's gonna catch on that they're getting' hoodwinked there. (LAUGHTER)

QUESTION:

07:16:20;12

Tell us how did all these innovative things you brought to the market, these high performance

cars, the excitement of the race and on the street, on the track, how'd you manage to keep this innovation when you're working with these big structured companies who are, like, sort of against that. The momentum's the other way.

CARROLL SHELBY:

07:16:39;15

It's very difficult. A small company like ours can do things that can't be done inside a big company. And it creates a lot of problems, such as not invented here, because the things that we do are the interesting parts of what a lot of engineers that, and for instance, a stylist would go to school. And he'd graduate from an art center or Detroit school back there. And he is an automobile designer.

07:17:13;06

And then he'll get married, get him a job at Ford or somewhere. And get into the design center, I mean, the design department of the company. What happens, gets married, has a couple kids, and they put him to designing door handles or bumpers. And it's one of the most heart rending

things that I have to put up with.

07:17:44;11

Because, you see, these engineers that want to engineer an automobile and they wind up engineering springs. Or they wind up engineering a suspension system or something. And here, our little company gets to take these cars and do the things that to them that they can't do back there, because it created, we work in what you call a niche market, where there's not much, you can't sell a million of these cars. And their finances are based on they gotta sell a million of something to make any money. It's very difficult for us, because we could not operate without being a part of a big company.

07:18:37;00

It would cost us 20 million dollars to do what we call the soft stuff, emissions and crash testing of a model of a car. We have to work with a big company to do that. They have 10,000 engineers working on that. We wouldn't have the 20 million dollars to do that.

07:18:53;23

So, we have to work with 'em. It's constant working with the people that understand why we're there. We're there to build what we call halo cars, to show that these young people, that a great percentage of the young people in this country, their first interest is automobiles. And their interested in performance, they're interested in cars that will do unusual things. They are not interested in a black Chevrolet or a black Ford or the things that they sell millions of. They're interested in the cars that you read about winning the races in the newspapers or the magazines or on the Internet now.

07:19:44;06

And us working with these companies, it's a very tight wire that we have to walk. If we're cocky about it, if we think that we're very important in the overall scheme of a big company, they're going to run us off. We're there to perform a service that gets a lot of publicity for the things that we do.

07:20:08;10

That the cars that we take and modify are the sport cars that we build. And we can do that, we can take a project and go from zero to three months we're in production. Where Ford, if they have to do that, they take two years to do what we can do in three months. So, it's a very tight rope that we have to walk. But we couldn't be in business if we went out on our own.

07:20:43;16

I've known of a thousand automobile, a thousand guys that are gonna build an automobile, and they don't realize that there's 7,000 parts that have to be coordinated. The parts have to come in on time, they have to be designed properly. And that can only be done by the big company that has all of these engineers, all the testing facilities.

07:21:04;11

And we reap a lot of the glory of this. But I always tell the people, our people, you have to eat humble pie, because you're very lucky to get

to work on the things that you get to work on, and have the backing of a big company. Yet, you create a jealousy in an age not invented here, of a lot of people inside that company that go to work every day heart broken because they wanna do the same thing. So, I've been fortunate, I think, to realize that, as many years as I've been in it. I learned a long time ago, I saw guys that would get into the business like we were, and they'd think that we're bullet proof or we're bigger than the company they, or we do things that they can't do. They can't live without us.

07:22:04;24

Don't kid yourself. They can live without ya in five minutes and they'll never hear from ya again. But I constantly try to motivate our people not only to build a better product, but how to work with a big company. Which we couldn't do it without 'em.

QUESTION:

07:22:24;12

And how do you motivate them to do that?

CARROLL SHELBY:

07:22:26;12

Constantly staying in touch with them. Seeing that they work with the people inside the company. You have people inside the company are very difficult to work with. You have to eat crow a lot. You have to cooperate with the people that you're having to work with, and you have to realize that they have problems and they work up in the morning in a bad temper that can cost our little company millions of dollars. So, all of this has to be monitored, and we have to work with these people. And my job is to try to pick up these problems and solve them.

QUESTION:

07:23:04;27

Suppose we had a bunch of young people starting out who wanted to be engineers, but they wanted to be, they wanna be like you. They wanna build these exciting race cars and street cars. I mean, what would you tell them? What would you, how they could bring their innovations to life in the years ahead? What would be your advice?

CARROLL SHELBY:

07:23:21;22

To have a passion for automobiles that I've had all my life. To realize what your goals are. To stick with your plan, and understand human nature to the point that you realize that you have to work, you have, there are people, everything that we do, there's people that are much smarter than we are, that, any job that we do.

07:23:55;12

But by coordinating and working with those people, and letting them know that it's a team effort, and you're trying to accomplish something that you can do for half the money, you can do for a tenth of the time by working together. And that's my job, I've made it work. I've had great disappointments. I'm 85 years old, I'm going to have great disappointments from now on, but it's my passion to do this.

07:24:29;16

I still wake up at 2:00 in the morning trying to fix something that usually isn't a problem at 7:00 when I wake up. But you have to be on top

of the problems. And all business is, as far as I'm concerned, is solving problems, and trying to solve it with the least amount of friction between two people.

QUESTION:

07:24:51;09

Can you tell us about any exciting things you're working on for the future? I mean, you still come to work, and you're working on stuff. What's goin on?

CARROLL SHELBY:

07:24:57;20

Well, yeah, I'm concentrating on Mustangs. We can't build a lot of different cars, but we're going through a big transition right now. And that is the fuel crunch. And we have huge engine cars now. The dealers are making a lot of money-over the MSRP of our cars right now.

07:25:28;12

But we know that if the fuel prices stay the way they are, we better have a Focus with 350 horse power. We better have a Mustang V-6 with 450 or 500 horse power. And we have to be aware and we have to be able to change courses, in the middle

of the river do a quick 180, and we can do that where the big companies can't. So, that's a big problem right now. We'll solve it. We'll get there. We got a lot a real good people in our little company.

QUESTION:

07:26:13;00

Let me ask you this, I mean...

CARROLL SHELBY:

07:26:14;23

We have, by the way, our company is based on a lot of ex-Ford employees that have retired, and people that understand we have to work within the system at Ford. Ford has systems, and we have to work with those systems. But there's times that we can change the reason those systems are in place.

07:26:36;28

For instance, people that buy our cars aren't looking for six years and 60,000 mile warranty. I've sold 100,000 cars that I push out the gate, hand 'em the key, and take the check. See, it's yours. We can cut the warranties down on some of these things that as we visualize what we take

out of the longevity of the car.

CARROLL SHELBY:

07:27:10;16

And we have to be able to look into the future to see what we can get away with and what we can't. And so far, I think that we've been the most successful of this, of any little company in the business.

CARROLL SHELBY:

07:27:29;10

Over a longer period a time.

QUESTION:

08:00:34;28

Lemme ask you a question, America has always had a reputation of bein' a great place to be innovative. And you're obviously a great innovator. Do you think America's still a great place for innovators and innovation?

CARROLL SHELBY:

08:00:44;23

Absolutely. The economy in this country is surviving on the people that innovate right now. We've lost our manufacturing capabilities because of the free trade situation. We, our government is, excuse me.

QUESTION:

08:01:26;01

I'm gonna ask 'ya again is America still a nation of innovators?

CARROLL SHELBY:

08:01:29;20

I think it is. My ideas are certainly open to criticism. But I see us losing our manufacturing base because of people that are in power now are free-traders. And we've lost our manufacturing base because they're trying to bring up these third world countries, the labor rates. Bring their income up so that the world's probably more evenly compensated for labor. I don't understand it completely. I'm not a very well-educated person. But I feel that...

QUESTION:

08:02:39;19

Tell me about the, is America still a nation of innovators?

CARROLL SHELBY:

08:02:46;02

I feel like we're great innovators. We're training more engineers in India than we are here. More engineers in China. But not all. We're training more engineers in India, China,

and Europe probably. But it seems to me that most of the great ideas seem to still come from America. It's still seems to me that our adversaries are still trying to find out how to do what we're, our economy is surviving. And I think it's surviving on innovation. That's my opinion. What's yours, Barry?

QUESTION:

08:03:27;20

I've always believed the same thing. I think that's why people come to America.

CARROLL SHELBY:

08:03:35;28

Hey, lemme ask 'ya a question. Earlier you were talkin' about Henry Ford and Lee Iacocca. Who were some other people that might've inspired you early on to get into this business? Maybe some people you haven't mentioned. Family, friends, neighbors, anybody that...

CARROLL SHELBY:

08:03:49;01

I had a high school friend named Ed Wilkins that passed away a couple of years ago. He was never a wealthy man. I drove his MG, we built a soapbox derby, I mean not a soapbox derby. A

little go-cart with a Maytag washin' machine engine when we were in junior high school together.

08:04:10;04

And the first racecar I ever drove in my life in an organized race was his MG. And he was just a draftsman. But he left my foundation, our foundation \$10,000 when he died. And we were friends all our life. He was very, very simple, never, ever looking for the moon, never stretching, trying, not overly ambitious. Just loved his cars. And I've known so many people like that. That are moving on now that are just the salt of the earth. There's people back at Ford when we first started building the Cobra that would stay and work till 2:00 and 3:00 in the morning. I remember in 1965, I think it was, we had the 390. And General Motors had come out with a 454, Don Frey and Don Sullivan, who was one of the four engineers that built the first Ford V-8 in 1932, I believe it was, for Henry Ford.

08:05:30;03

And he used to tell me the story. Henry came in three months before launch and said, "You gotta take four inches outta the engine." And he stuttered. He says, "B-but by God, we did it." And it was the spirit of people like that that we needed a larger engine. The chief engineer, Don Frey and Don Sullivan, went down to the Cleveland Engine Plant one Friday night.

08:05:58;10

Put on the overalls and themselves changed the core so that Ford had the 427 that is still probably the most popular engine that Ford's ever built. The one that's known as the performance engine. And when you think back you realize I've gotten a lot of credit for things, and things that had happened that I didn't have a damn thing to do with.

08:06:30;23

And if you ever lose the ability to be thankful for all of the things like that that have happened to 'ya in your life, I think that's

where I've known a lot of billionaires that I thought were horses' bananas. They let it go to their head. And I think that being true to your values, I think growin' up in East Texas as a kid, very poor circumstances, living through the Depression, you realize that the world turns upside down every day on somebody that was on top of it.

08:07:13;09

And I try to live my life and run the company expecting that that could happen, and trying to run a company that is thankful. The fact that we have a big company to lean on for all of our problems, we have every problem in our little company that Ford has. The only thing, it's miniscule. It's a pimple on an elephant's behind, beside, compared to theirs. But they can solve it a lot, so many problems that we can't that we have to be thankful for that privilege that we have to work with them. Otherwise, our little company couldn't work.

QUESTION:

08:08:14;00

You know, a hundred years from now, when people are lookin' back and they're thinkin', "Carroll Shelby," What would you like them to remember you by? Is it a car? Is it the kind of person you were? Is it that you only drink milk and water? See? I snuck it in.

CARROLL SHELBY:

08:08:25;07

(LAUGHTER) Yeah. Still on milk and water. I would like to be remembered as a person that has been extraordinary lucky in life. But I think the most important thing in life is never give up. And I've had so many things turn upside-down on me and our companies in the last 50 years.

08:08:57;06

It doesn't even worry me. I don't think I don't think about what I'm gonna do. I know I'm gonna have to get up and dust myself off for something tomorrow. Excuse me. But I wanna be known as someone that loved what I did, that loved my family. And never forget how thankful 'ya should be.

QUESTION:

08:09:25;12 And suppose we could leave a message. 'Cause this interview is gonna, we're not just showin' it once and throwin' it away. A hundred years from now, somebody'll pull this out and look at it. What do you wanna say to them? If you could send a message to, you know, the engineers of the future or the drivers of the future? What would be somethin' you've never told anybody? Some little thing we could leave them with? What would you think about?

CARROLL SHELBY:

08:09:46;11 Never give up.

QUESTION:

08:09:52;04 Convinced me.

QUESTION:

08:11:02;03 I want 'ya to tell us a little bit about your School of High Performance Driving that you started back in '61. You know, how it started, what its purpose was, and how it affected things.

CARROLL SHELBY:

08:11:10;14 In 1959, I decided to build my own car. I had to

live in California where the hot-rodders were ra[cing]. Lance Reventlow had put a group of people together that had built a car that looked like it might be successful. The first American car that really competed against the Ferraris and the European cars.

08:11:33;19

So, I decided that I had to come out here. I didn't have any way to make a livin'. They, race driving wasn't very profitable back then. I'd had an interest in an automobile agency in Dallas. But I came out here. And I started all over with not a dime. And I'd had a very unfortunate divorce. And so I moved to California. And I took a Goodyear distributorship on for racing tires, is one way to make a living.

08:12:09;14

And I started the Carroll Shelby School of High Performance Driving. And I felt that the sport was growing. And with the income from that, and with the income from the tire distributorship,

that gave me the seed money for the first Cobra. And I taught at the driving school for a little while. And then I had a young man named Pete Brock who had graduated from art center school. And still, he's the one that drew the plans up for the Daytona Coupe.

08:12:55;11

And then a fella named John Tomanis took it over and operated it for years. And operated it all the time that I was building, that we were building the Cobras, that Shelby America was building the Cobras. And Bob Bondurant came along. He was one of my star drivers. And he hurt his legs very badly. I think it was at Watkins Glen. And he came into my office one day. And he said, "I don't know how I'm gonna make a livin'. I can't drive racecars and be competitive anymore."

08:13:29;04

I said, "Get your helicopter license and I'm gonna close my driving school and give it to you." He took it. He went to Ford, got some

financing from Ford, and he's still in the business today. Although he works for one of the competitors. But that's the story of the Carroll Shelby Driving School.

QUESTION:

08:13:49;12

Was that one of the first driving schools?

CARROLL SHELBY:

08:13:51;09

One of the first. I think there was one or two smaller ones in the country. I don't recall who they were.

QUESTION:

08:14:01;06

All right. Now, tell me a little bit about this OX2, an eight cylinder engine that runs on hydrogen? Are you buildin' somethin' like that or...

CARROLL SHELBY:

08:14:07;02

Oh, it'll run on hydrogen. It'll run on about anything except peanut butter. It's a very small, little engine that was developed originally in Australia with a lot of faults to it. But it fires two pistons at the same time. It's kinda like a pistol cylinder. And the

amazing thing is you take a 30 kW generator, and the engine to pull it, the auto cycle engine, the little two-liter engine.

08:14:38;20

It weighs 1,600 pounds. This engine weighs, with the 30 kW generator or a 60 kW generator, weighs a total of 300 pounds. A little less, actually. But this little engine, 61 cubic inches, puts out 300 foot pounds of torque at 800 rpm. And that's the secret to it. We've just, we've been working for several years now, seven or eight years, to get it to the point that we think that we're about a year away from goin' commercial.

08:15:15;00

We have several companies that are interested in it. I got high hopes for it. But I've developed a lot of things that I had high hopes for. I have a new carbon fiber that weighs a third less, costs half as much, stronger than the present carbon fiber. I've got high hopes for that. I'm not sure it'll work. But I haven't found any real problems with it yet.

08:15:46;06

But I'm always looking for something that's different. In automobiles in the technology of things that will, this carbon fiber could save five or 600 pounds in an automobile. And that's one of the main things that Detroit is looking for as far as fuel consumption is concerned. Cutting the weight of cars. So, my little engine and that. And I have a couple more inventions that I fool with on the side that I hope work out.

QUESTION:

08:16:24;12

Let's talk a little bit about the car. There's a lot of cars here. You built a lot, design a lot of part... Do you have some favorites? And tell us some, obviously it'd take hours to go through every car. But, you know, you have this passion. You tell me about some of the passion that we see in some of these cars. How you got it in there.

CARROLL SHELBY:

08:16:41;26

Well, everybody says you can't do it. And you have to find that little niche that you are the..

I- was surprised when somebody told me a year ago that I'd, a couple years ago and, that we had come up with 135 different models of cars. Three or four of them I remembered. And 130 of them are forgotten. They were failures. Or they didn't, or they never came commercial. They were too late or too early in their life cycle. I get asked 20 times a week what is my favorite car. And I've always said, "The next one." Our Daytona Coupe, I'm told it once sold for \$22 million in Germany the other day. I sold it for \$4,000. We built six of them. They won the world championship.

08:17:41;29

Says, "Why in the world didn't you save those cars?" I said, "Because our company needed the \$4,000. And at that time, racecars, obsolete racecars weren't worth anything." A Ferrari that I won in a lot of races in sold for \$15 million the other day. I don't worry about that. 20/20 hindsight always works. My favorite car is the next one we're gonna build.

QUESTION:

08:18:59;06

Okay. You've been known throughout your career for some crazy threads and (LAUGHTER) some crazy hats. Tell me about those coveralls. And tell me a little bit about this hat.

CARROLL SHELBY:

08:19:10;00

I had a chicken farm. All the chickens died eventually. And my next door neighbor in East Texas now is the world's biggest chicken producer. And I started the same time he did. And I went broke. And he's a billionaire. But one day, I was vaccinating my chickens. And my wife called me and said, "You're supposed to be in Fort Worth, Texas. The race starts in an hour and a half."

08:19:35;10

I had chicken manure all over these overalls. And I was stickin' a needle in these chickens to keep them from getting Newcastle disease. I jumped in my pick-up truck. I didn't have time to change. I got to Fort Worth, to Eagle Mountain Lake just in time to start the race. I

won it in these overalls. And they put pictures of me on the front page of the *Fort Worth Press*. And I thought, "Hey, this is pretty good." Then I always wore a black hat. I don't know why. But I had a black hat that I'd worn to just keep the sun off. And I came to California one day. And I had that black hat on.

08:20:23;24

And I won the race out here. They says, "The man in black with his overall, the man with the black hat and his farmer's coveralls." So, I thought, "Doesn't get any better than this." They didn't run my picture when I didn't have all this stuff on. So I've been wearin' that hat ever since.

CARROLL SHELBY:

08:22:06;03

The little things are what counts in those things. For instance, the tires, you got too much tire spin when we put it together. And I went to Goodyear and I says, "I want some more grip. We've got to have, and forward thrust. We've gotta try to get rid of the wheel spin with, 'cause there's more than 540 horsepower in it."

You know, (LAUGHTER) 'cause they advertised that. But there's more than that in it.

08:22:29;18

They says, "Hell, we can't do that. Christ, you cut the longevity outta the tires if we make them any stickier." I said, "Take 10,000 miles out of them and go screw yourself. Ya getting' to doin' it." (LAUGHTER) Engineers didn't wanna lower, their ambition is a 100,000 mile tire.

08:22:48;26

Which I don't know why it is because that means they don't sell many tires if they run 100,000 miles. I believe I'd make them a little softer, but anyway that tire that we've got on the KR is the most sensational tire that I've ever heard of anybody buildin'. And all we did was just change the compound a little bit.

QUESTION:

08:23:11;13

Who's idea was that?

CARROLL SHELBY:

08:23:13;26

Well, the engine, I told them I wanted, you know, I wanted more stick-um. They said, "We can't do

that because we lose mileage on them." I said,

"I don't give a damn about the mileage.

(LAUGHTER) I want it to perform and stick." And that tire is just sensational.

QUESTION:

08:23:29;28

Now, is it true that King of the Road was originally the title the Corvette was gonna get?

CARROLL SHELBY:

08:23:34;10

Yeah. (LAUGHTER)

08:23:34;14

(QUESTION: UNINTEL)

08:23:35;10

I went back to Detroit one time to meet with Iacocca. And he had a guy named Henry Carlini that was his assistant. He died a couple years ago. He was his assistant over at Chrysler, too. Henry said, "Look here." He says, "The Corvette's comin' out with King of the Road. Here's the new brochures and everything."

08:23:54;20

That's when they had spies, you know, you can see what the other guys were doin'. Now, they advertise what they're gonna be doin' two years from now. And they usually never do it. I said,

"No, shit." I looked at it. I picked up the telephone. Called my trade dress lawyer in Washington. And I said, "Is King of the Road copyrighted?" And he says, "Well, I'll find out in the mornin'." I said, "Hell, I'll have a new lawyer and find out tonight."

08:24:28;21

I said, (LAUGHTER) "I don't need you to find out in the mornin'. I wanna know within an hour." He called back and he says, "No, it's not copyrighted." I said, "Your ass better be down, it better be there (LAUGHTER) in the mornin' at 8:00 and copyright it." He called me at 9:00 and said, "It's done." I had called California in case, you're supposed to build a car like that and said, "Put KR on the along, you know, the fender that we're at GT350."

08:24:58;24

I called 3M. Says "How long would it take you to build me some decal that said, 'GT500KR'?" And they says, "We could have it for 'ya in three days if you want less than a thousand." Says,

"We'll have to go to a prototype shop."

08:25:19;24

I called California, the production line. I said, "How many GT500 Convertibles are we building next week? And how many hardtops?" And they told me how many they were building. I said, "You're gonna build 50 GT500KR hardtops and 50 Convertibles." (LAUGHTER) And that's where it came from.

QUESTION:

08:25:42;26

You have to be resourceful, right?

CARROLL SHELBY:

08:25:45;05

Well, that's the reason you gotta stay small enough that you, if you're so big that you can't move quickly, then there's no reason for us to be in business. You've gotta stay small.

QUESTION:

08:25:56;10

Thanks again.

CARROLL SHELBY:

08:25:57;05

Thank you, Barry.