



# General Motors Board of Directors (1950)

# MUNUC 33

# ONLINE



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## CHAIR LETTER

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Dear Delegates,

My name is Vikrant Magadi, and I'm excited to be your Chair for the GM Board of Directors. Christian and I are thrilled to be running MUNUC's first-ever corporate board, and we can't wait to simulate the workings of this fascinating company, as well as the broader events of the 1950s. A little bit about myself - I'm a second year in the College majoring in Molecular Engineering (still haven't engineered any molecules though, so kinda bummed about that). Last year at MUNUC, I was an Assistant Chair for Sultan Qaboos's Cabinet of Oman. I'm also involved in ChoMUN and compete on our travel team, which basically means I get to hear Christian unmute himself for the sole purpose of laughing three times a week on our Zoom calls. Outside of the MUNiverse, I'm involved in lab research and sing in UChicago's South Asian acapella group. In my rapidly dwindling free time, you can find me cheering for the Nationals, unsuccessfully recreating family recipes, or mentally recovering from the last season of Game of Thrones.

As your Chair, I will be running committee's frontroom. This is the (hopefully physical) place where you will receive crisis updates, make speeches, and collaborate with your fellow delegates on directives. I'll outline some of my expectations for frontroom below, but my advice boils down to two things: be as involved as you can and be respectful of each other. Even if this is your first conference, I promise that writing a directive or making a speech you're unsure of will make your experience more valuable than simply observing. However, actively contributing to committee cannot come at the expense of common courtesy or another delegate's experience.

Now the specifics. In my view, the basis of a good frontroom performance is writing detailed and decisive directives. It's easier for people to be convinced by your speeches—and to work with you in unmods—when you have a concrete, written plan. As such, I hope to see as many of you as possible writing and submitting directives after an update. If you're new to crisis or uncomfortable with writing directives, please don't feel like you can't contribute—I'm not expecting anyone to write a three-page masterpiece on their own. Even if you only have an idea for one clause, writing that idea

down goes a long way toward helping committee. For more experienced delegates, getting other people involved in directives is a great way to show your leadership and collaboration (and is, you know, a nice thing to do).

As far as the content of directives goes, one thing you'll notice in this background guide is that this committee is about far more than making cars. The political and social trends of the 1950's will feature prominently in the updates you'll get, so you should make sure to incorporate these into your solutions in the frontroom. While GM's bottom line will be the driving consideration in committee debate, that doesn't mean every issue should be approached from a purely corporate perspective. Leaning on the right government official can often be more lucrative than building a new factory.

My last expectation is about sensitivity. American culture has changed significantly since the 1950s, and some of the characters you're portraying may have had views that we would consider unacceptable in 2021. Christian and I expect that your directives, speeches, and notes will not contain content that is offensive by modern standards, even if it would have been acceptable in the 1950s. I will reiterate this expectation at the beginning of committee. Feel free to ask me or Christian for clarification any time before or during conference.

MUNUC has published some great resources on both the basics and finer points of crisis, so give those a read if you haven't already. Please don't hesitate to contact me at [vikrantmagadi@uchicago.edu](mailto:vikrantmagadi@uchicago.edu) if you have any questions between now and MUNUC. See you in February/April!

Best,

Vikrant

## CRISIS DIRECTOR LETTER

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Dear Delegates,

Welcome aboard. Vikrant and I are very enthused to have you all joining us at MUNUC 33. This committee is dynamic, interesting, relevant to the present, and has quite some room for imagination and creativity. Throughout the weekend, you will be interacting with foreign, political, economic, and social issues that not only affected GM in the 1950s but continue to define the United States and the world in the present day. Furthermore, this is also the first time ever that MUNUC has run a corporation as a continuous crisis, so I hope you are excited to join us in blazing a new trail for delegates to come.

I will be your Crisis Director for this weekend. My job—along with our team of Assistant Chairs, who will be responding to your notes—is to create and control the simulated world outside of committee. A bit of background on me: I am a fourth-year student at UChicago studying economics and chemistry. I am originally from Toronto, and I was a CD for MUNUC last year. I am also the Secretary-General of ChoMUN, UChicago's collegiate conference; have competed for our competitive team; and am co-President of Phoenix Funds, an undergraduate financial society. In my spare time I enjoy running, watching baseball, listening to progressive rock music, and cooking.

You will interact with the outside world both through committee directives—which are passed by plurality—and personal directives—commonly known as crisis notes or backroom notes. These are in-character messages to people your character would have contact with, i.e. family members or your admin assistant. Through the backroom (our term for the crisis room), you can and should use your portfolio powers to influence the world outside committee without passing directives. This is a valuable tool if you want to do something for your character's own personal gain or something internally in your department. I encourage you to use the backroom heavily and be creative and detailed in your requests. While realism in your requests is key, a big part of crisis is imagination. If you have a reasonable, interesting, and well-thought-out way to get a private army, buy Ontario, create a TV game show that gives your character a cult following, or rig an election, we will listen.

I will also encourage you to work together when you feel it is necessary, and not just for the purposes of doing so. Your ideas for backroom do not have to be pre-planned and be developed *in situ*, but they should not be sporadic. Save reacting to updates for the frontroom; in the backroom, focus on building a storyline, or crisis arc as we call it, for your character. A good place to start is getting into character, looking at your bio, and thinking about what you as that person would want to accomplish, for the gain of GM and/or yourself. Then, map out a way to get there, building up resources and using them, and considering who you will need to contact along the way (those people can be fictional; simply write to them and we will respond as them). We are eager to 'break' your backroom actions into front room crisis updates that affect the committee.

Requests for feedback and assistance on how to use the backroom will be valued and welcomed at all times. You will not be judged for your level of experience, but rather by how you respond to stimuli using the tools that you have.

For more information about how to do continuous crisis Model UN, check out the materials under the "Prep & Resources" tab of [munuc.org](http://munuc.org).

I look forward to combining MUNUC's signature pedagogical experience with the mental athleticism that makes crisis unique. If you have any questions about best practices, expectations, rules, the background guide, or anything else, please feel free to email me at [metivierc@uchicago.edu](mailto:metivierc@uchicago.edu).

I hope you're as excited to shape history as I am.

With thanks and regards,

Christian

## POWERS AND GOALS OF COMMITTEE

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This committee shall be responsible for the administration of all of the brands of General Motors. As such, it will have the ability to introduce new products and remove older ones, hire and fire designers and workers (in compliance with union agreements of course), and acquire and divest from other companies. It will be responsible for determining the overall direction of the business and will need to consider how to respond to new entries to the space—from American and international companies. The committee will have to maintain a footing in Washington and ensure that US Government regulations are favorable to both the auto industry and corporations in general, and that infrastructure development will be conducive to the establishment of the automobile as the centerpiece in the American way of life.

# HISTORY OF THE AUTO INDUSTRY

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## *The 19<sup>th</sup> Century*

It's quite hard to place an accurate date on when the first car was produced. While some credit early steam-powered carriages first invented in the late 1600s, this is a minority view. In the late 1700s, inventors first experimented with gas-powered engines.<sup>1</sup> The design of a gas turbine actually preceded the patent for the piston-based internal combustion engine; it was not until 1858 that the Belgian Jean Joseph Étienne Lenoir (in this tradition of French naming, Étienne is the given name) produced a commercially successful design for the internal combustion engine.<sup>2</sup> This engine design would soon play a pivotal role in the development of the automobile industry.

The invention of the steam engine revolutionized the world in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century; the ability to extract energy and power from hydrocarbons (coal or liquid fuels) at a large scale with relative efficiency sparked unparalleled industrial advances. However, the efficiency of steam systems is limited by the fact that they must keep steam recirculating constantly; this requires heavy containment and cooling apparatus for any successful application. Thus, while steam engines are well suited for stationary applications like factories, they are not as wise a choice for moving vehicles, for which the power-to-weight ratio becomes a concern. The internal combustion engine—so called because the combustion occurs within the piston system itself—was remarkably lightweight, portable, and efficient.<sup>3</sup> Even in its early stages, this design was well equipped for powering cars. Early internal combustion engines produced power comparable to that of a horse, leading to the still-used concept of “horsepower” in an engine.

Most scholars agree that the first ‘car’ in the modern sense of the word was developed in 1886 by Carl Benz of Germany.<sup>4</sup> Powered by a ¾ horsepower engine, with three wheels, and a completely

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<sup>1</sup> G.N. Georgano, *Cars: Early and Vintage 1886-1930* (London: Grange-Universal, 1990).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid

<sup>3</sup> Daimler AG, “Company History. 1885-1886. The First Automobile,” n.d., <https://www.daimler.com/company/tradition/company-history/1885-1886.html>.

<sup>4</sup> G.N. Georgano, *Cars: Early and Vintage 1886-1930* (London: Grange-Universal, 1990).

open cockpit, Benz's motorcar looked more like an oversized child's tricycle with a motor than the sleek Mercedes-Benz sedans that Daimler AG—the company he founded with Gottlieb Daimler—would go on to produce. Nonetheless, he, his wife, and their two sons went on the world's first recorded motor road trip a few years later, going some 180 kilometers around Germany and demonstrating the practicality of the motor vehicle to the world.<sup>5</sup> Benz pioneered further advances including, in 1893, the double-pivot steering system, an invention integral to the development of the steering wheel. He also introduced pivotable wheels, allowing vehicles to more easily change direction.<sup>6</sup> Benz soon began to experiment with more powerful and complicated engines.

### ***The Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century***

Entering the 20<sup>th</sup> century, most automobile firms were small. Building cars was very labor-intensive, and most vehicles were either custom-built or produced in very small batches. Most of the machining was done by hand, and with that came a choice: hire laborers that could perform all of the tasks required to construct a complete car or less skilled workers that could be trained to just do a few. The capital investment to train one person in a simple task such as attaching one part to another is far less than training a worker to be what amounts to an automobile artisan. However, original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) ran into a problem: assembling a car is a very complex process. Thousands of parts must be assembled in a complex process with many steps, so the model of training workers to do specialized tasks was only feasible for companies with a very large number of workers. It also only made sense if those workers were constantly busy, leaving little room for bottlenecking along the process. The workshop always had to be in motion, and the tasks had to be balanced carefully to ensure that workers further down the line would not be 'starved' of work by a particularly slow colleague, or time-intensive step.<sup>7</sup>

This approach only works in a large scale. If you are making 20 cars, it does not make sense to hire a small army of workers to split up simple tasks. With scale, however, a production facility could

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<sup>5</sup> Daimler AG, "Company History. 1885-1886. The First Automobile," n.d., <https://www.daimler.com/company/tradition/company-history/1885-1886.html>.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid

<sup>7</sup> Toronto Public Library. 2015. "A brief history of the Automobile Industry." Business & Personal Finance. [https://torontopubliclibrary.typepad.com/business\\_personal\\_finance/2015/03/automobile-industry.html#:~:text=motorized%20road%20vehicle.-,Commercial%20production%20of%20automobiles%20began%20in%201896%20in%20the%20United,by%20an%20internal%20combustion%20en.](https://torontopubliclibrary.typepad.com/business_personal_finance/2015/03/automobile-industry.html#:~:text=motorized%20road%20vehicle.-,Commercial%20production%20of%20automobiles%20began%20in%201896%20in%20the%20United,by%20an%20internal%20combustion%20en.)

always be running. Workers, having received their training, could always crank out an identical product. This could be done quickly, reliably, and, in theory at the time, quite profitably. The elimination in capital costs and the standardization of the production process created a market where normal people could own their own vehicle, it democratized car ownership.

Henry Ford saw the opportunity to bring cars into the mainstream. Rather than having them be a plaything for the rich, Ford wanted to make a simple, homogenous product, that he could produce rapidly from his assembly line in Michigan to dramatically lower his unit costs. He called this product the Ford Model T, and it was released in 1908. Though the car was fairly expensive at first, mass-production proved to be remarkably advantageous; Ford's cars were easy to make and cheap to maintain.<sup>8</sup> At the time, the automobile industry was quite disjointed. Numerous smaller companies like Buick, Cadillac, and Oldsmobile stuck to older methods of production, and there were only about 200,000 cars on the road in the United States.<sup>9</sup> Ford's revolution set about a dramatic change in the industry. It began a race to adopt the new methods and saw many companies attempting to buy their competitors, restructuring the corporate stage.

## ***Rise of Labor Unions***

### *Origins*

Leading up to the 1950s, GM experienced years of tense relations with its workers. During the Great Depression of the 1930s, GM maintained profits by laying off thousands and slashing the wages of those who remained. These draconian measures paid off; GM grew to become the largest automaker in America and rose to the top of the Fortune 500. However, this success came at a price. Angered by the layoffs and wage cuts, as well as by longer hours and dangerous working conditions, GM's workers turned to unionization. In 1936, a new union called the United Auto Workers (UAW), began to secretly gain support among GM workers, and in December of that year, the UAW organized a strike of over 7,000 workers at a plant in Flint, Michigan.<sup>10</sup> After 44 days, GM finally

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<sup>8</sup> History.com Editors, "Ford Motor Company Unveils the Model T," 2009, <https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/ford-motor-company-unveils-the-model-t>.

<sup>9</sup> History.com Editors.

<sup>10</sup> Erin, Blakemore. "The 1936 Strike That Brought America's Most Powerful Automaker to Its Knees." History, 17 Sept. 2019, [www.history.com/news/flint-sit-down-strike-general-motors-uaw](http://www.history.com/news/flint-sit-down-strike-general-motors-uaw).

agreed to the workers' demands, increasing workers' hourly wages and recognizing the UAW's union status, paving the way for a new wave of organized strikes in the coming years.



In 1945, the UAW cemented its growing power, organizing a nationwide, 113-day long strike of over 300,000 GM workers.<sup>11</sup> Meeting workers' demands for higher wages and paid vacation cost the company millions.

### Post-war growth

In the post-war years, the UAW's fortunes continued to grow, mostly thanks to the efforts of labor leader Walter Reuther. In addition to organizing the large-scale strikes of the 1940's, Reuther also developed the shrewd tactic of playing automakers against each other in labor disputes. In a strategy known as pattern bargaining, Reuther and his labor representatives would organize a round of strikes at one of the "Big Three" car companies – Ford, Chrysler, and GM. These strikes would force the company to offer deals with higher wages and new benefits for its workers. Reuther would then move one to the next company, organize the same strikes, and use the previous deals as precedent in the next round of negotiations. This approach to bargaining culminated in a 1950 agreement

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<sup>11</sup> Press, The Associated. "A History of Key United Auto Workers Strikes against GM." AP NEWS, Associated Press, 16 Oct. 2019, apnews.com/83b9a7d6f2b04doda468c97ccf39b095.

known as "Reuther's Treaty of Detroit," which expanded vacation time and adjusted workers' wages for their cost of living over a five-year period.<sup>12</sup> At the start of the 1950's, the UAW was the official representative of GM's employees, giving them tremendous leverage in settling labor disputes. Labor unions nationwide were also at their peak influence during this time, with one-third of all US workers belonging to a labor union. Entering the new decade, appeasing labor unions without harming company profits will be a priority for GM.

### Post-war Boom

#### *Economic Growth After World War II*

Following the end of World War II, the American economy entered an unprecedented period of expansion. Meeting the demand for military supplies during World War II required major increases in government spending on manufacturing. This increased spending helped lift the US economy out of the Great Depression. Unemployment dropped to a record-low 1.9% by 1945 as vast numbers of American workers were employed in some facet of the war effort.<sup>13</sup> During the war, strict rationing measures on food and other supplies had limited consumption. With the war over and these rationing measures lifted, Americans eagerly spent money on clothing, household appliance, and, most importantly for this committee, automobiles. The factories that had churned out uniforms, bullets, and airplane parts during the war soon transitioned to producing consumer goods to meet the rising demand. Automakers led the way, with over 5.1 million automobiles sold in 1949.<sup>14</sup> The

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<sup>12</sup> Levy, Frank. "Inequality and Institutions in 20th Century America." Stanford Industrial Performance Center. Accessed June 16, 2020. [https://inequality.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/media/\\_media/pdf/key\\_issues/gender\\_research.pdf](https://inequality.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/media/_media/pdf/key_issues/gender_research.pdf).

<sup>13</sup> "Economic Consequences of War on the US Economy." Institute for Economics and Peace. [http://economicsandpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/The-Economic-Consequences-of-War-on-US-Economy\\_o.pdf](http://economicsandpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/The-Economic-Consequences-of-War-on-US-Economy_o.pdf).

<sup>14</sup> Walsh, Margaret. "Gender and the Automobile in the United States." Gender and the Automobile in the United States: Consumerism and the Great Economic Boom. [http://www.autolife.umd.umich.edu/Gender/Walsh/G\\_Overview3.htm](http://www.autolife.umd.umich.edu/Gender/Walsh/G_Overview3.htm).

increase in production was supported by the hiring of new factory workers, giving millions of Americans access to a steady income through blue-collar jobs.

### *GI Bill and Movement to the Suburbs*

The post-war economic boom also brought with it major societal shifts. These shifts were largely a product of the 1944 Servicemen's Readjustment Act, better known as the GI Bill of Rights or simply the GI Bill. This law provided extensive benefits to veterans returning home from World War II,



including aid for vocational and higher education, unemployment benefits, and low interest loans for homes and businesses.<sup>15</sup> With the GI Bill making home ownership attainable, many veterans hoped to buy homes outside of the cramped confines of cities. To meet this demand, developers such as William Levitt built thousands of low-cost homes in suburban areas, most famously Levittown on Long Island in New York.<sup>16</sup> Sadly, this realization of the American Dream was not possible for all, as racist redlining prevented many People of Color from moving into predominantly white suburbs. Still, the combination of newly built homes and the financial means to buy them prompted thousands of Americans to move to the suburbs for the first time, marking a radical shift in the American population that has continued to the present day.<sup>17</sup>



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<sup>15</sup>"GI Bill." GI Bill History. <https://www.public.navy.mil/bupers-npc/career/education/GIBill/Pages/GIBillHistory.aspx>.

<sup>16</sup> Nicolaidis, Becky, and Andrew Wiese. "Suburbanization in the United States after 1945." Oxford Research Encyclopedia of American History, April 26, 2017.

<https://oxfordre.com/americanhistory/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780199329175.001.0001/acrefore-9780199329175-e-64>.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

## ***Marshall Plan***

The United States wasn't the only country to enjoy economic growth after World War II. Western European countries also experienced significant economic recovery, partially due to an American initiative known as the Marshall Plan. Named for Secretary of State George C. Marshall and implemented in 1948, the Marshall Plan provided over \$13 billion in relief aid to 17 European countries. This aid money was used to prevent famines in the short term and restore agricultural and industrial production.<sup>18</sup> The Marshall Plan successfully bolstered European economies and was a major factor in ensuring these countries' post-war stability. However, it should be noted that this was not purely a charitable initiative on the United States's part. Some of the aid money provided to European countries was used to purchase American goods, recycling it back into the American economy and promoting the US's own post-war growth. Additionally, providing aid to European countries promoted the stability of democratic governments, helping to stem the tide of communism that originated from the Soviet Union.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> "Marshall Plan (1948)." Our Documents - Home, n.d. <https://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=false>.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

## SOCIAL AND CULTURAL CHANGES OF THE 1950S

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### *Status of Women and the Rise of Feminism*

Along with economic expansion and rising political tensions, the 1950s brought a variety of changes to the American social landscape. These changes would serve as the foundations of the pivotal social movements of the 1960s. Though much of the following section takes place after the start of committee, these events will be playing out in real time as you act on behalf of General Motors. A key social development during the 1950s concerned the role of women in American society. The years following the end of World War II led to the formation of what is now thought of as the “traditional” American family. In this typical family, men worked to provide income for the family. Meanwhile, women primarily stayed home and were responsible for caring for the children. It is important to note that this is a highly stereotypical image and is certainly not representative of all women or all families in America at the time; many women began working while their husbands were away fighting in World War II and continued to work after the War’s end. However, this stereotypical view of the family had enormous influence on American culture during the time period and is therefore worth exploring in more detail.

During the 1950s, the role of women became increasingly tied to family and domestic life. Part of this stemmed from the younger age at which women got married—by the late 1950s, the average age of women at marriage was 20.<sup>20</sup> This also manifested itself in American universities—just 38% of college students in 1958 were women, compared to 47% in 1920. Even among women that did go to college, the concept of a “Mrs.” degree became a popular stereotype.<sup>21</sup> Women that sought “Mrs.” degrees were thought to go to college for the purpose of finding a husband rather than actually obtaining an education. While this notion is clearly sexist, it was extremely influential to American society at the time. As a result of this increased focus on marriage, family sizes grew during this

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<sup>20</sup> “Mrs. America: Women's Roles in the 1950s.” PBS. Public Broadcasting Service, n.d.  
<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/pill-mrs-america-womens-roles-1950s/>.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

period—the number of families with three children doubled between 1940 and 1960, and the number with four children quadrupled.<sup>22</sup>

The emphasis on family as women’s primary responsibility was closely tied to women’s portrayal in the media. Advertisements, in particular, perpetuated the stereotype of women as the ones responsible for cooking, sewing, and entertaining guests. Campbell’s Soup, for example, published ads featuring smiling women serving cans of soup to their children. Advertisements for household appliances such as vacuum cleaners and washing machines mainly portrayed women using the products. These advertisements often circulated in women’s magazines such as *Ladies’ Home Journal* and *Woman’s Home Companion*. Magazines such as *Seventeen*, which primarily catered to young female audiences, published articles on “How to be a woman,” featuring claims such as, “there is no office, lab, or stage that offers so many creative avenues or executive opportunities as that everyday place, the home.”<sup>23</sup> These statements point to the distressing reality of the time period—that far from being an idyllic representation of family life, societal treatment of women in the 1950s undervalued their worth and limited their prospects. Women’s growing frustration over this treatment was famously captured in Betty Friedan’s 1963 book, *The Feminine Mystique*. The publication of this book struck a chord with women nationwide, sparking the feminist movements of the 1960s.

### ***Civil Rights Movement***

One of the most pivotal changes in mid-20th century American history was the growth of the Civil Rights Movement. The 1950s witnessed enormous strides towards equal rights for African-Americans and other minority groups, in the form of both public awareness and legal changes. One of the early advances in the movement was in education. In 1951, 16-year-old student Barbara John led a walkout at her segregated Virginia high school. Her school lacked plumbing and heating, packed students into overcrowded classrooms, and had significantly worse facilities than the neighboring schools for white children. Barbara John enlisted the help of NAACP lawyer Oliver Hill to challenge school segregation and the “separate but equal” doctrine that the Supreme Court had

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<sup>22</sup> Vanessa Martins Lamb. The 1950’s and the 1960’s and the American Woman : the transition from the “housewife” to the feminist. History. 2011. ffdumas-00680821f

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

previously used to justify it.<sup>24</sup> Her case became part of five lawsuits that eventually reached the Supreme Court under the name *Brown v. Board of Education*. In 1954, the Supreme Court handed down a landmark decision, ruling that the “separate but equal” doctrine was unconstitutional and ordering all segregated schools to integrate. While this ruling was widely resisted and slow to be implemented, it provided a legal basis for equality in schools across the country.

The Civil Rights Movement also helped dismantle Jim Crow policies in public transportation. The first of these victories came thanks to Montgomery, Alabama resident Rosa Parks. Before 1955, the city of Montgomery had segregated “whites” and “colored” sections on public buses, and African-American passengers were regularly ordered to give up their seats for white passengers when the “whites” section was full. On December 1, 1955, while riding a public bus, Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat to a white man, eventually being arrested for her defiance.<sup>25</sup> Parks’ story led civil rights activists in Montgomery to organize a mass boycott of the bus system. Thousands of Montgomery residents chose to walk or share cars instead of riding buses, putting pressure on the city’s finances and launching a Supreme Court case about segregation. In 1956, the Supreme Court ruled that



segregation on public buses was unconstitutional, ending the successful boycott and bolstering the Civil Rights Movement nationwide.<sup>26</sup> It was also at this time that a young Alabama minister named Martin Luther King Jr. rose to national prominence. After leading the Montgomery bus boycott, King and his supporters founded the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) in 1957, giving the Civil Rights Movement a face, a name, and a more unified front leading into the 1960s.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> “Barbara Johns,” *Virginia Changemakers*, <https://edu.lva.virginia.gov/changemakers/items/show/121>.

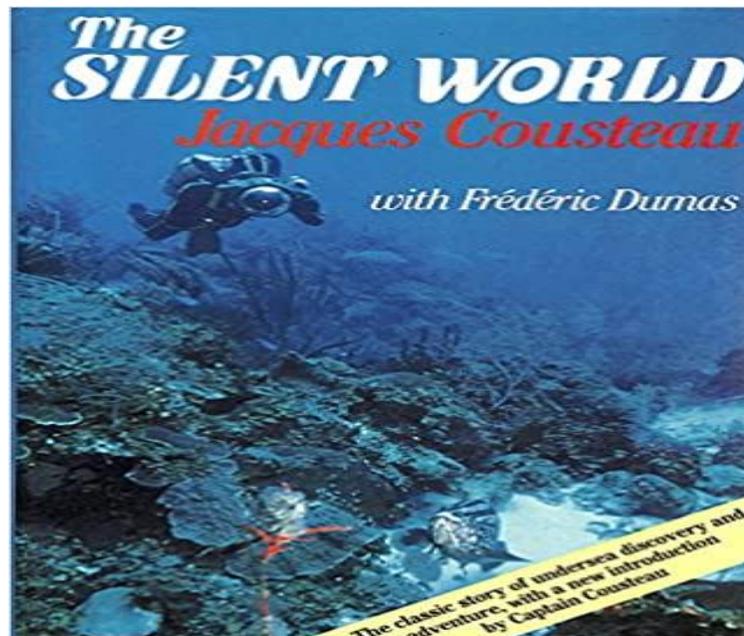
<sup>25</sup> History.com Editors. “Rosa Parks.” History.com. A&E Television Networks, November 9, 2009. <https://www.history.com/topics/black-history/rosa-parks>.

<sup>26</sup> Carson, Clayborne. “Montgomery Bus Boycott to the Voting Rights Act.” Encyclopædia Britannica. Encyclopædia Britannica, inc., February 4, 2020. <https://www.britannica.com/event/American-civil-rights-movement/Montgomery-bus-boycott-to-the-Voting-Rights-Act>.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid.

## ***Environmentalism***

The economic boom that followed the end of World War II was paired with increasing awareness of industrialization's negative impacts on the environment. In 1948, Congress passed the Federal Water Pollution Control Act, the first piece of federal legislation to address water quality issues. The FWPCA, which was amended in 1972 into the well-known Clean Water Act, gave the Surgeon General the power to cooperate with state and local governments and implement programs for managing water quality in lakes and rivers, as well as for transport and disposal of sewage.<sup>28</sup> This act, however, did not give the federal government significant power to create or enforce pollution regulations. A 1956 amendment expanded the government's power to include this and also increased funding for the Surgeon General's programs.<sup>29</sup> Public awareness over preservation of the world's oceans increased after the 1953 publication of *The Silent World*. This book by French photographer Jacques Cousteau showcased beautiful photos of marine life off of the coast of Southern France.<sup>30</sup>



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<sup>28</sup> "The Modern Environmental Movement." PBS. Public Broadcasting Service, n.d. <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/earth-days-modern-environmental-movement/>.

<sup>29</sup> "Digest of Federal Resource Laws of Interest to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service." Federal Water Pollution Control Act (Clean Water Act), n.d. <https://www.fws.gov/laws/lawsdigest/fwatrpo.HTML>.

<sup>30</sup> "The Modern Environmental Movement." PBS. Public Broadcasting Service, n.d. <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/earth-days-modern-environmental-movement/>.

Concern over air pollution similarly increased during this time period. Unfortunately, this awareness came as a result of a series of tragedies. On October 30, 1948, the town of Donora, Pennsylvania experienced a fatal accident because of sulfur dioxide emissions from a nearby steel plant. Due to shifting weather conditions, the sulfur dioxide built up as dense smog and descended on the valley where the town was located. The toxic fumes killed 20 people and sent over 600 more to the hospital, prompting a national conference on air pollution.<sup>31</sup> Another smog incident occurred in New York City in November of 1960, killing roughly 200 people who suffered from asthma and other respiratory conditions. These tragedies led to the 1955 passage of the Air Pollution Control Act. Despite its name, however, this act did little to actually control air pollution, as it gave the federal government no enforcement authority. The act also failed to address air pollution from car emissions, which allowed the automobile industry to expand unchecked throughout the 1950s.<sup>32</sup>

### ***The Evolution of Media***

As American society evolved rapidly during the 1950s, so too did the ways in which Americans received information. As previously mentioned, magazines, particularly those targeted towards women, wielded enormous cultural influence. However, the dominant media force of the day was television, which exploded in popularity after World War II and profoundly changed how Americans consumed news, sports, and entertainment. Although they were relatively scarce in 1948, just seven years later, televisions could be found in half of all American households. TV quickly replaced radio in showing live sporting events, and sitcoms such as "I Love Lucy" became cultural staples. TV also introduced an entirely new means of influencing public opinion. Dwight D. Eisenhower's 1952 presidential campaign featured the first political ads to be broadcast over television.<sup>33</sup> Meanwhile, large companies, including GM, were rapidly transitioning to television commercials as a primary advertising medium. Entering this committee in the 1950s, there is immense potential to use television for commercial and political gain.

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<sup>31</sup> Boissoneault, Lorraine. "The Deadly Donora Smog of 1948 Spurred Environmental Protection-But Have We Forgotten the Lesson?" Smithsonian.com. Smithsonian Institution, October 26, 2018. <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/deadly-donora-smog-1948-spurred-environmental-protection-have-we-forgotten-lesson-180970533/>.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> The History of Television (or, How Did This Get So Big?), n.d. <http://www.cs.cornell.edu/~pjs54/Teaching/AutomaticLifestyle-So2/Projects/Vlku/history.html>.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

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### *Car Culture*

#### *The Battle for the Heart and Mind*

While Postwar Europe was still dealing with rationing, reconstruction, and the associated economic hardship, North America seemed to be in much better shape. The war had stimulated the American economy, but this economic boom drew concern from many. The government had run up high levels of debt to pay for the war, and they would need to pay it off, with interest, in the near future. Still, many of these concerns at the level of the government did not concern the household consumer. Indeed, for many American families, things were great. Families grew in size, housing construction boomed, and the need for individual transportation increased dramatically. Suburban housing developments were too far from cities to use public transportation, and even in those suburbs with access to public transit networks, there remained an immense cultural appetite for car ownership.<sup>34</sup> Before diving into GM's current approach towards winning a spot in the driveways and garages of America, it is important to recognize that car ownership was at the forefront of the American psyche.<sup>35</sup>

Since Henry Ford first sent the automotive into the mainstream several decades prior to the start of this committee, one might assume that cars had become mundane and commonplace. This is not necessarily the case: while cars themselves were not a new concept, automakers realized that they could keep what those cars looked like and how they performed. Crucially, the juggernaut that is the American cultural apparatus—art, music, literature, film, and popular culture—got behind the appeal of the automobile. This was, in part, an aesthetic perception but at times something more practical.

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<sup>34</sup> "Suburban Growth," [ushistory.org](https://www.ushistory.org/us/53b.asp) (Independence Hall Association), accessed December 3, 2020, <https://www.ushistory.org/us/53b.asp>.

<sup>35</sup> Association, Historic Vehicle. "How the Automobile Shaped America: Culture," 2013. <https://www.historicvehicle.org/how-the-automobile-shaped-america-culture/>.

In addition to the romanticization of the car in art,<sup>36</sup> some sought to take some of that artistic energy and apply it to the automobiles themselves. This created the 'modding' culture in which tinkering with cars became widespread. The advent of this new 'Hot Rod' culture brought forth highly modified cars that were both swanky to look at and quite fast.<sup>37</sup> Of course, with any possession comes pride, and informal groups of enthusiasts started to spring up and compare their handiwork—not just visually, but also in the streets. They tested the speed of their doctored and swanked-out machines in informal street 'drag races.' While dangerous and soon regulated by law, drag races as well as the general allure of speed and modding culture more broadly caught the interest of major car companies.<sup>38</sup>

### *Echoes with the Sound of Salesmen*

In the final years of the 1940s, car companies began seriously considering the possibility of providing sporty, high-performance cars available directly from a dealership, not a secondary mod market. This is a classic business strategy and one that delegates to this committee should understand: 'vertical entry,' in which a firm above another firm in the supply chain seeks to take that other firm's business. In this case car companies, producing a large volume of a completely homogenous product, knew that they could not compete with the small tinker shops on individuality, but they used their price efficiencies to tap into a broader demand base. Although one can make a case for several different true 'firsts' in this product area, the first widely-recognized, mass-produced, iconic, and ground-breaking 'muscle car' was GM's own Oldsmobile Rocket 88.<sup>39</sup> Oldsmobile had not been known as a performance carmaker beforehand, but this beast of a sedan was soon turning heads while dominating on the stock car circuit.<sup>40</sup> Of course, being one of the Detroit Auto Companies, when GM decided to produce something based on demand, they created additional demand in the process.<sup>41</sup> Advertising, product placement, and careful understanding of cultural nuance and

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<sup>36</sup> Marc Fisher, Michael S. Williamson, and Lazaro Gamio, "Cruising toward Oblivion: America's Once Magical - Now Mundane - Love Affair with Cars," *Washington Post*, 2015, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/sf/style/2015/09/02/americas-fading-car-culture/>.

<sup>37</sup> Sandy Heelan, "Hot Rod Culture in the 1950s," *Gunther Toody's Diner: An American Classic*, 2014, <https://gunthertoodys.com/hot-rod-culture/>.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> J. "Kelly" Flory, Jr., *American Cars, 1946-1959 Every Model Every Year* (McFarland & Company, Inc, 2008).

<sup>40</sup> Stock car circuit: a racing circuit popularized by the fact that competing cars were 'stock' and thus akin to what one would find on a street near one's home.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

messaging were as big a part of creating an entirely new subset of the car market as was any effort to engineer a superior machine. The market for cars is quite versatile, so any successful competitor in it must be as well. As such, one must know how to seize an opportunity and enter into promising markets, even if it might seem that they are the place for smaller competitors. A company does not just find demand, they can also create it.

Speed racing was not the only aspect of automobile culture romanticized in this era. So was the burgeoning phenomenon of the 'road trip.'<sup>42</sup> Postwar American popular messaging and advertising focused heavily on the idea of the family unit as something to desire and build but also as the ultimate reward. Suburbs. Schools. A car in the driveway. The metaphorical white picket fence. Automakers (and tire companies as well) realized that if they wanted to keep sales rolling, they would have to start convincing families to own multiple vehicles, and so started the mission to craft cars to one's identity, even if the same person manifested more than one car type. A cabriolet or convertible might be better-suited to a bachelor—who would want to roll up to a date driving a milk van? Still, a convertible would be impractical for the family man. This could be corrected by convincing families that they might need one car for family-based activities such as shopping, visiting the in-laws, and transporting purchased goods, but that the ultimate status symbol would be owning more than one, driving the second car for pleasure and/or the commute to work. You'll notice that these past sentences have used the word "man" and made references to men a lot—much of the messaging of this time clearly conveyed the advertisers' vision that the man was the breadwinner of the household and had the power of the purse. Whether having gender-diverse messaging would be the right thing to do either in the business or ethical/moral sense is a question for this committee to deal with. Notwithstanding that, the automakers quickly realized that, while it might be inconceivable on an individual level to think of buying a second car just because the Gibson family down the road had a great road trip to the Grand Canyon, on aggregate, small changes to demand and supply incentives do have an effect on a company's overall business for a given product. Such incentives include both things such as price (a \$500 drop in price might not make you more likely to buy a car, but on aggregate, one can prove time and time again that across an entire firm's

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<sup>42</sup> National Museum of American History: Behring Center. "A Nation of Highways." Smithsonian Institution, n.d. <https://americanhistory.si.edu/america-on-the-move/interstate-10>.

client base, that change resulted in more unit sales—in other words, all demand curves slope downwards) and other things that shift the entire demand curve, such as consumer tastes.

Let these serve as valuable lessons for the delegates to this committee: a successful business must be comfortable with the intersection of culture and commerce and also with not just tapping into tastes in the former and demand in the latter but shaping them as well.

### ***Corporate Structure and Function***

#### ***A Brilliant Red Barchetta From A Better Vanished Time***

William Durant founded GM in 1908, with the vision that a unifying corporate entity in Detroit would make it possible for the plethora of brands that serve the constituted GM then (and now) to achieve cost synergies, become more profitable, gain market share, and facilitate better R&D to make better cars. Cadillac, Chevrolet, Buick, Oldsmobile and others were all consolidated under the same roof, but it was not until the removal of Durant and the installation of Alfred P. Sloan, who still serves as the leader of our firm as Chairman of the Board of Directors, for the concept of committing to the brand-based corporate structure to really take hold. Durant had essentially envisioned that the only tie between the different brands would be ownership—they would all still effectively operate as independent companies.<sup>43</sup> Sloan quickly realized that great gains could be made towards achieving the objectives described above by going further.<sup>44</sup> To avoid cannibalizing demand, GM would have to ensure that the various brands were catering to fundamentally different market segments—or at least, different enough that people were choosing between a GM product and a Chrysler or Ford, rather than having GM compete with itself. That might sound counterintuitive—after all, if you bring two pieces of art to an auction instead of one, aren't you twice as likely to sell one? Perhaps, but the operating assumption here is that cars will sell—you are better served using your production capacity to attack different market segments and capture 'latent demand' or unrealized demand. A car company with the resources of GM would be able to produce a car for each different market segment, and so it was decided that Cadillac would be 'flagship' luxury brand, with the remaining

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<sup>43</sup> The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, "General Motors Corporation," *Britannica*, 2020, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/General-Motors-Corporation>.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

brands forming a graduated spectrum of luxury, with Buick above Oldsmobile and Pontiac, and with Chevrolet at the bottom of the luxury spectrum.<sup>45</sup>

The thing about luxury is that it is something that can vary without major alterations to the structure of the car. Obviously, there are some chassis designs/sizes that are more akin to certain markets than others (nobody is going to buy a luxury pickup truck), but some more central models (such as sedans, and to a certain extent cabriolets) could simply change their upholstery and finishings of the car whilst keeping the frame constant to produce two completely different products (and at different price points) on the same base. A luxury Cadillac sedan could have the same engine, wheelbase, and trunk design as a more modest Oldsmobile, and a fiery Pontiac could just be a 'souped up' version of a more simply clad Chevrolet. The advantages of this were twofold. On one hand, GM could achieve significant cost savings by having one production line produce the common parts, and then have the base components outfitted separately at different levels of luxury, as opposed to making everything separately. On the other hand, this enabled GM to simplify the shopping experience for someone who was deciding between levels of luxury in a vehicle. In the 1950s, the American market was saturated with small car brands.<sup>46</sup> For someone who was perhaps considering splurging on a model but was having doubts, they could go to a single dealership, see two co-located GM brand stores, and compare the two rather than having to hunt around town. In the formal language of academic economics, an agent has preferences over car consumption that includes *search*—search theory states that making it easier for the agent to assess the market and have more complete information (rather than asymmetric information) makes him or her a more able and willing consumer. It also increases general willingness to buy—more information lowers an agent's aversion or fear of adverse selection.<sup>47</sup> So, if you have seen more of what is out there, you are more confident in your choice having been the right one for what you were looking for. GM hypothesized that brand striation would enable them to capture more of the demand in the market and also to engage more consumers on the margins in entering the market and buying cars.

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<sup>45</sup> The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, "General Motors Corporation," *Britannica*, 2020, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/General-Motors-Corporation>.

<sup>46</sup> Todd Lassa, "American Car Industry Brands in the 1950s: An Orgy of Excess," *Automobile*, June 2020, <https://www.automobilemag.com/news/american-car-industry-brands-1950s-history/>.

<sup>47</sup> Steven Nickolas, "Understanding the Difference Between Moral Hazard and Adverse Selection," Investopedia (Investopedia, September 17, 2020), <https://www.investopedia.com/ask/answers/042415/what-difference-between-moral-hazard-and-adverse-selection.asp>.

Furthermore, GM's name carries value that a boutique car manufacturer might not—someone would take trust in knowing that something was a GM product, and with the brand structure, the GM name would effectively be underwriting the reputation of all of these individual and disparate cars.

It will be up to this committee to decide how much they wish to expand their brand lineup—either consolidating, offering more products within fewer brands, fewer within more or some combination of those two, or spinning off certain models into more unique entities to add a novelty and feeling of exclusivity. The way that brand affairs will be conducted is up to this committee to decide.

## BIOS

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### ***Isaiah Cambridge, Chief Operating Officer***

Hailing from Jacksonville, Florida, Isaiah Cambridge was a standout businessman from a young age. While attending the University of Florida, Cambridge started one of the first drive-in movie theaters in the country at an abandoned lot next to campus. The Cambridge theater quickly became the most popular social location at the university, and Isaiah became wealthy beyond a college student's wildest dreams. Cambridge graduated college in 1935 and opened new drive-in theaters around the Jacksonville area. As his theater chain grew, Cambridge was faced with the choice of guiding his business through a national expansion or selling the business and earning a huge payday. Seeking new challenges, Cambridge sold his business and joined GM's Corporate Development department as a Vice President. In just a few years at GM, he has become the CEO's right-hand man. As COO, Cambridge oversees the daily operations of the company, ensuring that all departments are working efficiently and cooperatively. He also plays roles in negotiating new partnerships and liaising with government regulators.

### ***Gerard Henry, Chief Strategy Officer***

Born in Albany, New York, to a wealthy family that owned a milk delivery business, Gerard was never an excellent student, more distinguished for his abilities on the track and the basketball court. However, what he lacked in quantitative reasoning on tests he made up for with incredible business vision. After graduating Dartmouth College with a degree in Political Science, he became involved with the management consultancy McKinsey & Co. There, he was known for his 'presentability' to clients—that is, being able to quickly summarize their concerns and problems, see the route of the issue, and form a qualitative solution that was more concerned with framing the questions faced by the company in the eyes of management than enumerating specific solutions. Henry's value proposition to clients has always been that he provides them better vision—and with that vision, they use their own skills to solve their problems. That skillset is at work as CSO—his job is to look at the strategic aspects of GM and look for new opportunities for the firm and ward off potential threats in the corporate landscape. That might look like assessing new entrants to a market,

evaluating a brand's present and future, contracting with a consulting agency to assess an idea, or forming partnerships with suppliers, companies, and manufacturers both domestic and abroad. Henry is effectively this company's Secretary of State.

### ***Stephen Barnett, Director of Design and Innovation***

A native of Colorado Springs, Colorado and a graduate of the Rhode Island School of Design, one of the most prestigious design colleges in the nation, Stephen Barnett always knew that he wanted to be someone that crafted new worlds in the mind of the beholder. A painter since the age of 3, all he asked for on his birthday every year was old magazines—turning them into incredible collages that were at one point displayed in the Colorado Governor's Mansion. Graduating during the depression, Barnett struggled to find work and spent many months unsure of where he would sleep or eat next in New York City -- the term 'starving artist' carries great weight to him. Marriage brought him to Detroit, and in an act of anguish one day at his family's destitution, he was caught painting a graffiti mural of a car melting into a sea of tears by Henry Ford II, who was so impressed by his talent that he offered him a job on the spot. He worked at Ford for five years, before accepting a promotion to be head of design at GM just five years ago. His job encompasses branding and advertising as well as the aesthetics of cars themselves—it is said that there is nobody that better understands beauty in motion at the firm than Barnett, who enjoys the final say over all branding decisions and exterior car designs at the firm. If you own a GM car and are proud of it, it is almost certainly because of him. He hopes to have kids someday to share his love of Disney with.

### ***Catherine Lecourt, Labor Relations Chief***

Known universally as Cathy, Lecourt is a native of Arlington, Virginia—her father was an economist in the Department of Labor under President Woodrow Wilson and wanted to make sure that his very bright daughter got the best education possible, so asked the former President to write her a letter of recommendation to attend Princeton, which she graduated from with a degree in Economics and History. She once considered getting a PhD, but when funding dried up during the depression, she found a job at a local Teacher's Union and quickly rose through the ranks as a skilled negotiator. It is said that Cathy could cut a deal for Salmon with a hungry grizzly bear—and no wonder, as she was able to establish the Maryland Teachers' Union as one of the most progressive in the country,

entitling its members to generous defined-benefit pension plans and excellent retirement policies. The current CEO of GM knew that he wanted a woman with her gravitas and skill on his side, so poached her from that job as soon as he rose to power -- she is now in charge of all negotiations and union relations with GM's internal unions, and those of its suppliers and customers. She is well regarded on both sides of the bargaining table and is frequently consulted by President Truman's Labor Department on matters related to labor disputes nationwide—as such, she enjoys immense clout within the Democratic party.

### ***Stanley Ciplickas, Chief Financial Officer***

There is no lemonade stand in the story of how Stanley Ciplickas became involved in the financial department at GM— a native of Battle Creek, Michigan, he was always a whiz with numbers, but most of all widely regarded as someone that never told a lie. Stanley Ciplickas is earnest, kind, and very eloquent—exactly the sort of person you want to trot out in front of investors and stockbrokers on a call to discuss earnings, the company's liabilities, and why the new bond issue or equity split might be painful or risky for shareholders, but will be the right thing in the end. As an alumnus of UMichigan with a degree in accounting, Ciplickas has always been a details guy—never once imagining that his job would be not just to evaluate the company's finances and report them to the SEC, but also to wield influence in Washington and in the lobbying circuit to prevent excessive taxation and regulation of large conglomerates such as GM, as well as to prevent their classification as monopolies and thus potentially the target of antitrust action. Ciplickas' right-of-center political views help with this and as such he tends to get around better in Republican circles. He is a close ideological ally of rumored 1952 Presidential Candidate Robert Taft (known as "Mr. Republican" and leader of the powerful Taft family) and the two are golfing partners frequently.

### ***Angelo Melanio, Chief Engineer***

Born to immigrants from Lazio, Italy, Melanio grew up in Queens, New York, in a rough neighborhood. Building was always a fascination of his—sports and art never interested him, and his parents' attempt to placate him with toys and musical instruments ended in horror as they arrived home one day to find a disassembled saxophone on the floor. Noting their dismay, young Angelo quickly reassembled it. He earned a partial scholarship to the school of engineering at Columbia

University, studying Mechanical Engineering, working night shifts at a local car mechanic's garage to pay off the rest. This love of autos got him an internship in the engineering department at GM in the summer between his third and fourth years, and soon landed him in Detroit, working in engineering design, where his job was to craft and test new engine designs. A passionate environmentalist and known for those interests in Washington, Melanio has made it a goal to halve the fuel consumption of all of GM's engines once every 15 years. He is not on track to meet that target right now, and frequently fights with the rest of the corporate board in lobbying for more money in R&D. Having shifted his pitch from that GM should sell those cars most friendly to air quality to that GM should sell those cars most friendly to your wallet at the gas station has gained him support with the group—and other automakers have taken notice.

***Elliot Condor, Senior Executive Vice President and Head of Corporate and Governmental Relations***

Elliot Condor came out of the womb to argue with the doctors in the emergency room. A born litigator, he entered Harvard Law School at age 20 and graduated at age 23—a boy genius. Having lost his father in the First World War, Condor felt a great sense of duty towards promoting peace—and so turned away numerous lucrative corporate gigs to work for the Brookings Institution in the foreign policy section, looking to promote diplomatic resolutions of conflicts and to create less elaborate webs of alliances such that the next war would not encompass the world as had been the case in 1914. He held this position for a while and became trusted by many higher-up bureaucrats in the Defense and State departments, as well as republican and democratic Senators on the Senate Foreign Relations committee. GM lured him away from the Brookings Institution as they became a major defense contractor during the Second World War, and those connections as well as experience with the Washington Lobbying scene proved invaluable in the securing of government production contracts. As the corporation's highest-ranking lobbyist, and with the moniker "the most connected man in Detroit", Condor's job is to peddle his enormous influence and ability to seal a deal with a handshake and a smile—to gain contracts, get favorable legislation passed, and at times ask the government and its bureaucratic investigators to turn a blind eye.

### ***David Watercress "DW" Glass, SEVP and Head of Investor Relations***

Being a public corporation means that you have thousands of mini-CEOs who all want to be heard. DW Glass' job is to make them all feel heard. A tax attorney by training who is very familiar with law enforcement and actually worked on the team that brought down Al Capone on charges of tax evasion, he turned to business after getting a job as a tax auditor in the private sector and quickly established a reputation as someone that knew the laws and knew them well, and but moreover had a gift for keeping people happy. A manager of investor relations has to know which threats of lawsuits, hostile takeovers, corporate proxy contests (in which investors try to take over the board and steer a business in a different way) and other shenanigans are real and which ones aren't. You have to maintain good relations with the press and answer questions about your stock performance and corporate earnings. And above all you have to work closely with the rest of the team—consider this position a sort of liaison between the CFO and General Counsel, who also has to have nerves of steel. Having connections in law enforcement (and those unto whom that law often needs to be actively enforced, if you know what we mean) will teach you that.

### ***Deborah Haas, SEVP and Head of General Motors Acceptance Corporation (GM Financial)***

Deborah Haas—never just “Debbie”—hails from the West Coast and is the daughter of restaurant proprietors in the Mission District of San Francisco. Always passionate about finance, Debbie chose to attend the University of San Francisco on a full-ride scholarship for merit but was encouraged to study accounting as becoming a bookkeeper was seen as a more acceptable career for a woman at the time. When the depression hit, working as a bookkeeper shielded her from the massive unemployment and layoffs associated with many other fields at the time. She got a job working at Wells Fargo headquarters in San Francisco, working in credit risk, and soon worked her way up to be responsible for many large chunks of the bank's retail business, including lending, mortgage and financing products. She was renowned for her expertise in evaluating bad debt expenses—understanding when loans are likely to be defaulted on and accounting for that in a firm's earnings projections and business plan. She is a recent hire—GM scooped her up from her very well-paid position at Wells Fargo to take the helm of GM Acceptance Corporation, which is the arm of GM that manages the car loans, payment-based financing, and auto insurance lines of business. These are

lucrative markets, and it is up to Debbie to make sure that they are profitable products for GM but also that financial institutions such as banks and smaller lenders do not swoop in and eat market share.

### ***Eric Farmer, SEVP and Head of Human Resources***

From the streets of Detroit to the headquarters of GM, Eric Farmer's story is a tale of rags to riches. Growing up as an orphan, Farmer made his living running small cons on tourists and locals. With an impeccable talent for reading people and gaining their trust, Farmer was a legendary con man until one day in 1940, when he unsuccessfully attempted to swindle a GM executive. Rather than call the police, however, the GM executive offered Farmer an entry-level job in Human Resources. Farmer's people skills allowed him to rapidly rise through the ranks, attaining his current position of Head of Human Resources in just 7 years. As Head of HR, Farmer oversees all of GM's personnel management, keeping GM's employees happy and productive. He also coordinates all recruitment of new employees, ensuring that GM hires the best engineers, managers, and executives.

### ***Elizabeth Herne, SEVP and Head of Macro Development***

Elizabeth Herne is one of these people that isn't really "from" somewhere because when you hear her story you feel like she was born in a bunch of different places, including Rome, London, Stockholm, and Connecticut. Her father's work caused her to move around a lot as a child and she truly considers herself a citizen of the world—and someone who has always felt the ambition of making it a better place. This is what brought her to Columbia University to study urban planning and public policy, and upon graduating she thought that her career would be in helping cities and suburbs develop. The depression changed a lot for her—she was laid off from the urban planning department of Chicago which at that point felt like a blessing. Elizabeth had become so disillusioned with the ability of government to promote meaningful change in the world of development that she knew the only way to realize her dreams of building iconic, functional, efficient, honey, and more sustainable cities was going to have to be done through building influence. GM hired her because of her expertise in understanding how governments and private corporations work together to design cities and infrastructure, and her job is essentially to be GM's point person for all things urban and road. With rapid growth of the suburbs and talk of the establishment of a national infrastructure

system, Elizabeth's job is to position GM for socioeconomic changes such as the development of the suburbs, infrastructure, and other things, and work to establish a business strategy that will adapt well to such disruption.

### **Evan Haynie, SEVP and General Counsel**

Half man and half lobster, it doesn't get more Maine than Evan Haynie. Born in Bangor and raised in Portland the grandson of a fisherman and the son of one of the state's most successful businesspeople by virtue of a lobster empire, Haynie always had a fondness for the ocean—sailing, rowing, fishing, and swimming. He chose to attend Harvard for undergrad to participate in their renowned rowing program; always a talker, he had quickly found a talent and passion for being a coxswain (the 9th member of an 8-person boat that uses his voice to coordinate and motivate the other rowers). After attending Harvard Law School, he moved back to Maine to work in the legal department of the family business, but soon moved to Detroit after marrying his college sweetheart Anna, a native of a suburb of Detroit, whose father worked for Ford (we don't talk about him). Evan got a job in the legal department of GM and has worked his way up to being the company's chief lawyer—in charge of compliance, defending the firm against the plethora of class action and other lawsuits that owners, customers, suppliers, and other entities often levy, as well as being the firm's chief legal strategist for when it goes on the offensive, levying lawsuits of its own. He is a member of the New York, Maine, and Michigan Bars.

### ***Gretchen Rosenthal, EVP and Chief Technology Officer***

Gretchen Rosenthal is many things, but typical is not one of them. Born to a family of writers and historians, she broke the mold from a young age by tinkering with electrical parts in her family's garage. When one of her home projects turned out to be a shortwave radio that was more powerful than anything on the market, Rosenthal was offered a full ride to MIT's engineering school. Rosenthal graduated with a degree in electrical engineering and immediately joined GM's engineering department. There, she forged a new path for women in the automobile industry, becoming GM's first female senior engineer and, eventually, its first female Chief Technology Officer. In her role as CTO, Rosenthal oversees all of GM's non-automotive technology. This includes electronic communication such as telephones, the power supplied to GM's factories, and

manufacturing equipment. In the office, Rosenthal is known as a brilliant executive, but also as somewhat of an oddball. She will often stop unsuspecting interns in the hallway for an impromptu speed walking competition or an elaborate explanation of why the country of Finland doesn't exist.

### ***Robert Birge, EVP and Head of Supply Chain***

A mathematics undergraduate with an accompanying interest in Philosophy, Bob was always interested in systems—how things interact. At one point he thought that would end up in the military with his fascination for procedure and chains of command, but the burgeoning field of management and operational science beckoned—he received a Ph.D in operations research from Princeton University in 1947, having avoided the draft with a graduate school deferment. Studying queues, wait times, operational and organizational efficiencies, and applying statistical and mathematical models to them is what he was hired by GM to do. To build relationships with the plethora of suppliers that the firm has, GM has lent him and his team out on various 'consulting assignments' to perform studies and advise the operations of trucking, manufacturing, and logistics firms across the US. As a result, he has a very strong relationship with the transport and manufacturing sector, on both the corporate and union side.

### ***John Koobatian, EVP and Head of Marketing***

Born in Los Angeles, California, to emigrants from Armenia who fled as refugees after the genocide, John has always understood the power of message—at first turning his attention to raising awareness of the plight that Armenians faced, and then afterwards to social justice issues in general as a youth. Suffering from poor eyesight, John was drafted to serve in the Second World War but due to his poor eyesight was assigned to the army motion picture unit, where he met future Hollywood actor Ronald Reagan. After being discharged in 1943, John went to Hollywood and worked as a marketing manager and a general laborer for MGM studios. Although he never held a corporate office there, his youth, ambition, passion for advocacy and ability to capture peoples' attention both through media and in person with his strong personality attracted GM to hire him in 1948 and put him in charge of revamping the marketing department. His job differs from that of the Design Director in that he is responsible for implementing a design/thematic vision and presenting it. John plans and shoots commercials coordinates with TV and Film studios about GM product placements

and is responsible for settling contracts with the Ad Men in New York that consult with GM to provide branding. He is also very close with the Screen Actors' Guild in Hollywood and is deeply disturbed with the allegations of socialist involvement therein.

### ***Jonas Zenzel, EVP and Head of Product Management***

It is fitting that someone with the nickname "Jonice" would be widely regarded as one of the nicest people at the firm. A business junkie since his youth, Jonas started his first lemonade stand from the balcony of his second-floor walk-up apartment in Brooklyn in his youth; lemonade was sold and lowered in a sealed cup on a string to customers below, which got him, and his flowing mop of hair featured in the lifestyle section of the 'New York Post' at age 8. A graduate of New York University's business faculty, Jonas has worked at various appliance companies such as General Electric and Viking; he was hired in 1948 to bring some of that expertise to GM. Product Management is decision making about a product that a company produces from the perspective of what a customer gets from it—essentially, you are designing the customer's experience with that product. Nobody had ever really thought about treating cars like appliances—but they are quite similar. Customers interact with them every day, and they are a part of everyday life. Product Management at GM is less about being responsible for the design of seats or brakes and more about engineering the experience that customers get from buying a GM car, and how that car meshes with various parts of their lives. It's pretty nebulous but that has never troubled Jonas - he is certainly a free spirit. And for all intents and purposes, GM could close his department and fire him tomorrow and he would be fine—he is married to the heiress to the Rockefeller Oil empire.

### **Bill Hinckley, President of Cadillac and Buick**

Bill Hinckley has been an engine man since birth. Born to a train engineer in Biloxi, Mississippi in 1899, Bill didn't have an article of clothing without a grease stain on it until he went off to Mississippi State in 1917. Putting his college career aside for the time being, Hinckley enlisted in the marines, where he fought courageously but extremely ineptly across France. What skill he lacked as an infantryman he made up for in charm, befriending a number of his commanding officers, which led him to be transferred to a mechanics job. When he returned home, he graduated with honors and began his career as an engineer for Cadillac, drawn by their new 90-degree flathead V8 engine

model. Through his charm and hard work he progressed to the C-Suite and, eventually, President. Hinckley dreams of a world where every home has a Cadillac in the driveway. A major political donor, Hinckley is a regular at Congressional Country Club, where he is known to meet with influential figures and play terrible golf.

### ***Montgomery C. Chesterfield II, President of Oldsmobile, Pontiac, and Chevrolet***

Montgomery C. Chesterfield II is a true self-made American man. Inheriting only a modest fortune in railroad stock from his father at the age of 16 (and the houses in New York City, Sagaponack, and Newport, of course) Chesterfield made his own way by going to the same boarding school as his father, and then Yale. Coincidentally his roommate in school would spend Christmas at the Queen Anne-style mansion of one Ransom E. Olds, whom he met on several occasions and who encouraged him to look for work in industry, as it was rapidly becoming respectable for a man of his social standing to do so. Though he would never drive such a car himself, Chesterfield asked for a job at Oldsmobile and was provided one. By working his way up from Junior Vice President all the way up to Senior Vice President and finally President, Chesterfield became one of the most powerful men in the automotive industry. Chesterfield, however, laments the sorry state of affairs that allow a captain of industry from an excellent family to be subject to the whims of the public and their elected officials.

### ***Peter B. Kerstoffle, President of GMC***

Peter B. Kerstoffle has been driving a truck since the day he got his driver's license. First hauling freight for his father between the family ironworks and various hardware stores, Kerstoffle knew the ins and outs of what makes the perfect pickup for a modern consumer—it was for this reason that the truck division of General Motors, GMC, hired him on as engineer after he finished his degree in mechanical engineering from UC Berkeley in 1944. Kerstoffle, after numerous successful projects as an engineer, was appointed head of GMC in 1950, and has been given creative control. With his newfound leadership role, Kerstoffle hopes to make the pickup truck a central part of the American identity, and to ensure that the GMC division of General Motors stays at the forefront of the company. Kerstoffle is not only in charge of designing new trucks, but also selling them, being responsible for GMC's vast marketing apparatus.

### ***Joseph "Joe" Anthony, Press Secretary***

Born to Italian immigrants in Greenwich, Connecticut, Joe Anthony. Joe is a proud alumnus of Greenwich High School's Debate team - and he'll never let anyone forget it. Luckily for him, his debate skills landed him a spot at Yale University, where he majored in English. Upon his graduation, Joe began working in GM's marketing department, where his smooth talking lent him a great advantage in crafting GM's public message. As Press Secretary, Joe is the voice for all of GM's public announcements, including product launches and business partnerships. Joe also helps smooth over any scandals GM might be involved in, especially product recalls. With contacts at major media outlets, Joe has a knack for promoting stories that paint GM in a positive light - and silencing stories that don't. In his spare time, Joe enjoys long walks on the beach and pontificating about American politics.

### ***William M. Allen, Director: Chairman and CEO of Boeing***

William Allen was born in Lolo, Montana on September 1, 1900, attending Montana University, and graduating from Harvard Law School in 1925. Just five years later, he was a member of the board of Boeing Air Transport, and in 1931 he joined the board of Boeing Airplane Company. In 1945, two weeks after the end of the second World War, Boeing Chairman Egdtvedt turned to Allen to fill the role of president of the Boeing Company. Allen, having been trained in law, initially believed himself not properly qualified to head an engineering firm, but he was made president and CEO because he had greater breadth of knowledge than the senior engineers at Boeing at the time. Under his leadership as president, Boeing developed several military aircraft, but Allen is best known for two decisive moves he made in 1952: the construction of the Boeing 367-80 and the beginning of its development into the Boeing 707. Although he has no guarantee of a buyer, these aircraft are the centerpiece of Allen's strategy going forward. With an eye on the future, Allen's aim is to lead Boeing to become the premier manufacturer of aircraft worldwide.

### ***Robert W. Woodruff, Director: Chairman and CEO of Coca-Cola***

Robert W. Woodruff, born 1889 in Columbus, Georgia, was born heir to a Georgia manufacturing and business empire—a future he wanted no part in! After graduating from high school, Woodruff

spurned his family by dropping out of college and working as a day laborer who sifted through sand in order to make glass. He was fired from this job after a year, but managed to work his way into a sales position at the White Motor Automobile Corporation a job he excelled at like no other. Quickly rising through the ranks, he became a vice president at White Motor. During World War I, Woodruff was named to the US Department of Ordnance, and used his position to purchase military trucks exclusively from White Motor—a business trick that made White Motor more profitable than ever before. In an effort to repair his relationship with his son and taking note of his considerable success, Woodruff's father Ernest offered to let Woodruff lead one of Ernest's new business acquisitions—the Coca Cola Company. After many years of successful management, the Coca Cola Company has become a force to be reckoned with both in American culture and business. With experience as an automotive executive, and as the leader of one of America's biggest companies, Woodruff goes into the 50's looking to capitalize on America that has more money than ever before, is watching advertisements on TV, and is rapidly developing a national identity that includes his company's brand.

### ***Henry Morgenthau Jr., Director: Former Secretary of the Treasury***

Henry Morgenthau Jr. was born to a wealthy New York family in 1891. Despite his future role, Morgenthau did not have an economics background. Instead, he obtained degrees in architecture and agriculture from Cornell University before serving on New York's Agricultural Advisory Committee. When President Franklin D. Roosevelt entered office, he appointed Morgenthau, an old friend, to the Federal Farm Board. After the previous Treasury Secretary's resignation, Roosevelt appointed Morgenthau. Although he had relatively little experience with monetary policy, Morgenthau was an effective Secretary of the Treasury. His signature accomplishment was helping fund the New Deal, FDR's massive spending plan to lift America out of the Great Depression. Morgenthau also helped manage the nation's finances during all of World War II. After President Roosevelt's death in 1945, Morgenthau retired from his post to focus on philanthropy and sit on the boards of various companies.

***Franklin R. Collbohm, Director: CEO of RAND Corporation***

Franklin R. Collbohm, born in New York City in 1907, knows the ins and outs of managing large scale manufacturing projects. Having studied engineering at the University of Wisconsin, Collbohm worked as a designer and test pilot on the DC-1, DC-2, and DC-3 aircraft, trailblazing planes of the aviation industry. During the Second World War, Collbohm was an instrumental part of a team of military personnel and engineers that made the B-29 one of the most effective military aircraft in history—this team would go on to become the RAND (short for “Research and Development) Corporation. Securing the RAND Corporation’s initial funding as a million-dollar loan from the Ford Foundation, Collbohm worked with many executives in the automotive industry during the war to manufacture bombers. RAND’s post-war role has become as a think-tank to analyze projects and make them better and more efficient—be it designing better military equipment, coming up with more effective foreign policy, or simply in making an assembly line as profitable as possible. Collbohm leads a RAND corporation that is uniquely suited to become an influential force in both circles of American politics and industry.

***Leonard Goldenson, Director: President of Paramount Pictures***

Leonard H. Goldenson, born in Pennsylvania in 1905, effectively built the modern American entertainment industry. Wanting to be a lawyer, Goldenson received his law degree from Harvard Law in 1933 and began to work as a lawyer for Paramount Pictures that same year. Noted for his business acumen, Goldenson first worked as a legal consultant for mergers, and then became the negotiator for mergers himself. He orchestrated the merger between ABC and Paramount in 1951 and was put in charge of both companies as a result. With considerable creative control, Goldenson is responsible for producing television and movies that will be entertaining to the American public—not to mention profitable for his company. With the United States having cemented itself as a cultural force in the entertainment sector, Goldenson leads an entertainment and news powerhouse that will be crucial in defining the American identity for decades to come.

### ***Thomas Dewey, Director: Former Governor of New York***

Born 1902 in Owosso, Michigan, Thomas Dewey has spent most of his life in the halls of power; starting a promising career as a lawyer after getting a law degree from Columbia University, Dewey was brought into the public eye after being named a special prosecutor for the state of New York. After a high profile and wildly successful run dismantling organized crime in New York City during his time as Manhattan District Attorney, Dewey was elected governor of New York in 1943. A rising star within the Republican Party, he was the Republican nominee for president in 1944 and 1948, being defeated both times. A leader of a coalition of moderate Republicans, Dewey was instrumental to the election of Dwight Eisenhower and Richard Nixon in 1952; it suffices to say that Dewey is incredibly well politically connected. Dewey has announced that his gubernatorial term ending in 1954 will be his last, and that he will be going into private law practice - a well-spoken man with many friends in high places, Dewey is an influential figure in both politics and industry, an outspoken anti-communist, an anti-unionist, and industrial speculator. What he will do with his retirement, time will tell.

### ***Jacob Devers, Director: Former US Army General, Developer of Several Tanks***

Born in York, Pennsylvania, in 1887, Jacob Devers is an accomplished World War II veteran. At the beginning of the war, Devers served as commanding general of the Army's 9th infantry division. He was quickly promoted and cycled through command positions in the European, North African, and Mediterranean theatres. His final, and perhaps most pivotal, role in the war was as commander of the 6th Army Group. His division was a key piece of the ground assault on Germany that ultimately ended the war in the European theatre. Throughout his career in command, Devers was known for his frequent use of tanks in ground combat. Despite objections from other high-ranking officials, Devers pushed for the development and adoption of the M-4 Sherman tank. He later advocated for the development of other tanks, as well as new tank artillery technology. Devers retired from his military career in 1949, but military technology is still close to his heart. Devers brings extensive military automotive knowledge to the GM's board.

### ***Robert "Bob" Davis, Manager, Flint Truck Assembly***

Born to a family of farmers, Bob Davis knows the value of an honest day's work. Growing up, in addition to working on his family's farm, Bob lent a hand at the local auto repair shop on weekends. It was there that Bob first fell in love with cars, and also where he gained his signature catch phrase, "Can we fix it? Yes we can!" After high school, Bob knew he wanted to build things with his hands for a living, so he signed up to work at the nearest GM assembly plant. Twenty years later, Bob is the Manager of GM's Truck Assembly plant in Flint, Michigan. In this role, Bob ensures that GM's trucks are manufactured on time and to the highest standards of quality. Bob is also a leader for his employees, serving as a union liaison and making sure that the corporate offices hear their complaints.

### ***Naomi Cohen, Head Doctor***

Hailing from the friendly confines of Burlington, Vermont, Naomi Cohen knew she wanted to be a doctor since she was a little girl. For her 6th birthday, while all of her friends received dollhouses, Naomi asked her parents for a suture kit so she could practice her stitches. This early preparation clearly paid off, as Cohen graduated from the University of Vermont's medical school at the age of 21. Cohen completed her residency and specialized in trauma surgery, where long nights spent in the ER made her well acquainted with car crash victims. Once she decided the demanding schedule of an on-call surgeon wasn't for her, Cohen left her job at the hospital and began working as a medical consultant in the automotive industry. In her current role as Head Doctor, Cohen works with the engineering department to help GM's cars meet safety standards. She also oversees and interprets results from crash tests. More recently, Cohen has begun an internal investigation into safety standards at GM's assembly plants to determine whether GM's employees have a safe working environment.

### ***Joseph Pinto, Faceless University of Chicago Intern***

Joseph Pinto can't wait to sell out. As a student in the University of Chicago's famously theoretical Economics department, Pinto longs for the day when he can forget everything he learned in school, join a big company, and earn a big paycheck. That's why he applied to GM's Business Management

internship. To his chagrin, however, the internship so far has mostly consisted of fetching coffee for executives and making copies of memos. Despite the mundane work, the internship has had some upsides. Socializing with the other interns has given him a large network of friends in various departments, as well as other universities around the country. Additionally, some of the less technologically adept executives ask Pinto to make copies of high-level memos for meetings, so Pinto has a knowledge of GM's upper management that few other interns do.

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