

BEST
OF

TEMP
SLAVE
!

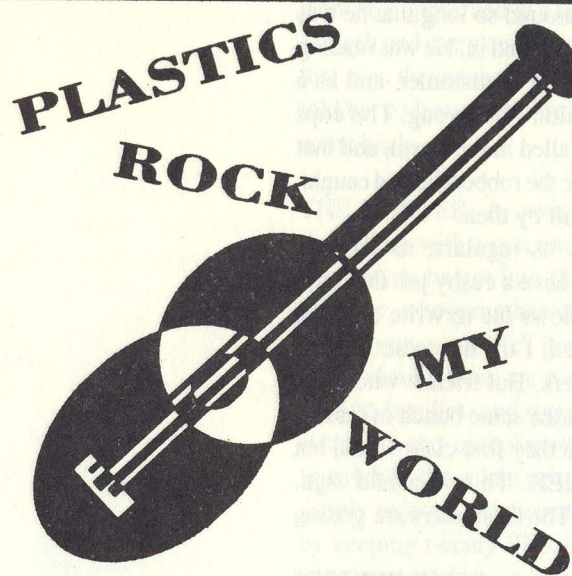
I Work for Boreco INC.

Here I go again. I'm a glutton for punishment. At least that's what people must think. Well, when my money dries up, when the check is no longer in the mail, when I start getting calls from creepy-sounding bill collectors, the only choice is to work. Work anywhere, at any time, doing anything. Low pay, back-breaking nonsensical work for slave-driving bosses. It's all the same to me. It's my life and I deal with it.

My first temp job in Madison was one for the books. I was gleefully told by a local temp agency rep that she had lined me up with a first shift job. BUT, the shift was 6AM to 6PM, three to four days a week. She said, "On the bright side, you'll have 3-4 days off per week and we will increase your pay from \$6 an hour to \$6.75 an hour if you show up for work everyday." I was overjoyed to hear this. I'd have to get up at 5 in the morning just to get to the job on time and then get home at 7PM, leaving me enough time to scarf some food and go to sleep. It was like having your brain

sliced right out of your head. Because to do the job you would have to accept the fact that your life was on hold.

The assignment, or should I say ass-whipping, was at a plastics manufacturing plant 15 miles by car from my home. The plant manufactured plastic molding by use of an injection process. They made a variety of consumer products that people don't need to buy. This included electric toothbrushes, baby ass wipe



containers, super balls, reflectors for batteries, medical kits and stuff I couldn't even imagine.

My supervisor greeted me and then took me to the reflector line. A robotic arm deposited row after row of black reflectors on a conveyor belt. My job was to pick the reflectors off the belt and deposit them in a box. I learned the job in ten minutes. Another worker stood close by smiling ear to ear. He looked like he had escaped from a mental ward. He worked the 6PM to 6AM shift. (Imagine the kind of life he had.) His teeth were green and black and his hair was matted down on his head. I could have fried bacon on it. He gave me the low down immediately.

"This is a real brain dead job pal," he told me. "I shouldn't be telling you this but people go crazy in this place. When we get a temp we know he ain't staying for long. Even the one's that do wind up splitting. This one guy was here for 3 months, everything seemed ok and the company was going to give him a full time job. One day he was on his lunch break, he walked out on the floor, grabbed his boom box and walked out a side entrance. We never heard from him again. It was just like that — here and gone at the bat of an eye." He looked at me and started laughing.

After a few hours of work, I couldn't decide if they manufactured plastic or killed brain cells. It was so godawful that I thought they should move the plant to Mexico. Fuck NAFTA, let the Mexicans be bored out of their skulls. With any luck it would save the brain cells of American working dogs so they would have more time to watch prime time sit coms or drink gallons of beer. In fact, I was willing to help them move the machinery to Mexico. Not only was it sensible, it was my patriotic duty!

The reflector job was just one work area. To alleviate the boredom, or to kill even more brain cells, we switched jobs every 6 hours. No matter where you went it was mind numbing shit work.

The afternoon of my first day, I worked on a plastics molding machine called the TM-150G2. The TM became my buddy. I stood next to it, opened a door and placed a metal mold into a slot. When I closed the door, a robotic

ABSTRACT INTELLECTUALISM!

Every so often, I just can't help being crazy. I have to mess with my boss and coworkers. I just can't control myself. One day I was using a ratchet to unscrew a plastic mold. Time after time I inserted the wrench into the mold. I turned to a coworker and said, "This is just like sex, I insert and pull out when I'm done."

My boss overheard me say this and then replied, "You may think you are doing the fucking but you're the one getting fucked."

Then I said, "Oh, so that's why my asshole is torn and bloody after a day of work."

My boss nearly had a shit fit and his eyes bugged out of his head. "What did you say? Now how am I supposed to recommend you for a full time job if you talk like that?"

I answered, "Ok it's torn and bloody but I like it. Does that make you feel better?"

My coworker and I burst into laughter. The bossman shook his head and gave me the evil eye. "I'll have to watch out for you," he said.

(Gee, he was the one who butted in on the conversation. You'd think he would have a sense of humor!)

machine pushed the mold into a hole and then withdrew. It formed electric toothbrush heads. I reached into the machine, took the mold off, placed it in a vise grip and winched the plastic head off the mold. Then I repeated the process. For 6 hours.

The best job by far was sitting in front of a machine that made noises like a grunting pig. It then farted pieces of plastic at me. I cut away the bad parts and put the good parts in a box. I was supposed to watch for nicks and scratches but most of the time I boxed everything.

To make matters worse, the only clock on the plant floor was posted directly in front of me. It was like an extra form of torture watching the hands of the clock go by minute after minute. The only thing to do was ignore it and let your mind wander.

Most of the time I became part of the machine. I noticed that you could buy yourself time if you used the same body motions. Unfortunately, this meant you were setting yourself up for a lot of aches and pains because your arms and shoulders are not meant to do the same tasks continuously. I simply endured. I had no choice. For me this was a "bridge" job, the kind of job you grinned and bared, to show your next employer that you were a good worker. Based on my previous employment

history, I had to begin recreating a work history. For the next 4 months that's what I did.

MY COWORKERS!

In any manufacturing plant the very best part of working is meeting your fellow slaves. I never met such a collection of misfits as I did at Boreco Inc. Some of them tried to assure that the job wasn't so bad. But others had the

thousand yard stare, like they'd been in a war. It didn't take long to figure out that Boreco Inc. was a dumping ground for the working class of Wisconsin. No matter what smiley faced spin you put on it, I had seen it all before. Everyone had bills to pay, kids to support, better cars to buy and

nowhere else to go. They were going to put in their time and muck through the mess.

In the breakroom, they talked about hopped up cars, said "motherfucker" every other word and pranked each other. I sat back and smiled taking it all in while thinking — so this is what happens to bad boys and girls who don't do well in high school.

To be fair, though, almost everyone I met had an outside interest — some were mechanics on the side, others went to college, one guy was an Olympic class wrestler. The one thing

The best job by far was sitting in front of a machine that made noises like a grunting pig. It then farted pieces of plastic at me.

A temp job working in a plastics factory for \$6.75 an hour?

WILL SOMEONE SHOOT ME!

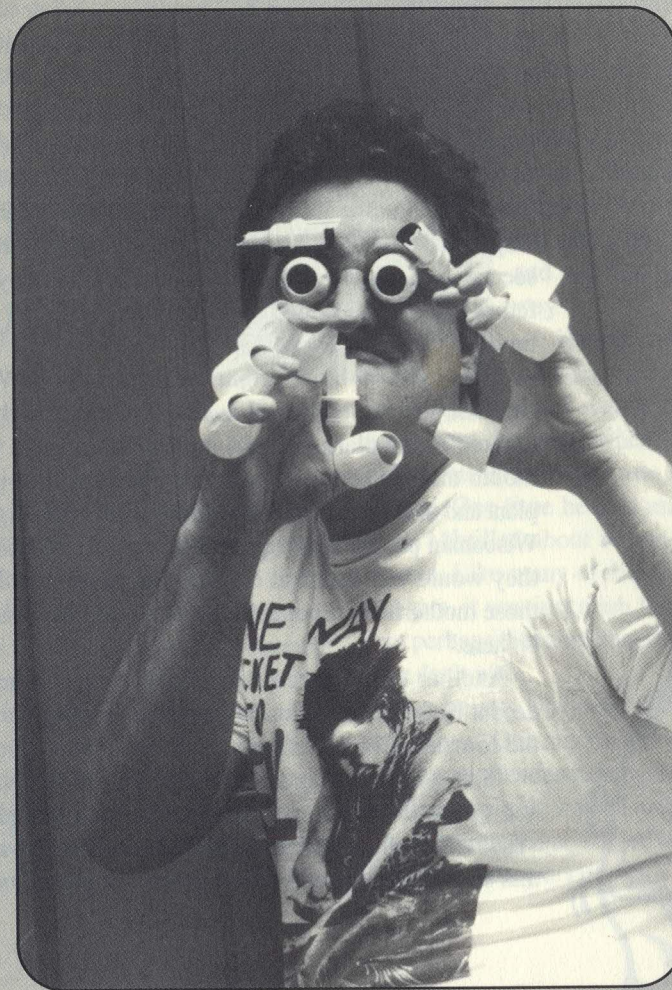


PHOTO BY LAURA CLEES

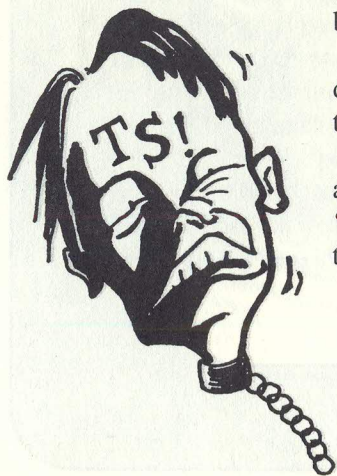
we all had in common was that we wanted to be somewhere else.

One woman had recently moved to the U.S. from Russia. I thought all the Russkis were in New York but here was one in Wisconsin! She turned out to be a great person. At first she kissed ass to the bosses and I wondered if she would ever get a clue. Well, that came soon enough because work, no matter where you work, is still work. She kissed ass to get a full time job and then made fun of the place in a hilarious fashion. In her lilting accent she explained her language difficulties had led to dumb jobs. One time she went to the wrong company to apply for a job and they hired her anyway. When she got home and showed her boyfriend the application he erupted in laughter because she had gotten a job at a laundry washing company. She took the job for three days and then quit saying, "What do you think I'm stupid, Russians don't work like that." I was the only person in the plant willing to be patient with her so we became good friends, discussed her life in the former Soviet Union. She was thrilled to relate how boring and stupid the bureaucrats were. The clincher was that her second to last job was as a technician at Chernobyl! Her father had even designed the damn thing! OUCH! I continually teased her about this.

Thank god for black people too, especially in Wisconsin. One guy named Billy was one of the few blacks who worked in the plant. He was an imposing figure with a mouth that ran constantly. One day he stood outside the plant and threw rocks at birds. Nearby whitebread pig faced Wisconsin people drove by in their cars. I told Billy that they would call the cops on him. Billy replied, "I hope those motherfuckers come for me. At least I won't have to be here."

Another time I asked Billy if the company had any decent benefits. He burst into laughter and told me about the company Christmas party.

"Shit, a few years ago, I went with my wife to the party and everyone came up to me, pointed at me and said, 'You're Billy right?' Well, it didn't take me long to realize that since I was the only black guy at the party everyone



knew my name. By the next party they had hired another black guy named Ted. So people came up to me and said, 'Hi Ted.' I just laughed and started drinking heavily. This motherfucking place is unbelievable. I don't kill any brain cells here because I check my brains at the door and collect 'em when I leave."

Another guy totally reaffirmed my pride in the American working class. One week he didn't show up for work, didn't bother to call or make an excuse, and then out of nowhere showed up like nothing happened. Even Boreco Inc. could not tolerate this, they canned him. He smiled and waved goodbye to everyone. What a great guy!

MY BOSS

My boss was the prototype Wisconsin male. He was stocky and squat with a big head resting on his shoulders, topped off with a haircut from hell. He had a German name, too, which was par for the course, because everyone had a German name except for me and Russki woman. He also had the typical Wisconsin accent. Vowels are spoken in a low guttural elongated fashion. You could always tell an outsider from a local this way. The accents sound friendly but you knew that many of them were small minded petty assholes with no redeeming social values. The

absolute worse Wisconsin boss or resident for that matter loved work, loved to drink, they played softball or bowled. They loved to hunt and ice fish and cheer for the Green Bay Packer football team. Like I said, no redeeming social values, especially regarding the Packers!

My boss was not a jerk. He knew the score and was a cool person to shoot the shit with. He encouraged me to stay with the company but knew full well I wasn't a lifer. He already knew

He already knew that no one stayed at the job and it was his job to evaluate and push new meat into and out of the revolving door.

that no one stayed at the job and it was his job to evaluate and push new meat into and out of the revolving door. So he never hassled me, admitted to me that the job was a brain stealer and went on his merry way.

He was an excellent mechanic when it came

to fixing problems with the robotic equipment. He knew when you were pulling his chain but let you get away with it. One time he told me that he wasn't thrilled about bossing people around. Like many of the production workers, it was just a job for him. He was perhaps the most honest boss I've ever dealt with.

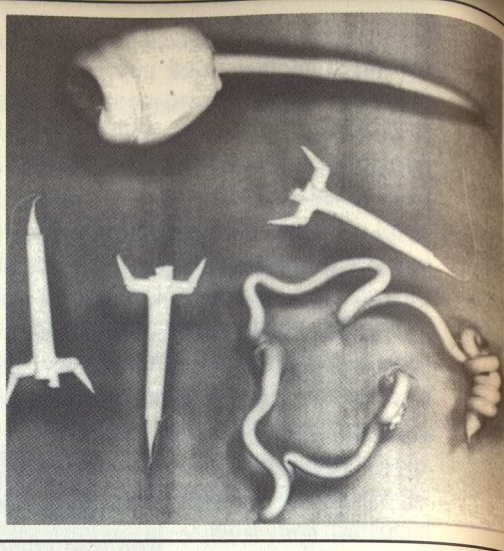
But he also made me very scared sometimes. One day he told me to go to corporate headquarters and apply for a full time job. He wanted me full time. My blood pressure started racing. A full time job working in a plastics

PEOPLE AND PLASTIC

Plastic is like people. Given the correct care it turns out relatively normal in appearance and serves a function to society. The best plastic is the kind that is sturdy in character, has a clean look to it. It can be counted on for durability and a long shelf life covering food items, adorning cars, homes, and other necessary consumer products.

However, things can go wrong, very wrong. Sometimes during the birthing process the genetic road map gets screwed up and the best laid plans go haywire. In people it leads to mental retardation, birth defects, disease and Temp Slave! readers. But, we do our best to care for the misfits of our society.

Not so with plastic. The pieces of plastic on display came through the birthing process warped and useless. Since they can not benefit society they must be destroyed.



factory for the rest of my fucking life! It was like the devil asking me to sell my soul!

I thought, what the hell, I'll do it just for the entertainment value. No way in hell would they hire me. If they even considered it I'd start messing up the place so they would get rid of me. I didn't realize at the time how desperate they were for workers because days after filling out the application he tried to schedule a physical for me.

STAY IN LINE!

Non-union plant work totally favors the bosses. The noise level makes it nearly impossible to hold a conversation with your coworkers. Because the line never stops you are always isolated. You depend on your coworkers to keep you supplied with

tools and boxes. This leads to some heavy shit. Most workers tend to be slackers and you can wind up being screwed.

Sometimes the person who is supposed to relieve you for breaks doesn't show up on time. Since you are tied to the line your first inclination is to blame your coworkers. I saw this happen many times. People just back stabbed the next person to curry favor with the bosses. Every so often my mind would wander and I'd fuck up. One coworker was a Minnie Mouse busybody who ratted me out every time. I wanted to strangle her. But I tend to pity people like her. No matter how much ass kissing she did, it wouldn't get her a raise and she'd be tied to her line like everyone else.

In this respect the anger and frustration toward the bosses is redirected to you coworkers. This plays right into

the hands of the bosses. On top of this Boreco Inc. was very good at providing free food every other weekend and this was enough to keep people satisfied.

Every so often, when the lines were down I held court, talked with people about how crappy things were, told them not to be fooled by the feel good nonsense. A few times I hinted at bringing a union in just to piss people off. But they knew, as well as I, that a union would be a waste because no one ever stayed long enough at the job and no one in their right mind would ever want to stay. We joked a lot about it but nothing ever happened.

The hilarious thing was that the workers had the company by the short hairs. It seems like the main requirement for working at Boreco Inc. was that you could count to 5, or had enough fingers on your hand to hold plastic. They didn't even bother to give people benefits to start; they waited until the third month of your employment. It wasn't mean spirited; rather, they just did not want to deal with paperwork. They wanted to see if you would stay before they gave you anything.

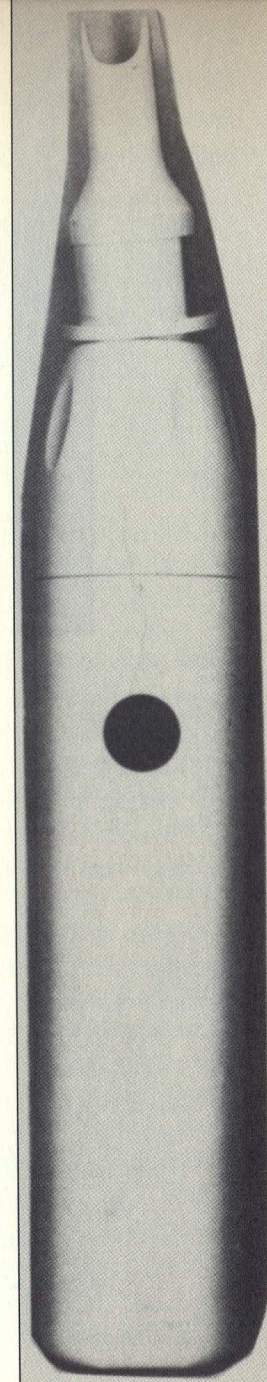
Anyway, the bosses are able to keep people in line in a plant situation because of the nature of the work and the nature of the worker. They play worker against worker and the clueless worker falls into the trap. Besides, most plant workers expect nothing, so they demand nothing. It's a scenario that's been played out countless times in plants all over the world.

What working people really need is a sense of themselves as people. Far too often they define themselves by the jobs they do and this makes it difficult to better their lot in life. Respect yourself first and then demand respect from other people, is what I say.

STAGE DOOR LEFT

The bossman was really pressuring me to take a full time job. I put him off for weeks and then had to fess up.

I had applied for another job and miracles of miracles it had come through. I told him I was leaving. (I didn't even bother to call the temp agency.) He was pissed at first but



understood where I was coming from. The new job paid double what I was getting with Boreco Inc. He shook his head and said, "Well you gotta go with the money. Good luck."

My coworkers reacted as if a family member had died. To be truthful I felt the same way. They were the nicest people I ever worked with and it was hard saying goodbye to them.

But don't think I'm going soft. My last week of work I packed plastic with gouges in it, if it came out greasy I packed it. I packed the plastic upside down, sideways or whatever way I felt like. Other times I just threw loads into a grinder. It was a last parting shot at the Drudge-masters of Corporate America. The person doing quality control at the company we shipped the plastic to would definitely get the picture once they saw my work. I almost wanted to enclose a big happy face sticker with a booger on it just for the hell of it.

But like I mentioned earlier, this job was a bridge, a stepping stone to better things.

As for the agency, they totally freaked on my boss. They asked him why I didn't contact them and let them know I was leaving. Of course this was totally ridiculous since I had established my own relationship with my boss and the company. The agency was an afterthought. I only called to lambast them if my check was late. Otherwise they weren't worth a phone call. Besides, they were the fuckers who lined me up with the shit job to begin with. Were they doing me a favor? Was I supposed to kiss their ass for it?

No way. It's just not in my character.

KEFFO

