



WHY IS THIS BOOK WORTH OUR TIME?

#1 – This book is a terrific reminder of how work provides meaning to life.

#2 – This book is a terrific reminder of how work provides belonging circles in life that matter.

#3 – This book raises real alarms about the threats that we face from Artificial Intelligence and automation and globalization.



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American Made

What Happens to People When Work Disappears

Farah Stockman

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What is the point?

Globalization and automation have been devastating to people – “blue collar people” – who lost their jobs. Because...work is what gives life meaning...

QUOTES AND EXCERPTS FROM THE BOOK – THE “BEST OF” RANDY’S HIGHLIGHTED PASSAGES:

1. The forest was shrinking but the trees kept voting for the ax. Because its handle was made of wood, they thought that it was one of them. -- Proverb pg. v
2. The mind that is not baffled is not employed. The impeded stream is the one that sings. -- Wendell Berry pg. v
3. ON A COLD AFTERNOON, before the end, they sauntered together out to the smoke shack behind the factory in Indianapolis and spent their fifteen-minute break asking one another “What would you be, if you could be anything, and money didn’t matter at all?” pg. 3
4. Leonardo da Vinci designed a new kind of bearing around 1500. Galileo invented another one a century later. ...Bearings are essential for nearly every machine that moves: Bicycles. Cars. Tanks. Conveyor belts. Wheat combines. Fighter jets. Escalators. Fans. ...Working there conveyed a certain status. “You are a member of a great industrial family,” declared an employee handbook from 1955. “The products you help make bear Link-Belt’s Symbol of Quality known throughout the world.” pg. 5



5. The workers had been passed from owner to owner, just like the machines they ran. pg. 5
6. Mostly the bearings were unglamorous, anonymous, hidden from view, like the workers themselves. Both were rarely thought of by the world outside the factory walls, until something that people took for granted broke. pg. 5
7. Studs Terkel marveled at the information contained in those accounts of ordinary life; at how people got through their days in boring or repetitive jobs; at how they made meaning of their work in an age when already so much was automated. ...Terkel could not have predicted how many jobs—truck driver, cashier, toll booth operator—would be threatened with obsolescence. He wrote his book long before the factories of Indianapolis and Lordstown and Janesville moved to Mexico and China. ... Nor could he have imagined how many human jobs would be lost to machines. Yet even back then, Terkel managed to pinpoint a chief anxiety of the American working class: “the planned obsolescence of people.” pg. 7
8. The economic lockdowns threw into sharp relief the new divisions in our society between those who work in the knowledge economy, who might have the luxury of working from home, and those in the service industry, who must risk exposure to the virus to get paid. pg. 8
9. Work has always been a central marker of status. But during a pandemic, the kind of work a person does can determine whether that person lives or dies. pg. 8
10. Jobs lie at the core of the social justice movements of our time: the labor movement, the women’s rights movement, and the civil rights movement. ...Black people didn’t risk their lives to vote just because they liked voting. Casting a ballot is not an end in itself. pg. 9
11. The march on Washington in 1963—where Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., delivered his famous “*I Have a Dream*” speech—was called the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. Jobs came first, even before freedom. What good was the right to sit at a lunch counter if you couldn’t afford a meal? “If a man doesn’t have a job or an income, he has neither life nor liberty nor the possibility for the pursuit of happiness,” King declared in a speech he gave in 1968, just days before his death. pg. 9
12. **Work matters.** ...Too often, when we discuss the fate of laid-off American factory workers, we forget what we learned in the 1960s, when Betty Friedan’s *The Feminine Mystique* argued for the psychic importance of jobs outside the home for women; or in the 1990s, when William Julius Wilson’s *When Work Disappears: The World of the New Urban Poor* spelled out the social consequences of the loss of work for urban blacks. ...**Jobs matter.** ...work provides an essential context of our lives; pg. 9
13. More often than we may acknowledge, it determines our place in society’s hierarchy. pg. 9
14. In a healthy society, it is the job of workers to work and the job of leaders to ensure that enough jobs are available for ordinary people to make a decent living. When politicians get elected, the first thing they do is reward their faithful supporters with jobs. pg. 10
15. **“The factories are never coming back,” they declared. They forgot that even false hope is a form of hope, perhaps the most ubiquitous kind.** pg. 10
16. Without work, all too often, depression sets in, all the more so when unemployment becomes the norm rather than the exception. So, too, does social unrest. pg. 10

17. It's no surprise that the massive protests that erupted in the summer of 2020—the largest in over half a century—took place in a time of widespread unemployment. pg. 10
- 18. Now our country is grappling with a new wave of job displacement brought on by artificial intelligence. pg. 11**
19. Another cafeteria supervisor lost her job abruptly after a decade of service for sneaking a box of cereal out in her bag, a crime that students committed all the time. pg. 12
20. The “planned obsolescence” of swaths of American workers has fattened the stock portfolios of college-educated people like me and flatlined the income of people like them. pg. 13
21. “Just one hundred years ago, women were picketing for the right to vote,” he said. “Now students aren’t going to aspire to be the first female president but rather the next female president.” pg. 18
22. I heard their stories of how they had gotten their jobs, who had trained them for their jobs, and what happened after their jobs moved away. They were stories about work but also something deeper. Who we hire, who we train, whose mistakes we cover up at work reveal our deepest loyalties. They are stories about not just who we are but to whom we belong—who we take as “one of us.” pg. 55
- 23. Low-income women, especially black women, have always worked, not out of boredom or existential emptiness but out of necessity. Their struggles, which Rutgers labor history professor Dorothy Sue Cobble has called “the other women’s movement,” garnered far less media coverage. Who knows the name of the first female coal miner? The first female autoworker at Ford? How many even know the full name of “Mother Jones,” the fearless labor organizer once labeled “the most dangerous woman in America” because legions of mine workers laid down their picks at her command? (It was Mary Harris Jones.) pg. 96**
24. The United States remains one of only a few countries in the world with no law mandating paid maternity leave, a dubious distinction it shares with Liberia and Papua New Guinea. pg. 98
25. After well-to-do white people figured out how lucrative the sale of marijuana could be, it was legalized. In Massachusetts, the first wave of licenses went to companies led by prosecutors and sheriffs—the very people who had once made a living locking up black men like Wally. Even John Boehner—the former Republican Speaker of the House of Representatives who’d once declared himself “unalterably opposed” to legalizing marijuana—changed his mind; it must have been around the time he joined the board of Acreage Holdings, a publicly traded cannabis company. pg. 115
26. The only way the workingman had ever gotten anything in this world was by fighting for it and standing strong with the union, he thought. That’s how he felt when he ran for union vice president at the Rexnord plant. If a worker complained to him about something the union had done, John replied, “You are the union. Show up to a meeting.” pg. 132
- 27. That was part of the appeal of Donald Trump. He’d grown up watching his father, a bigwig, shake hands with men in hard hats on construction sites. He knew the power of handshakes like that. Trump didn’t talk like a college boy. He cursed. He bragged. He threatened. He mispronounced words. He told tall tales that no one believed. He ate hamburgers, not sushi and salad. And he fought every slight. The college educated didn’t know what to make of him. But factory workers recognized him right away: Trump was a hillbilly in a suit. ...Trump had a chip on his shoulder, like the steelworkers did. Despite his family money, he had never felt accepted by the New York establishment. pg. 166**
28. The China parts offended the workers, who took pride in the Link-Belt name. pg. 172

29. The Japanese bearing company NTN sold specialized bearings to the U.S. Navy so cheaply that American competitors went out of business. But once NTN cornered the market, it jacked up the price. pg. 173
30. China's state-owned corporations didn't have to turn a profit. pg. 174
31. The new goal seemed to be making bearings that would last one day longer than the warranty. pg. 174
32. **Debates about who deserved their jobs and who should have been let go were common on the factory floor. Good jobs are a precious commodity. Factory workers guard them as jealously as capitalists guard their money and property. ...The power in the factory lay in the doling out of jobs, the training for jobs, the protection of jobs, and the ability to take jobs away. pg. 178**
33. EVERY GENERATION HAS its big moments, events that define the time and those who lived in it for all the years to come. Sometimes we recognize the moment immediately—like the assassination of John F. Kennedy or the September 11, 2001, terrorist attack on the World Trade Center. Other times, it takes years to comprehend what we've collectively borne witness to. ...Some events are like the hiss of a gas leak. They whisper a warning about a gathering threat that reveals itself later, when someone lights a match. ...taken together, they spelled an unmistakable warning. Something was about to change irreparably. pg. 180
34. Perhaps the most shocking thing about Trump's rise, at least for policy wonks, was the way he had promised to tear up international agreements: the Iran deal; the Paris Agreement; NAFTA. **...For all the political polarization in Washington, for three decades there had been remarkable agreement about free trade by American presidents, regardless of party. pg. 184**
35. Never before had we had such access to the unfiltered, private thoughts of so many of our fellow citizens. Yet so little actual information could be gleaned about the people behind the tweets that they left us with only the illusion of insight, something more dangerous than ignorance itself. pg. 185
36. Every economist I had ever interviewed on the subject of free trade had assured me that it was a boon for the country. ...That's what I'd learned in college: if every country specializes in what it's good at—its comparative advantage—things will be made more efficiently, more wealth will be created, and everyone will win. pg. 186
37. Twenty years after the signing of NAFTA, even its biggest cheerleaders acknowledged that Mexico hadn't become rich. pg. 187
38. In his book ***Rigged: How Globalization and the Rules of the Modern Economy Were Structured to Make the Rich Richer***, Dean Baker, an economist at the Center for Economic Policy and Research, a Washington-based think tank, noted that blue-collar jobs are sacrificed in such trade agreements, while white-collar jobs are protected: We deliberately write trade pacts to make it as easy as possible for U.S. companies to set up manufacturing operations abroad and ship the products back to the United States, but we have done little or nothing to remove the obstacles that professionals from other countries face in trying to work in the United States. The reason is simple: doctors and lawyers have more political power than autoworkers. pg. 188
39. Jeff Faux, an economist who founded the Economic Policy Institute, a think tank affiliated with the labor movement, has argued that instead of representing the interests of American workers, the U.S. government represents the interests of a class of global elites who have more in common with one another than with workers in their own countries. pg. 189
40. By 2010, the United States had lost 700,000 factory jobs because of NAFTA, according to the Economic Policy Institute. About 24,000 of them were in Indiana. pg. 189

41. Estimates of the number of jobs lost in the United States because of free trade with China range from 2 million to 5 million, heavily concentrated in the manufacturing-dependent Rust Belt and parts of the rural South. In recent years, a flurry of academic studies has detailed the deep and lasting impact in those places. ...increases in the number of children living in poverty, single motherhood, deaths of young men from alcohol and drugs, and reliance on public assistance. pg. 190
42. But laid-off factory workers don't want a government check; they want their jobs. Autor's team concluded that Hillary Clinton would have won Pennsylvania, Michigan, and Wisconsin—and thus the 2016 presidential election—had the economic impact of imports from China been only half as big. pg. 190
43. It was a dramatic reversal from the days of Henry Ford, who had paid his workers a high daily wage in order to reduce turnover and the need to train new workers. Fordism, as it came to be called, created a virtuous cycle in which workers earned enough to save up and buy a car, increasing the demand for the company's products. **Free trade with China produced the opposite effect: a Walmart economy in which workers are paid so little that they can't afford to shop anywhere else.** pg. 191
44. A frequent refrain I heard was that automation, not free trade, had sent more jobs away, as if the two weren't intimately connected. pg. 191
45. "If we had to make the iPhone here in the United States, how much would it cost?" he asked. "How many people would be able to afford one?" I saw the logic in that. Yet there was something disturbing about the way that free trade was being championed by people whose own jobs were not on the line. pg. 192
46. In other words: forget about jobs for blue-collar workers; focus on jobs for engineers, lawyers, government regulators, and financiers. pg. 192
47. For the first time, I began to understand the distrust and anger I was hearing from the steelworkers about "globalism." pg. 192
48. To Americans with gumption and capital and education, globalization made big dreams possible. It was more than an economic theory; it was a way of life. pg. 193
49. I didn't subscribe to Donald Trump's view of the world. ...I knew that our country's greatest achievements had involved making sacrifices for the good of the world: landing on the beaches of Normandy to help France defeat the Nazis during World War II; bankrolling Europe's rebirth with the Marshall Plan; helping Africa end the AIDS epidemic. The United States had helped establish an international economic order of rules that other countries could benefit from, rather than strong-arming weaker countries into bilateral agreements that favored itself alone. ...Yet I had to admit that the working class had not benefited nearly as much as the elites from that world order, especially in recent years. pg. 194
50. The more I saw things from the steelworkers' point of view, the more I realized how much of the downside of the economic world order had been piled on the shoulders of blue-collar workers, while so many of its benefits had flowed to college-educated people like me, who traveled with passports thick as Bibles. pg. 194
51. It was never a mystery who the winners and losers of free trade would be. Classical economic theory had long predicted that free trade would increase the wealth of the wealthy while making less-educated Americans poorer, a concept referred to as the "distributional effects" of free trade. Free trade threw American factory workers into economic competition with some of the hungriest workers in the world. But it offered untold wealth, market access, and investment opportunities to U.S. corporations. pg. 195

52. From Great Britain to Brazil, voters are choosing nationalism and rejecting international economic integration. pg. 196
53. Members of labor unions, and unorganized unskilled workers, will sooner or later realize that their government is not even trying to prevent wages from sinking or to prevent jobs from being exported.... Something will crack. The nonsuburban electorate will decide that the system has failed and start looking around for a strongman to vote for—someone willing to assure them that, once he is elected, the smug bureaucrats, tricky lawyers, overpaid bond salesmen, and postmodernist professors will no longer be calling the shots. pg. 197
54. That was when John realized what he'd really signed up for. "It wasn't negotiating," he told me. "It was begging." pg. 198
- 55. In the United States in 2016, unions had been fading for decades. A third of American workers had been union members in the mid-1950s; by 2016, only about 12 percent were. pg. 200**
56. Tim called it "the suck-ass clause." Every man at the table knew what he meant. Only a suck-ass—the term used to describe workers who sucked up to management—would trade his dignity for less than the cost of a pack of cigarettes. pg. 201
57. Though some labor unions had participated in the civil rights movement, others had viciously opposed it. ..."Unions were created to keep us out," one told me. pg. 203
58. Mark had walked into the break room just in time to hear Leonard call the Arab terrorists "sand niggers." ...But after Leonard refused to look Mark in the eye, Mark declared him a "teeter-totter," someone who is friendly to black people one day and racist the next. pg. 205
- 59. Racial and Cultural Identities. There she learned that the benefits of the GI Bill—which had enabled her own father to attend Harvard Law School and buy a home in Winchester—weren't available to more than a million black veterans. She learned about racial covenants that had kept black people from being able to purchase homes in the suburbs. She realized that Winchester hadn't been white by accident. It had been white by design. ...(She) wrote *Waking Up White*. ..."I was raised to believe in white supremacy by two of the most loving people I know. They were just teaching me what they had learned." ...Yet the truest truths about white privilege were those about white people who are also economically privileged. pg. 332**
60. "If you ever get restless when you don't have a job or your roof leaks, or the children look puny and shoulder blades stick out more than natural, all you need to do is remember you're a sight better than the black man," she wrote. "We'll give you the pick of what jobs there are, and if things get too tight, you can take over his jobs also, for any job's better than no job at all. Now that's a bargain. Except, of course, if you're ever crazy enough to strike or stir up labor legislation, or let the niggers into your unions, or mess around with the vote." ...The rich man's trick didn't always work. During the Civil War, whites in the mountains of Appalachia preferred to break away and form a new state—West Virginia—rather than die for those stuck-up slave owners in Richmond. pg. 334
61. Never had the country been so full of talk of white privilege, white supremacy, white tribalism. Yet never had such talk rung so hollow to men like John, who knew a different bitter truth: Rexnord's rich white CEO had sent John's job away just as quickly as he sent away Wally's. pg. 335
62. "There are a gazillion ten-dollar-an-hour jobs, half a million twelve-dollar-an-hour jobs," Brian Reed told me. "You go from there, and jobs are few and far between." pg. 337
63. At Rexnord, the social life had revolved around beer, bowling, and baseball. At Lilly, workers pumped iron in the company gym after their shifts. Brian swallowed his loneliness. During his lunch break, he watched ESPN by himself, missing old friends. "It's different," he told me. "I'm not saying it's bad by no means. That's their culture. I stepped into their world. They didn't step into mine." pg. 338
64. "Shame on them if they wouldn't take the time for someone they work with," Brian thought. "I guess I'm coming from a factory where you are almost like a family." pg. 339

65. Of the 3 million American workers who were displaced from long-term jobs between January 2015 and 2017, about 2 million found jobs by the following year. But only half of those who'd found employment were earning as much as they'd been making before. pg. 341
66. When House Speaker Nancy Pelosi ripped up her copy of it into little pieces, right there on national television, Shannon couldn't believe it. That convinced her that the Democratic Party was motivated more by hatred of Trump than by love of country. pg. 343
67. The CEOs and their workers, the politicians and their voters, the pundit class and the people about whom they pontificate, the Silicon Valley entrepreneur making \$16 million a year and the prep cook making \$16 an hour were all preoccupied, perhaps for the first time ever, with the same all-encompassing fear: of dying alone, gasping on a ventilator. pg. 346
68. The pandemic laid bare an ugly truth about the booming economy: about 40 percent of all workers in the country labored in low-wage jobs with little security. Their jobs evaporated with the pandemic. pg. 346
69. The virus exacerbated inequalities in the workforce: between men and women, as mothers left work in droves to care for children when schools closed; between white and nonwhite, as blacks and Hispanics, who worked disproportionately in "essential jobs," died in disproportionate numbers; between citizens and the undocumented, who were largely ineligible for government relief; between the college educated and those without a college degree, who were far more likely to be laid off or furloughed during the pandemic. pg. 347
70. Factory workers can't work from home. Neither can waitresses, maids, barbers, or janitors. pg. 347
71. Public health officials were forced to issue urgent warnings that bleach should not be injected or ingested after he suggested that injecting disinfectants might cure the disease caused by the virus. ...The cost of electing a reality television star had never been more clear. pg. 348
72. The video of George Floyd's killing came at the tail end of the lockdown. ..."People are furious and traumatized and unemployed." Unemployed. That was the difference. ...After months of social isolation in lockdown, the protests had given jobless people something important to do, a community to do it with, and a sense of common purpose. pg. 350
73. Three times as many people reported anxiety in the spring of 2020 as in the previous year, and four times as many reported depression, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. ...More than a quarter of young people said they had contemplated suicide within the last thirty days. pg. 350
74. "Only a foolish optimist can deny the dark realities of the moment," Franklin Delano Roosevelt said in his inaugural speech in 1933, when unemployment hovered around 25 percent. But work, he promised, would renew us. "The joy and moral stimulation of work no longer must be forgotten in the mad chase of evanescent profits," he said. "These dark days will be worth all they cost us if they teach us that our true destiny is not to be ministered unto but to minister to ourselves and to our fellow men." pg. 350
75. Why was the Trump administration still asking the Supreme Court to strike down the Affordable Care Act in the middle of a global pandemic? pg. 353
76. Protests and marches do matter, she told me. "I noticed that when we started marching and showing signs, the media started paying attention," she said. "Other than that, you're not going to get your voice heard. Writing a letter? You don't even know if they'd read it." pg. 361

American Made

What Happens to People When Work Disappears

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SOME OF THE KEY CONTENT AND IDEAS FROM THE BOOK

Dammit! A business is worth more than the price of its stock. It's the place where we earn our living, where we meet our friends, dream our dreams. It is, in every sense, the very fabric that binds our society together.

So let us now, at this meeting, say to every Garfield in the land, "Here, we build things. We don't destroy them. Here, we care about more than the price of our stock! Here, we care about people."

Andrew Jorgenson Addresses the Stockholders of New England Wire & Cable Co.
Other People's Money (Gregory Peck; 1991)

The fear of being replaced, of no longer being needed, is an anxiety that has only grown with time.

Millions of Americans are coming of age in places where a majority of the jobs that exist are expected to be outsourced, offshored, or automated in the coming decades. ...Even the harried fast-food worker at the drive-through window cannot sleep easy at night without fear of being replaced by a robot. This is the final insult of menial, poorly paid work: the CEO will eventually find a way to get rid of it—of you—altogether.

*"As a society, we are what we do at work," Jacqueline Jones wrote in her authoritative history *American Work: Four Centuries of Black and White Labor*, "and we remain the sum of our radically divergent workplaces."*

They forgot what jobs mean to people.

Work gives us a reason to get out of bed, a place to be, and a source of self-worth. It gives us social networks, mentors, and unions that amplify our political voice. It shapes our days.

I didn't see it as a sign of a system gone awry. I didn't feel that it was anyone's fault. But the more time I spent with the workers, the more I began to question how our economic system works and who it works for.

The policy makers and economists who champion free trade tend to live far from the laid-off workers in dying towns.

"Only a foolish optimist can deny the dark realities of the moment," Franklin Delano Roosevelt said in his inaugural speech in 1933, when unemployment hovered around 25 percent. But work, he promised, would renew us. "The joy and moral stimulation of work no longer must be forgotten in the mad chase of evanescent profits," he said. "These dark days will be worth all they cost us if they teach us that our true destiny is not to be ministered unto but to minister to ourselves and to our fellow men."

Farah Stockman: *American Made: What Happens to People When Work Disappears*

▪ **From the *New York Times* review of the book:**

- *For Shannon, Wally and John, making bearings is a means of climbing the economic ladder. Wages at the plant — \$25 an hour — are above the U.S. average for manufacturing (\$20 in 2016, \$24 today). These workers become homeowners, make down payments on cars and consider sending their kids to college. Yet there is so much more to their jobs than the pay. There is camaraderie — Shannon feels braver after relationship advice from her co-workers, Wally takes solace in the factory bowling league and John mulls over his problems with his union brothers. These networks confer value not seen in economic statistics.*
- *Manufacturing employment peaked in the summer of 1979 at around 19.6 million, according to data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The 1980s and '90s were tough, with nearly two million jobs lost, but the aughts were dreadful: About six million jobs vanished. The trend is not confined to the United States; in Britain, a quarter of manufacturing jobs disappeared in the 1980s, and nearly as many again in the 1990s. The Link-Belt workers see free trade with Mexico, which was supposed to support U.S. exporters, as a broken promise.*

▪ **About Farah Stockman:**

- **Farah Stockman** joined the *New York Times* editorial board in 2020 after covering politics, social movements, and race for the national desk. She previously spent sixteen years at the *Boston Globe*, nearly half of that time as the paper's foreign policy reporter in Washington, D.C. She has reported from Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran, South Sudan, Rwanda, and Guantánamo Bay. She also served as a columnist and an editorial board member at the *Globe*. In 2016, she won the Pulitzer Prize for a series of columns about the efforts to desegregate Boston's schools. She lives in Cambridge, Massachusetts, but also spends time in Michigan.
- *Before I started researching this book, nearly every person I interacted with on a daily basis had a bachelor's degree. Yet only about a third of American adults have one.*
- *As the child of a black woman and a white man, I grew up steeped in conversations about race. My parents argued about racism at the family dinner table with regularity. If a white waitress treated our family rudely, my mother, who'd experienced blatant racism all her life, assumed that the waitress disapproved of interracial couples. ...That was why I became a journalist, to talk to the waitress.*
- *For twenty years, I spent my spare time thinking about the livelihoods of poor people in Kenya. I didn't pay attention to the livelihoods vanishing in my own backyard.*

▪ **The story in a nutshell:**

- There were plenty of good union jobs (for the "lesser" educated)
- at a factory with a rich, decades-long history
 - *In the spring of 2017, I joined them; my editors at The New York Times had assigned me a long narrative piece about the dying Rexnord bearing plant, the factory that Trump had highlighted in his tweet.*
- Until the jobs were sent elsewhere – and, by the way, quality of the work did not matter anymore...
 - *Then the bosses at Rexnord announced that they were closing the factory and moving its work to Monterrey, Mexico, and McAllen, Texas.*
- And the people were left behind, and cast out, and lost money; but, they lost far, far more than money

▪ **A word about the politics:**

- This is an anti-Trump book. But it is also an equal opportunity criticizer. Bill Clinton, George W. Bush, and Barack Obama all receive plenty of the criticism and blame...
- *Clinton told the American people that they could not stop global change, they could only harness it by embracing free trade and globalization. ...That was true. But he went on to make three specific promises about NAFTA that did not come to pass: Mexicans would become rich enough to buy American products; they'd stop flocking into the United States, looking for work; and NAFTA would create far more American jobs than would be lost.*
- *Bill Clinton granted China permanent normal trade relations and supported China's admission to the World Trade Organization. ...Two decades later, China is still an authoritarian state—and on track to become the world's largest economy.*

▪ **Shannon, Wally, and John**

- *She had become the first female ever to run the furnaces at the plant. She'd grown up hungry in a trailer park. Money had always mattered.*
- *THE MORE TIME I spent with Shannon, Wally, and John, the better I understood what the job at the bearing plant had meant to them. It had rescued Shannon from an abusive man, thrown Wally a lifeline out of a dangerous world, and handed John a chance to regain what he'd lost. The machines there might have been old and cranky. The floors might have been coated in grime. The roof might have leaked brown water when it rained. But for the lucky few who'd managed to get jobs there, it had been a place of identity, belonging, and redemption.*

- *Although I ended up with John, Wally, and Shannon somewhat randomly, they embodied the struggle of the labor movement, the civil rights movement, and the women's rights movement that had brought them to the factory's doors.*
- **You try hard; to hold on. But...alas...**
 - *The closure of Navistar had taught them to be cautious and to hold on to jobs tenaciously. You have to "make them want to keep you," Austin told me. At the same time, he acknowledged that even the best workers could lose their jobs at any moment, through no fault of their own: "If they want to close a plant, cut half the jobs, that's what they are going to do.... Anything can happen. We have no control over it."*
- **We (the United States) get so much wrong...**
 - *Supporters of free trade say that it generates enough new wealth to compensate losers. But we don't do that. The United States spends far less per capita than European countries on compensating and retraining workers who lose their jobs in the wake of free trade agreements.*
- **Losing your job; then asked (ordered) to train your replacements:**
 - *Yet for all their differences, the union men around the table agreed about one thing: no one should be forced to train his or her replacements in order to get that severance money. ...A union's power rests on its ability to determine who is trained.*
 - *There was only one thing the workers had over the company men who sat across the table from them: the knowledge of how to make a bearing. ...The message was clear: the skills that the workers had mastered on the factory floor meant nothing to the company.*
 - *IN THE WEEKS and months ahead, no division on the factory floor would prove more contentious than the line between those who trained and those who refused.*
 - ***The most unapologetic volunteers were black men who viewed the refusal to train the Mexicans as racism. After all, it hadn't been so long ago that the white men had refused to train them.***
- **Some (more) thoughts about race and racism**
 - *He divided the white people he worked with into three categories: racist, whom he defined as those who don't want to work with or be around black people; prejudiced, whom he defined as those who can work with black people but will never stand up for them or have their best interests at heart; and a last category of people who were neutral. Those in that last category had the potential to be true friends.*
- **Work provides:**
 - meaning – with motivation
 - friends
 - pride (the good kind of pride)
- **The Book:**
 - Epigraph
 - Author's Note
 - Prologue: The Unspoken Line
 - Part I: The End of Everything: 2016
 - The Impossible Possible
 - Shannon, the Survivor
 - Wally, the Believer
 - John, the Fighter
 - After the Tweet
 - Part II: The Way Things Were
 - "Stand Up on Your Own Two Legs"
 - Honest Dollars
 - The Feltner Curse
 - "Don't Ever Depend on a Man"
 - Jane Crow
 - "Better Make Sure You Get a Pension"
 - Therapy

- “This Ain’t Navistar”
 - The Half-Life
 - Part III: Love and Work
 - Blame It on Second Shift
 - “You Are Going to Wish You Needed Me Now”
 - “You’re Just Company”
 - Hillbilly in a Suit
 - Part IV: The Warning Signs
 - “China Parts”
 - Part V: Shutting Down
 - “A Strongman to Vote For”
 - The Suck-Ass Clause
 - “It’s Not Pie”
 - Watermelon Was Right
 - The Future of Everything
 - Blessed
 - Difficult Life Situations
 - “Speak American”
 - “Not for Human Masters”
 - “Two Years of Nothing”
 - Losing Two Babies
 - Part VI: Starting Over
 - “A Dying Breed”
 - Minimum Acceptable Wage
 - “A Lot of Mess”
 - Good Neighbors
 - “Present with the Lord”
 - White Privilege
 - “It Ain’t Like Rexnord”
 - One of Us
- **Some Lessons and Takeaways:**
 - #1 – What we do, with the best of intentions, can have unintended harmful ripple effects.
 - #2 – There is a price to be paid as we engage in the pursuit of greater profit.
 - #3 – The profits pursued by those at the “top” can turn the people used to pursue such profit into “objects.”
 - #4 – The pain caused is real pain – with serious personal impact, and greater societal impact.
 - #5 – We may only be at the beginning of the pain. Artificial Intelligence and automation are just getting started...and, may bring even more pain; even greater pain.