



'ANGUS BARKS'

By Jeff Francis
AEG Executive Board

Vouchering

The Union has always believed in a fair day's work, for a fair day's pay. We expect an accurate paystub, so we understand why the Company expects an accurate voucher. We follow vouchering rules because they are the rules. The Company says the rules are ethical. That's a stretch.

PHILADELPHIA STORY

The 20.10 rules began after the government caught the Company charging commercial work to military accounts at a GE plant in Philadelphia. Shortly afterwards, an Israeli general was caught receiving bribes in return for ordering GE aircraft engines. The 20.10 policy was designed to prevent these ethical lapses and regain the government's confidence in GE.

Under 20.10, hourly production workers are expected to account for their time every 18 minutes, if necessary. You and I know that hourly workers are never in a position to bribe a general, or cook the books. And a good argument can be made that vouchering gets in the way of efficient production. But we follow the rules because they are the rules.

DIVISION OF LABOR

Many types of work go into making a jet engine. Engineering must create a good design; Project must get enough firm orders; Management must gather machinery, tools and material; Planning must develop a process; and Hourly workers must produce it. So you might wonder why all these groups aren't expected to account for their time every 18 minutes. In fact, not all hourly are required, only those who are considered direct labor.

That's because direct labor pays the bills for all the other groups. The value created by transforming raw pieces of metal into an engine that flies, is so great, it covers all overhead, and makes a tidy profit for the corporation. There are 377 direct hourly in Plant I and 254 direct hourly in Plant II. Their work pays all the landlord, management, and indirect labor expenses in Plants I & II. So naturally GE wants to closely measure direct labor. But is their purpose ethical?

SOME EXAMPLES

There are some management personnel who spend all day creating charts of Direct Labor Productivity. They can measure you against an average, you against a group, you against an expectation, you against you, and you against the world. In the hands of a foreman, these charts are a weapon, most often pointed at our newer members.

If your foreman says ***"Why did it take so much longer than usual to do that part last night?"*** – That's OK. It's his job to fix problems with the process and planning. Since your work is funding his job, tell him what tools and equipment you need to do the job right, so he can make himself useful.

If your foreman says ***"You can't charge 3 hours for that operation like you did last night, the chart says that operation takes 2 hours"*** – That's an illegal violation of 20.10, he can't tell you what time to charge.

If your foreman says ***"Change that 8 hours of good labor you took last night to 6 hours and give me 2 hours IME"*** – The foreman should be fired, and you might be too, if you do what he suggests.

If the foreman says ***"Remember to charge extra cost for that re-cut you had to take"*** – That's OK, he's reminding you of the rules.

If your foreman says ***"Shop tour tomorrow, give me an hour housekeeping later tonight"*** – That's OK, he's giving you work direction.

If you're producing quality parts and not abusing Company time, the Union can always defend you. No matter what the stupid charts say.

If you create scrap or skip procedures because you're rushing to meet chart numbers, you're giving the Company grounds to get rid of you.

If your foreman repeatedly harasses you with productivity numbers, get your steward involved.

