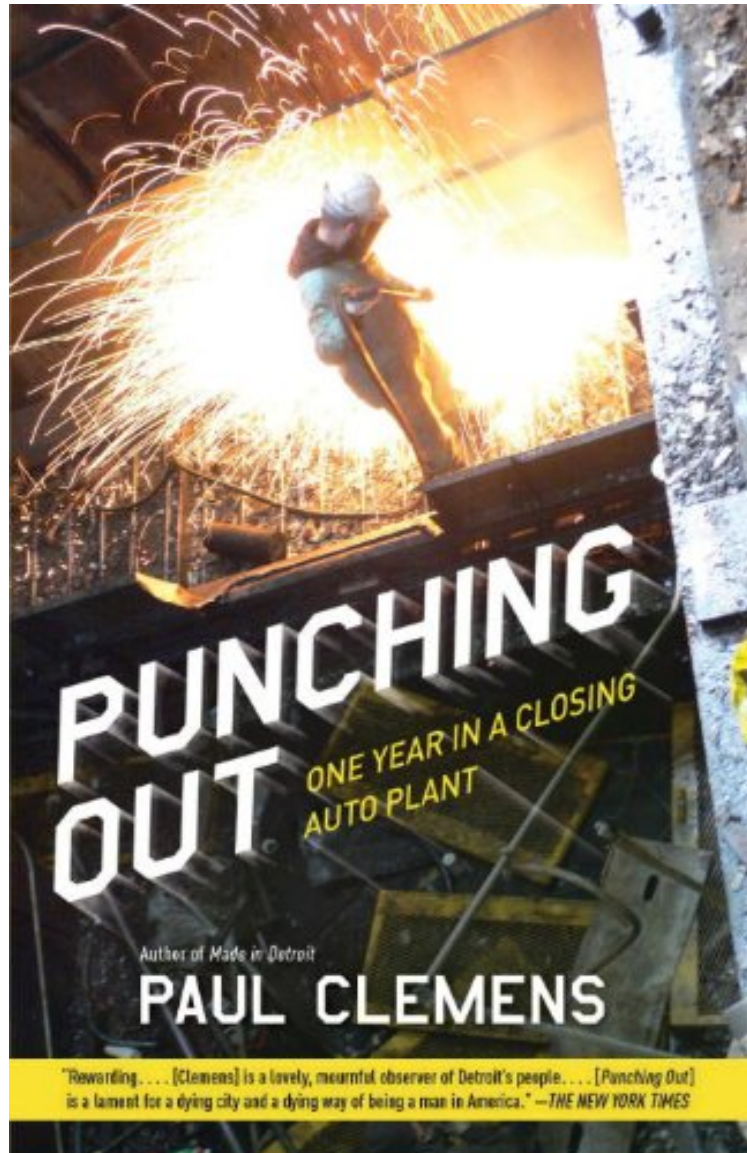


Punching Out: One Year in a Closing Auto Plant

Paul Clemens

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Paul Clemens : Punching Out: One Year in a Closing Auto Plant before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised *Punching Out: One Year in a Closing Auto Plant*:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A great behind-the-scenes look By Detroit Rick I really loved this book. It does what it promised - it delivers a fascinating narrative of what happens after a plant closes. But the author also gives you a great feel for what that plant meant over the years and decades prior - to the economy, to the people that worked there, to their families. By the time I was done, I felt like I actually knew the folks he describes. Plus, I even had a slightly better understanding of how various types of auto plants function. I commend Mr. Clemens for how

he puts the specifics (closing one particular supplier plant) into context of the greater decline of Detroit and struggles in the US manufacturing sector. Yet he is not preachy, doesn't seem to lean towards one side or other of the political spectrum, and just gives great insight into what has happened. Frankly, this book was even more fascinating than I expected. As an added bonus, I grew up close to where Mr. Clemens did, and not all that far from the plant he describes. A lot of his references to neighborhoods, streets and events really hit home for me. But this book is far from being just about Detroit's issues - that was just the icing on the cake for me. His writing is both accurate and poignant. This book, I believe his 2nd, will make me read whatever the author writes next. Good job.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A wandering eulogy
By Arlan Purdy
Having been employed at a factory that was shut down, the subject of *Punching Out* is near to me and an affecting topic. Clemens brought home some of the pathos of a plant shut down, some of the lack of purpose that descends into a kind of agitated boredom and tends toward depression. But Clemens' ability to capture what it is to be a part of a plant closure felt limited; he never managed to pass beyond observing to identification. I've never worked with presses or in automotive manufacturing, but I sometimes felt closer to the story than the narrator, and that he was getting in the way. An interesting read, even if limited.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Okay, I guess
By Joseph Romatowski
Though it was informative to read about the dismantling of a closed Detroit auto plant, unfortunately Paul Clemens is hardly a gripping writer. If you want to read a really well-written book about dystopian Detroit, may I recommend Charlie LeDuff's *DETROIT*. And if you like LeDuff's prose, try South African newspaper reporter Rian Malan's *MY TRAITOR'S HEART*, about dystopian South Africa.

An elegy—angry, funny, and powerfully detailed—about the slow death of a Detroit auto plant and an American way of life. How does a country dismantle a century's worth of its industrial heritage? To answer that question, Paul Clemens investigates the 2006 closing of one of America's most potent symbols: a Detroit auto plant. Prior to its closing, the Budd Company stamping plant on Detroit's East Side, built in 1919, was one of the oldest active auto plants in America's foremost industrial city—one whose history includes the nation's proudest moments and those of its working class. Its closing also reflects the character of the country in a new era—the sad, brutal process of picking it apart and sending it, piece by piece, to the countries that now have use for its machines. *Punching Out* is an up-close report, at once tender and angry, from the meanest, sharpest edge of America's deindustrialization, and a lament for a working-class culture that once defined a prosperous America—and that is now on the verge of economic extinction. From the Hardcover edition.

From Booklist
Born and raised in Detroit, Clemens has witnessed firsthand the decline and death of manufacturing in that city. So when he pondered writing about the decline of the American working class, he figured a good place to start was the closing of Budd Detroit Automotive Plant, built in 1919 and employing 10,000 workers at its peak. He captures the sights, sounds, emotions, and economics of closing the plant, which made the roofs, doors, and other body parts of cars, trucks, and sports utility vehicles, offering an intimate portrait of what happens to people and a manufacturing town when the doors are closed. Clemens details the nuts and bolts, including how machinery is disassembled and shipped for reassembly in Mexico and elsewhere, as well as the human element of union reps fighting for worker benefits and former workers pondering a grim future. Clemens looks beyond the dire statistics of tens to hundreds of thousands of plant closings each year to portray the individuals involved and the loss of jobs and social bearings in the community.

--Vanessa Bush
PRAISE FOR PUNCHING OUT: "Rewarding. . . . [Clemens] is a lovely, mournful observer of Detroit's people. . . . [Punching Out] is a lament for a dying city and a dying way of being a man in America." —Dwight Garner, *The New York Times*

"Clemens . . . paints the definitive portrait of a strange, resonant feature of the contemporary American landscape: the defunct factory . . . [this book] is an elegiac reminder of a scary truth lurking behind those abstract-sounding business headlines." —Carlo Rotella, *The Boston Globe*

"Out of the painstaking job of dismantling industrial America, a story emerges. Clemens closes the book on one venerable factory, but leaves us wondering about the future of American work." —San Francisco Chronicle

"Clemens has the street cred and old-school journalism chops to deliver a first-rate piece of deep reportage." —Minneapolis Star Tribune

"Superb practitioners of immersion journalism older than Clemens include John McPhee, Gay Talese, Madeleine Blais, Susan Orlean, Walt Harrington, Mike Sager, Adrian Nicole LeBlanc and Tracy Kidder. Based on *Punching Out*, Clemens is a worthy addition to the list and an example for journalists not just in the United States, but around the globe. His story of another closed auto factory is sadly familiar. But it has never been told this well." —Steve Weinberg, author of *Taking on The Trust*

From the Hardcover edition.

About the Author
PAUL CLEMENS was born in 1973 and raised on Detroit's East Side. His work has appeared in the *New York Times* and the *New York Times Magazine*. His book *Made in Detroit* (Doubleday, 2005) was a 2005 *New York Times* Book Notable Book. He is the recipient of a 2008 Guggenheim Fellowship.