

ANOTHER FRIDAY MORNING MEETING IN
SEMC's VULTEE STREET CONFERENCE ROOM #1

Jim, our senior gas products design
engineer, is going on
and on about how
the rate of resin bed consumption
slows down
as the gas diffusion path lengthens
and has been calculated to
be less than 0.10 ml./min., and
explaining too that only
after passing
air through the purifier at
1 slmp for 15 seconds
does the temperature increase
to ca. 50 degrees C.
And Roger's digging at a cuticle
with his pen, Peter's chewing
his lip, Virg
is pouring himself
another cup of coffee, Kurt,
sitting beneath the "If We Don't
Take Care Of The Customer ...
Somebody Else Will" sign,
is taking very careful
notes of the proceedings, and I'm
wondering if there's any
wads of chewing gum stuck to the
underside of this fancy-
schmancy conference room
table.

I'M DOODLING ON A YELLOW PAD OF PAPER

"We have to protect
ourselves, have to be certain,"
Fat Jim is saying, "that
the sales reps who leave
The Company
don't take any
of The Company secrets with them."
And I'm puzzling over what
in the fuck he's
talking about since I'm
the boss of these
thieving sales reps, have been here
longer than any of them, and I
don't know any damn company secrets,
can't imagine what they
might know that could jeopardize
the sovereignty of The Company.

But really the truth
of the matter is I
couldn't care less one way or
the other and say, "Yeah right, Jim,"
and keep on doodling.

THE GUYS IN FAB 11 CAN FIX ANYTHING

Phil and I gown-up
and go into Fab 11 where
IBM is manufacturing
their latest state-of-the-art computer
chips. Seems one of our
WCDS Dispense Pump Controllers is on
the fritz so we hand-carried
a new one all
the way up from Boston for the guys
to install on their 3 million dollar
DNS Apply Cluster Tool.
But right away we can see that
the new one
isn't working either. The little red
lights aren't lighting and it's
not cycling. So I begin to sweat
even more than normal
inside my Goretex gown and hat
and mask and booties and gloves.
I whisper to Phil, "What in the hell
will we do if we can't get
this damn controller going and this
million-dollar-a-day line goes down?"
He shrugs, "We'll be dead meat,
dead fucking meat."
But before we know what's
happening, 6 eager beaver engineers
have descended on our stupid little
\$500 controller that won't work
like vultures on a fresh zebra carcass —
one opens it up, another
holds a flashlight while a third
pages through the operator's manual
and a fourth is on the phone
trying to find cable
and some splicing tape. Nobody
says much, they're just working,
huddled over our stupid
controller lying there in the middle
of the Fab floor. Within minutes
they find the problem and repair it,
wham bam thank you ma'am just like that.
I'm helping out too, by the way,
by humming the theme
song to "Mission Impossible."