

A photograph of a suburban house at dusk. The house has light-colored horizontal siding and a dark roof. An American flag is visible on the left side of the house. A dark-colored car is parked in the driveway on the right. A blue trash bin is visible near the house. The scene is illuminated by the warm light of the setting sun, creating long shadows and a golden glow on the house's siding. Large trees with green leaves are in the foreground and background, framing the house.

AMERICAN MADE

FARAH STOCKMAN

READING GROUP GUIDE

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Work is a huge part of our identity, especially in America. In *American Made*, what are the connections between employment and how the factory workers see themselves?
2. While the majority of workers at Rexnord were white, the factory's employees were about 40% Black. One of the most striking things Stockman witnessed was how their different identities prevented them from taking collective action to prevent the closing of the factory. How did you see race as a factor in the experiences of the workers?
3. Do you think there is a cultural divide between people with college degrees and blue-collar workers without college degrees? Do you think people's mistrust of the government, or the "the elite," can be remedied? Discuss.
4. How did going through a plant closing impact the workers' political views?
5. There has been much debate about Universal Basic Income as a solution to unemployment, but we've also seen that people need jobs and want to work, rather than sit idly at home. Did the book change your opinion on social welfare? If so, how? If not, why not?
6. The book mainly follows three workers. How did you feel Shannon's experience, as a woman, was different from that of Wally and John?
7. How was Wally's experience, as a Black man, different from Shannon's and John's?
8. What surprised you most about John's experience and beliefs? Did you find yourself reconsidering your own previously held beliefs or stereotypes? If so, what were they? If not, why not?
9. Did the book change your opinion on globalization? What about automation?
10. How did immigration play into the factory workers' views of globalization?
11. How did this book change or expand your view of white, working-class Trump voters and the current divide between Democrats and Republicans?
12. What did *American Made* show us about the Black working class, a group that's discussed in the news far less often than the "white working class"?
13. What do you think is the biggest contributor to the fact of America's disappearing middle class?
14. What surprised you most about what happened to the Rexnord workers after the factory closed?

MEET THE WORKERS OF THE REXNORD FACTORY



SHANNON MULCAHY

Shannon, a white single mother of two, got the money and the confidence to leave an abusive man by working at the bearing plant. She worked her way up from a janitor to heat treat operator, one of the most dangerous and highly paid jobs on the factory floor. When the bosses announced that the plant is closing, she agonized over whether to train her Mexican replacement, or refuse to train, as her union urges her to.



RALEIGH "WALLY" HALL

Wally, a Black father of three children and four stepchildren, had gotten into trouble with the law in his youth. After a stint in prison, he got his life back on track with a job at the bearing plant, where he quickly became known as one of the hardest workers on the factory floor. Wally was well-loved by both the union and management, and eventually earned one of the most coveted jobs: Rexnord Business Systems Chairman. But he secretly longed to start his own barbecue business. When the bosses announced that the plant would close, he decided it was finally time to try it.



JOHN FELTNER

John, a white, married father of three, had already been through a plant closing. He'd worked at Navistar, a factory that made diesel engines. He lost everything when it moved to Alabama. John was finally getting back on his feet financially at the bearing plant when the bosses there, too, announced that they would close and move to Mexico and Texas. John, who'd been elected vice president of the factory's union, attempted to rally his fellow workers to fight the closure by refusing to train their Mexican replacements.