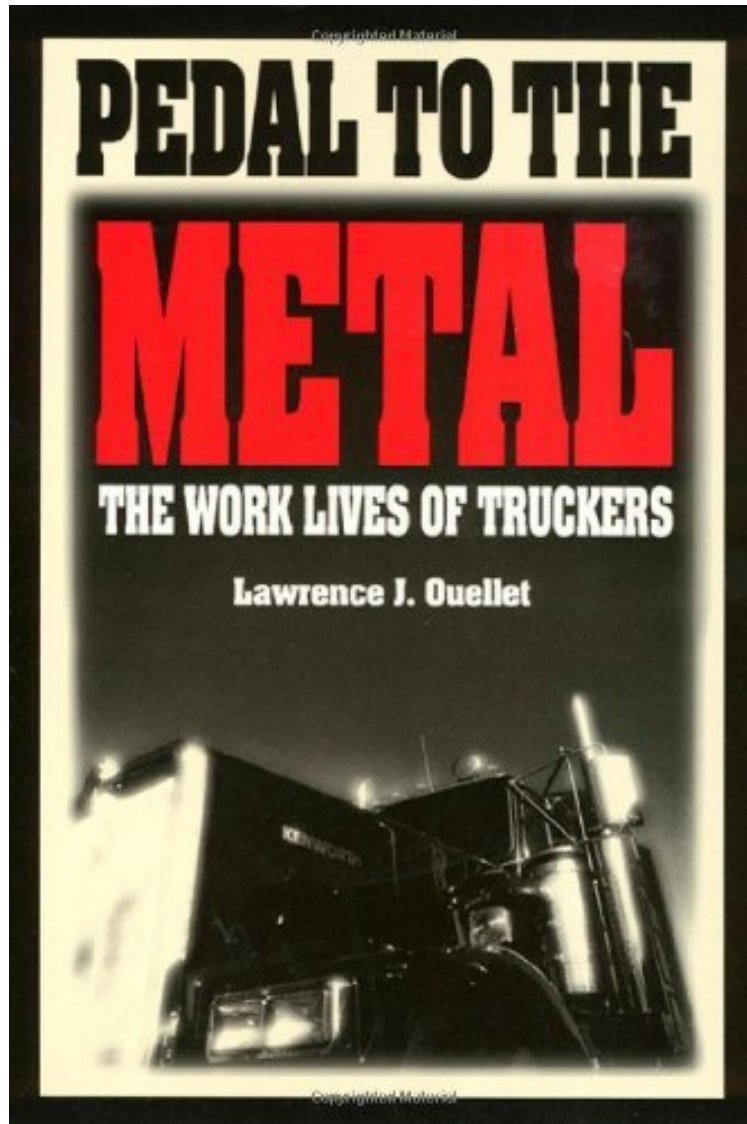


[PDF] Pedal To The Metal: The Work Life of Truckers (Labor And Social Change)

## **Pedal To The Metal: The Work Life of Truckers (Labor And Social Change)**

*Lawrence Ouellet*

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**Lawrence Ouellet : Pedal To The Metal: The Work Life of Truckers (Labor And Social Change)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Pedal To The Metal: The Work Life of Truckers (Labor And Social Change):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. I am finding your book much more easily absorbed. It is serving as the connective tissueBy ChrisDr. Ouellet,Your book is riveting and I intend to finish reading it over the next few days.I recently concluded an ethnographic research project of my own at a large, long-haul motor carrier, having

worked at a similar outfit myself from 2005-2009 before returning to college in 2010. Currently I am completing my written thesis for a M.S. in Applied Anthropology at the University of North Texas. The neoliberal theories of David Harvey have been a big influence on my theoretical approach toward framing both an industry description and the findings from my recorded interviews and site visits. From the realm of trucking, I have also read Shane Hamilton's (historian) *Trucking Country: The Road to America's Wal-Mart Economy* as well as Michael Agar's (anthropologist) *Independents Declared: The Dilemmas of Independent Trucking*, along with 40 or 50 industry and academic journals regarding the topic of high driver turnover; my specific focus. While each of these publications have their own merits, I am finding your book much more easily absorbed. It is serving as the connective tissue, enabling me to better articulate my research. I too have discovered the framework of masculinity in my work, albeit in a different light. Interestingly, a search for the word "cowboy" within my transcribed interviews reveals that it does not appear a single time. This, when joined with my broader findings, seems to suggest that even the illusion of the romantic cowboy-as-trucker image has been completely scoured away. Your work, as well as Michele Lamont's (sociologist) *The Dignity of Working Men* are finally allowing me to write something I feel solid about. It is obvious from your bio page on the UIC website that you have long since moved on to epidemiology. But, I wanted to thank you for this book. As a former driver, and the son of a career truck driver, its relevance is immediately obvious and its currency or applicability surprisingly familiar. As a researcher, it has already helped me with new ideas about how to frame my own experience and its relevance in my own written work. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. An exceptional ethnography in clear language and with in depth ... By Alan An exceptional ethnography in clear language and with in depth analysis of truckers' lives. Whilst now slightly dated, the social world portrayed by Ouellet gives a vivid image of the tough world of truck driving and the meaning truckers' construct to reconcile effort with reward. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Brilliant, insightful and funny. By MCCrash The author obviously knows trucking from the driver's seat, which is what makes his analysis of truckers so insightful. The chapter on truckers and sex is unexpected and funny -- you wouldn't expect some nancy professor type to spring something like that on you. The writing is clear and breezy, not all weighted down with a lot of jargon and abstruse theorizing. All in all, the book is the best there is to tell you about the guys behind the wheel of the big rigs we see every time we drive. Buy it, read it. You won't regret it.

From this experience, Lawrence J. Ouellet has the advantage of a rare perspective and a profound understanding of the two fundamental questions he asks in this book: Why do truck drivers work so hard even when it doesn't result in more money or other material gains? and How do truckers make sense of their behavior to themselves and to the outside world? A vivid ethnography of trucking culture, *Pedal to the Metal* documents and analyzes truckers' lives and work ethic, exploring the range of identities truckers create for themselves—the renegade cowboy, the company man, the voyeur, the lone king of the road. To explain truckers' motivations, Ouellet examines the meaning of work and the motivation for excelling despite long, unsupervised hours on the road. He finds that their occupational pride results in extraordinary efforts on the job and, subsequently, a positive sense of self. Driving skill allows truckers to improve their hauling times, which they proudly track to the minute, and to increase their productivity and income. Truckers' knowledge of the industry's structure and the idiosyncrasies of their own company allows them to improve their ability to get and carry out assignments, to maneuver around a traditional concept of rank and seniority, and to recreate to their advantage the pervasive cultural myths that the public expects should dictate a trucker's behavior. Whether capturing the pleasure and enchantment of trucking—driving under moon-lit skies across a snow-covered mountain range—or the miseries of boredom, bad weather, and exhausting schedules, Ouellet exhibits deep appreciation and passion for his subject.

From *Publishers Weekly* Before becoming a sociologist (he teaches at the University of Illinois at Chicago), Ouellet was a truck driver. "When I was a youngster, trucking captured my imagination." As a full- and part-time truck driver over 13 years, he continued to find driving a source of great satisfaction. For this study of drivers' experiences and work ethic, he was a participant-observer, limiting his research to stints as a short-haul driver at small, nonunion California-based companies between August 1981 and October 1982. Two questions formed the basis for his inquiry: Why do truck drivers work hard, even when their efforts do not result in any material gain; and how do truckers make sense of their behavior to themselves and the outside world? He begins with a brief overview of the trucking industry and then details the responses of drivers to their work, with fascinating insights into their motivations—including the machismo drivers feel when they barrel down an interstate at 80 miles an hour. He explores the inevitable conflicts between drivers and owners over job performance, and describes how truck drivers see themselves—the king of the road, the cowboy, the voyeur—and how these fantasies affect their relations with customers, motorists and other truckers. Ouellet's skillful weaving of anecdote and research make his ethnography of trucking culture both readable and informative. Photos not seen by PW. Copyright 1994 Cahners Business Information, Inc. From *Library Journal* Ouellet, a sociologist who drove trucks for 13 years, has produced a fascinating study of the lives and work ethic of truckers. He offers more than a study of truck drivers, as his entertaining work adds to research on blue-collar

workers and their interests, motivations, and job satisfactions. By conducting his research after his acceptance as a co-worker and peer, Ouellet gains heretofore unavailable insight while uncovering many surprising facts and trends. He explores, for instance, the range of identities truckers create for themselves as the renegade cowboy, the company man, the voyeur, or the lone king of the road. This surprisingly interesting and informative book is recommended for public and academic collections. Eric C. Shoaf, Brown Univ. Lib., Providence, R.I. Copyright 1994 Reed Business Information, Inc. "[A] fascinating study of the lives and work ethic of truckers... [M]ore than a study of truck drivers, [this] entertaining work adds to the research on blue-collar workers and their interests, motivations, and job satisfactions." --Library Journal