

Passed out 3/25/76
7:00 A.M. by M. Fernandez
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DEATH AT THE SMELTER

Loy McDonald was killed by ASARCO on March 12th. He fell victim of the company's corner-cutting policies. The switches on the Cotrell treater he was working in were unsafe, but more importantly, he was working alone on a 2 man job. Brother McDonald's blood is on the company's hands and we are not going to wait until the next man dies to do something about it!

McDonald had just short-changed from swingshift to work overtime on day shift. When he went into the treater he didn't throw his ground bar and the power switch, which has to be thrown up to open it, must not have latched fully. Men in the control room said they heard the switch fall closed, heard a moan from McDonald, and saw the light come on the control board indicating a short. They ran out, turned off the power, tried heroically to save him, but couldn't. Brother McDonald died about an hour later in the hospital.

A helper would have double checked and thrown the ground bar before McDonald ever went into the treater. Nobody else wanted to work over that day, so in spite of all their "safety first" signs, the company had McDonald working alone. Men working by themselves on jobs like this has been an issue in the plant for quite a while. When men in the shops recently tried to keep their helpers that the company cut out, they pointed out that when management cuts corners, or has men working alone they are setting us up for accidents. But ASARCO and the rest of the companies don't give a damn for anything or anybody--just profits. They're quick to put up no smoking signs when it comes out that too many of us are dying of cancer, but they don't spend a dime to clean this place up unless absolutely forced to. Its just like those miners back east that just got killed after the mine had been cited for safety violations over 60 times. And after the first bunch died, the company still kept running the mine until it killed 11 more!

In different parts of the plant we've been fighting job eliminations, fighting for enough men to be broken in on each job, fighting against the way they shuffle men around to lay off others, and fighting to get them to fix up unsafe conditions. All this while the company tries every trick to cut crews, take away helpers, or get by on overtime rather than bring a few more men in. Anything to get out the production as cheaply as possible, no matter what the cost to us. And then they fly the flag at half mast when a man gets killed working alone! These hypocrites ought to put a big dollar sign on that flag of theirs.

After setting up McDonald to be killed, the company heaps coals on the fire by trying to shift the blame on to the man. The report from the company/union safety committee doesn't bring out the fact that McDonald should have had a helper with him. All the company promises to do is "investigate the possibility" of getting different switches up there. And they put up a new sign about lock-out procedures.

If our union accepts this report as final, and doesn't push out the real issues here, it will be more of the same. No fight equals no change! We've got to get together, pin ASARCO. Raise hell about this report and take a clear stand on all this corner-cutting.

A special union meeting is being called for to take up the question of McDonald's death and what we are going to do about it. Watch the readerboard for the date and let's all turn out. Brother McDonald's death was industrial murder for profit--we can't let it be whitewashed. The greatest service we can do for him now is let his death be the spark that gets us pulling together to beat back this penny-pinching management!

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