

P.E. & Dr. Blake Steidler  
**A Flagger's Journey**

**RED LEAD PRESS**  
**PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA 15222**

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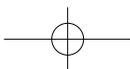
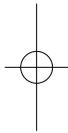
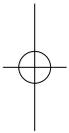
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Red Lead Press  
701 Smithfield Street  
Pittsburgh, PA 15222  
Visit our website at *www.redleadbooks.com*

ISBN: 978-1-4349-6681-0  
eISBN: 978-1-4349-2658-6

## Dedications

P.E and I would like to dedicate this story primarily to ourselves. We feel that everyone's attitude at FlaggerSource stinks therefore feel no need to dedicate this story to anyone else but ourselves. The names of businesses and people in this story are not real. Dr. Steidler carefully tweaked all names and businesses for their own privacy and protection. This story was written only for entertainment purposes and Pastor Edwards and I would like to give a shout out to anyone that has ever flagged.  
"Hang in there buddy!" and God bless!

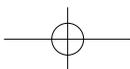
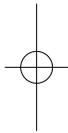
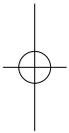


## Introduction

**They were just another** shady construction business looking for live bodies to fill a big job. With an application not only just one page, but one sided as well,

FlaggerSource is prepared to overlook background issues and pretty much welcome anyone on board. The unemployed still milking the system, drop out of orientation like flies when the company manager scares them away with on-site construction pictures. A brazen spanish man built like a tank has some words for the nervous bunch of job seekers as they depart from the four hour non-paid orientation. "I'm on parole, I'm ready to do this!"

hollars out the burly man. The crowd giggles along with myself as we walk out the door. The ultimate question in mind still remains. Who will be the last flagger standing? Who can stand in the rain? Who can stand the pain of not getting paid? And who might fall in love? Let the Journey begin!



# Chapter 1

**The smile on his face** only grew bigger, so he did what any professional scam artist would do, he covered up his leery smile with his right hand pretending to scratch his chin. He thought it was working. But it wasn't, us old heads had detected it for the umpteenth time. I seemed to be the only one amused by it. I wasn't afraid to put my time in at the gym and there wasn't a day that went by where I didn't pick up a toothbrush. But the old farts that could barely wipe their ass? Weren't amused. It would affect them the most.

The vice president of the company managed to keep his shady smile under control so that he could slowly lower his hand and face all the hundreds of employees once more. *Was it working? Were these flagers buying into my BS once more? Why do I have to do all of this? Shouldn't my wife the president of this gig stand here in this sweltering heat? Where is that wombat?* Ike Boner thought to himself. He cleared his throat and continued on with the line of BS that his penny pinching wife told him to say. *Just keep talking out your ass like you do when your around your buddies* She used to advise him.

Ike played his role. "I don't know what to tell all of you part timers, but if you do end up working your 40 hours a week for at least a year, we will offer you health insurance, but there is a co-pay."

The back of the crowd looked at one another and giggled. They had all heard this line of crap once before. Of the 685 employees was anybody blessed with Full Time hours? Most of the crowd was just hoping that this job could get them off of welfare but the numbers weren't looking too great. A twenty year old high school graduate was just wishing for the day he could finally say goodbye to his work boots on his feet. They were wrapped up in duct tape, and just barely managing to cling to his feet. And as for the rest

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of the crowd? This three hour safety meeting might be the only hours they would see all week.

Ike patiently waited for the giggles to subside before he would continue. He casted a furtive glance at his payroll lady. He had been plowing into her all week long with his buddies on his million dollar yacht while the wifey held down the fort in the unairconditioned garage. He doubted any of these low life flaggers had ever gotten the chance in their life time to even get near a yacht. Although he had heard some rumors that amidst the crowd was a flagger from his hometown with a \$10,000.00 dinghy, but as far as he knew, no flagger had ever gotten the chance to see it. That would always remain a joke in itself. Although the economy was way way down, things at FlaggerSource were looking way way up. After getting barred from the state of New Jersey, Ike Boner was glad he had taken his mother's advice and married a girl with money to bail him out of all his screw ups. Things were definitely looking up for big Ike. His wife was the brain, but his big sturdy hands were the manpower behind the whole operation. Guys like Ike Boner could laugh at signs like **D.U.I You Can't Afford It** because guys like Ike made signs of his own. Road Signs. Each and every sign tax deductible of course. His wife wouldn't have it any other way.

A hand of a brave new flagger went up and Ike pretended not to notice. Instead, he looked at the head of payroll lady as if questioning what line of BS he should come up with next. Teff winked at him and let him catch the sparkle of her big diamond ring. He already knew she was married, but that didn't stop rich guys like Ike Boner. Besides, she always complained about her husband not wanting children. *Go on, tell these losers what they want to hear* she silently told him. Teff and himself often used telepathetic body language to communicate with each other. Ike wiped the sweat dripping from his chin then placed his hands in his pockets to hide what little body language he could get away with.

"Yes, you have a question?"

The flagger did his best to maintain his composure. There was a lot of people shoved in this garage and he seemed a bit nervous." I was just curious, how do we go about getting full time hours?"

The smirk hopped back on the vice president's face and he was back to scratching his chin. He looked down and scratched his head for good measure." Well, you'll have to work really hard I guess and work your way up to a crew leader." The hundreds of newly trained flaggers looked around at each other in disbelief. Just how many trucks did this clown have? Crew leaders drove trucks. Did this con artist have 685 trucks hidden at his mommy's house? He surely couldn't fit them all in this garage.

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Another hand went up and Ike was really starting to feel the pressure. He cringed a bit as if the heat was causing him to have a headache, and then pointed his fat farmer's finger at the next query. This was the part that he really didn't like. Not knowing what kind of inane questions these toothless wonders would throw at him when he could be spending his precious time on the family's yacht. "Yes, you have a question?"

"Yeah, why are my paychecks always missing some hours that I have worked for?"

Teff walked away from the rest of the office girls to go use the restroom. Ike would have to be on his own for this one. That guy Tom over at the wage complaint department had proven to be a dick on countless times if she didn't be careful which flagger she decided to pencil whip. Usually she picked on the ex-felons. Nobody ever gave a shit about those guys. They had sucked off the system long enough. And she knew there was plenty of them out there in the crowd. Who else would take on a part time job with out benefits? Especially one that required you to live by the phone. A job where points would be issued to you should you decide not to bring your cellphone with you in the shower when you're on first call.

I watched the payroll lady flash her big shiny diamond at me as she furtively slipped past me to camp out in the ladies room. Unfortunately I was one of those sucker flaggers getting pencil whipped by little miss Wolf in Sheep's clothing. I was impressed how she had Tom over at the wage complaint office already wrapped around her little finger. I couldn't help but wonder what she did with all the money that she scammed off of the employees. With a turnover rate of nearly 85%, I imagined her little bit here, and a little bit there, **was really starting to add up**. Every time a new flagger walked into the office to fill out an application Teff looked at them as if they were a new pair of shoes. Because that's just what she intended to buy the very minute she had the opportunity to tinker with their first paycheck.

Ike scratched the back of his head to stall while he fished around for some more bull shit. It was really hard for him not to grin at this point. *Sitting on the yacht with his drinking buddies? or standing in this tropical jungle doing his best to blow smoke up everybody's ass. Why was it always the new people that asked all these stupid questions?* Ike suddenly came up with an idea. An idea that would shut them up for good.

"Will all of the crew leaders in this room stand up please?" He said raising both of his hands. The disheveled crew leaders looked at each other nervously before they arose from their seats. *What kind of tricks does this swindler still have up his sleeve?* They all thought to themselves. The sinister grin on Ike's face couldn't be any more ostensible, but when the economy is in the crapper, you gotta do what you gotta do and hope that the union can step

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in one day and fix things. But how? With millions on welfare praying for work and it only taking ten minutes to show someone how to flip a stop/slow paddle, what leverage did they have? The answer was simple. None.

The crew leaders stood there patiently and waited to see what was coming next. With dedicating 7 days a week of their time for three or four days of pay these dedicated poor souls were used to getting “F”ed. After a year of hell with this company, they had quickly learned that the good old days of counting sheep in their sleep were over. They were counting cars. Cars that they couldn’t possibly afford to buy with an annual income that would probably never reach the double digits. There would always be those college kids coming around in the summer that could flip that sign faster and scoop up all the hours then go back to their beer infested dorms when things got slow. Teff knew better than to clown college kids on their paychecks because their daddies were township supervisors. Their daddy’s owned businesses far more lucrative than this little FlaggerSource scheme. The well-heeled moguls and tycoons of Harrisburg had a special code of their own, *let’s keep new shoes on us, and only us.*

Ike placed his oversized fist over his chin once again. Another shady smile twitched on his face. He was about to drop the big one. The big one that would once and for all portray him for the weezling turd that he really was. His management skills took control of his body and he was feeling more cocksure than ever as he waved his big farmer hand at the helpless crew leaders. The super dedicated ones.

“These people here my friends,” He said with certainty, “Are the reason that you guys aren’t getting paid because they keep forgetting to turn in their time sheets.”

A dead silence permeated the tropical garage. *Did he just say that? Did he just blame all of the intentional office errors on the crew leaders? The dedicated ones that drove his crappy trucks all over God’s green earth for 2 hour show up pays and no drive time? After all the oil changes and paper work done on their time. Even the truck washes done on their time? No Ike Boner did not just say that. He couldn’t put the dedicated ones on the spotlight like that.* **But he did.** I tried not to laugh. As a guy I have always been amused at other guys aholeness behavior and this surely was the big one. It reminded me of a guy that I used to hang out with in Federal prison named Turtle, and Ike sure looked a lot like him. Turtle would be impressed with Mr.Boner’s big scheme.

There was dead silence in the room as if they were all waiting for Ike to announce that he was joking. I was grateful for the clown next to me loudly cracking his empty soda bottle because I didn’t want anyone to hear my laughter. I had already accumulated 4 shortages in pay and **none** of them had to do with paper work not being turned in by my crew leaders. Why would

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a crew leader not turn their paper work in? It made no sense? Because then they too would not be getting paid. Who would not want to get paid? Ike's joke brought no laughter amidst the 685 employees except for mine. But I was sure bottle cracking dude was doing his best to cover for me. I did my best to keep it under control. One of the more dedicated female crew leaders looked like she wanted to cry. Ike making an ass out of her was not cool in her book. Not after she spent two and a half hours at Pep boys for a stupid oil change, right after she had just did a job all the way in Maryland that took three hours to get there. Three hours that she knew she would never get paid.

Ike knew that his employees were not too thrilled with his ignorance. He had better pull a rabbit out of his hat. It was time to change the subject, and fast. All of the office workers kept their affable composure like Ike's wife the wombat had trained them to do. If Ike thought he was going to pull some shady shit like this on them he had another thing coming. They had plenty of dirt on him. They all knew about his pay shortage scheme because they were all in on it together. That was their company bonus. Whatever they could short chump out of the flaggers, was theirs to keep.

Ike looked at all 12 of his office girls and waved them up to the front where he was standing. Nobody budged. The office girls all looked at each other and thought to themselves *This rich male whore who drinks like a fish, conjures up stories for women on his yacht all day, isn't going to put my prettiness on the spotlight. Heck no, this funny man would not get a chance to publicly humiliate us.* Ike smiled like the show was just getting started. I remained seated in the back getting a little excited myself. As a new employee, I was totally unprepared for all of this funny stuff and was afraid I'd soon wet my pants from Ike's little show. These so called educated college bitches had been getting on my nerves all week. I wanted to know which one it was that kept putting me on call almost every time I called in for my daily assignment. Evidently I was not alone because the redneck clad in harley junk sitting next to me whispered a few words for the house. "That's the one. That's the one I'm sure that keeps putting me on hold for 15 minutes when I call in." Whispered Mr. stink breath.

I wasn't chuckling just yet. I was saving my chuckles for whatever trick the bossman had up his sleeve. He had already made an ass out of his crew leaders and now I wanted to see him go all the way with it and get the clowns in the office too. That would be funny. I knew one day I could write a funny book about all of this and get rich. Or probably not. But the show still went on.

"I need all of the office girls to come up here and stand." He said waving them on with no smile this time. I immediately lost interest. I could tell by his body language that he had no plans of humiliating them. Ike knew

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better than that. The wombat would be giving him crap all week if he tried a stunt like that. It was hard to find a rich lady to put up with all of his binge drinking and capers that ensued afterwards.

The girls reluctantly pranced their little fannies up to the front of the crowd and did their best to maintain a professional composure. As stingy as Ike and the wombat were, they doubted he was calling them up for awards or gold medals.

They all lined up like ducks and Ike pointed to the biggest one. The one I always wanted to date. She was wearing a neon green dress that sparkled and her hair was done up just so. She looked like a giant Peacock, yet I doubted she could fly. (Not that I'd ever seen a peacock fly.) I'm not usually attracted to the big girls but this one looked like she spent all day and maybe even the day before on her sparkly outfit. I was really turned on. That showed dedication. And the simple fact that she could be so dedicated to a clown outfit like FlaggerSource spoke great volumes. *If she can put up with a boss that's an asshole for all these years and still dress to impress, imagine what a guy dating her could get away with?* I thought to myself. I wanted to date her right then and there. Ike already had her broken in with his rudeness. I could be my regular jerk-off self and it would come as no surprise to her. I was already imagining myself kicking back on Ike's yacht and drinking a cold Corona while I had her make me a sandwich. I definitely had to hook up with this girl. I snapped out of my daydream when big Ike waved those working man's hands at my girl.

"I have an announcement to make in regards to my lovely assistant Jill. Jill has just been promoted to dispatcher. She will now be handling all of the dispatching." He said clapping his hands. The crowd went completely wild. It went so far as a standing ovation. Evidently I was not alone in taking a shining to this girl. The drunken red necks went wild, the harley dudes were on their feet, even the Wu-Tang wannabes seemed to be greatly relieved. I had no idea this girl was so popular among all of the employees but evidently she was. I looked around at all my competition. I hated competition. These toothless wonders had to go. The big girl belonged to me. I had already made up my mind.

The noise finally ended and Ike realized the good news of Jill getting bumped up to dispatcher was a good note to end on. The wombat back home would be impressed that he ended his meeting with some good news to keep the under paid flagger's minds off of their missing pay checks. Not to mention Teff could finally come out from hiding in the bathroom.

Ike looked at his wrist watch and dismissed the crowd. I was already making a bee line for the door. I have been diagnosed in the past of having a social anxiety disorder and big crowds like this exacerbate my condition, so it was best that I be the first one out, not to mention I didn't want anyone to ask me why I found big Ike's pep talk about health care so amusing. With

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my very first pay check being tampered with, I had already made up my mind that this place was a joke. I knew that my journey as a Flaggerman had just begun.

## Chapter 2

**After a year with** FlaggerSource my day had finally come and I was asked to become a crew leader and drive one of their stupid trucks. Gas was climbing quickly to almost \$4.00 a gallon and I was sick of half of my paycheck going into my gas tank. All of their office errors and 2 hour show up pays for jobs 60 or 70 miles away was really starting to piss me off. It all came down to arithmetic, and I was usually pretty good at crunching numbers. Using one's personal vehicle for this job got you nowhere and they did that purposely to dupe you into taking home one of their trucks so they could finally brag about having you by the balls. The girls working for this unscrupulous outfit made it a game to see who could be the first to have one of the new flaggers wrapped around their little finger. The convicts of course were the easiest because the bitches in the office knew for sure they had nowhere to go. In their minds, their punishment shouldn't end after release from incarceration. Those system sucking varmints should be out there holding the flag for free just to pay back their debt to society. That would always be Teff's opinion on the matter. She knew with all of her prettiness, people would eventually learn to gravitate towards her opinion.

I could feel the morning sun already trying to make an imposing statement as I pulled FlaggerSource's freshly washed truck into the parking lot. I had been up since 5am but very much grateful that my job destination for the day was only 55 miles away from home. Just the week before, FlaggerSource had been sending me to Gettysburg almost every day. An almost two hour drive that I knew I would never get paid for. Nobody did. Nobody ever got paid for drive time other than the rumors I heard about the company's number #1 bootlickers getting thrown an extra 5 bucks for their inconvenience. I knew that if I stayed with this company long enough I might end up caving and end up being one of those bootlickers. I'd proba-

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bly have to first start seeing those 30 hours a week that the company advertised about before that would ever happen.

As soon as I parked the company truck I knew something was definitely out of kilter. I was the only one there. I knew the company was losing a lot of contracts due to unprofessionalism, but shouldn't there be at least another FlaggerSource truck or two? I was hoping that this wasn't another notorious *Office Error* in which I would only get paid \$22.00 for my 55 mile trip to Harrisburg. More like \$19.00 after Uncle Sam would get his cut. I was 20 minutes early like usual so I was trying not to jump to conclusions. Crew leaders like myself are required to show up 15 minutes early for all job assignments. Even when we report to the FlaggerSource office for more training we are required to show up 15 minutes early. 15 minutes that was on our time and FlaggerSource had some kind of right to not pay us for. Just two weeks ago I showed up to a job in York 10 minutes early and the company manager yelled at me for being a purported 5 minutes late because of the required 15 minute early show up. Since then I have made a point of showing up 20 minutes early to play it safe. I looked at my watch. It was 7:10am. Start time was 7:30am. I went about my usual routine of lacing up my work boots and tuning in to my favorite rock station while I wait for whatever crew helper FlaggerSource would send my way. I had scrawled on a piece of paper the name *Leslie* and had already taken all of the necessary precautions. 2 squirts of generic cologne from the Wal-marts. (I had a system that I utilized. 1 squirt for dude helpers and 2 squirts for the ladies).

My favorite radio station was momentarily keeping me entertained for the time being while I kept on the lookout for my partner. I couldn't help but wonder what Leslie would end up looking like. In my 13 months at FlaggerSource I had already seen it all. The majority of the females that made it with this company were toothless wonders that smelled like an ashtray. For some it was all they could do just to squeeze into their jeans in the morning. Some of them just didn't care and allowed the seams to rip from all of the McDoublers that they had stuffed themselves with from the hunger they had built up from standing there holding the stupid flag. FlaggerSource tended to be more lenient with their female employees because big Ike collected an extra tax incentive from the government for each female he hired. Not to mention some of the big ugly contractor guys often enjoyed the company of a woman to lighten the mood a bit. I looked at my watch. 7:35am and I was still the only one in the parking lot. I knew that the contractors usually didn't come out until about 8am so if Leslie was running late, her secret would be fine with me. For all I knew she could be coming from 60 or 70 miles away and caught up in traffic. I always give a 15 minute lee-way before I phone into the office and ask what's up with my help for the day. I knew the company manager would want me to call in the very minute a crew member was late but I was far from the type to snitch on everybody. Especially since

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pretty much about everybody in the company got screwed over by the company at one point or another so why make things worse?

The heat from the sun was already weighing in and it wasn't even 8am yet. A heat wave was coming in and I knew that today was going to be a hot one. I could feel my nerves building up as I scoured the parking lot looking for someone named Leslie. I looked at my wristwatch. 7:45am. I didn't have Leslie's number and I knew it was time to call into the office. I wouldn't tell FlaggerSource that Leslie was running late. I would just simply ask for the number of my partner. I've had to do this several times before. My cellphone was dialing into the office when I heard a rather strange rattle from across the street. I turned my head to see a little beat up Toyota Tercel in need of some TLC (tender loving care). At first the car appeared dark and vacant until I noticed the pearly whites smiling at me. My first thoughts were that it must be one of the brotha brotherman's from down the way, lost and looking for directions. Those thoughts quickly eradicated when I saw the yellow vest. I gave a shout out to "B" or "Gmoney", or whoever he was.

"Hi, I'm looking for Leslie. What partner did they give you?" I said, all hitched up high in my big white truck. The rattling from his grey little jalopy grew louder and he just smiled at me almost making me feel uneasy. I noticed his teethies were a bit whiter than mine and I was already getting jealous. I do brush my teeth daily but the years I had spent in Federal prison had drug me into a coffee addiction and it was starting to show on my teeth a little. I was too cheap to buy the \$40.00 Crest whitening strips.

"I'm Leslie." He said with a smile. I blushed a little and immediately apologized. He didn't seem at all surprised at my wrong assumption." Don't worry about it. I get that all the time. There's actually a lot of guys named Leslie." He said as if he's told this story a million times.

"Oh, okay. I'm not from around here. I drove over an hour to get here today. Been up since 5:30 this morning." I said just trying to make stupid conversation.

Leslie smiled, "You and me both. You know what it is. Took me almost an hour to get here too." He said looking behind him to see if it was safe to park. *Yeah, I knew what it was. Pretty much every flagger working for FlaggerSource knew what it was. My goal was to just find one happy flagger. Just one. I had better jobs before and knew that I would surely never be that one. I had a Christian friend from high school stuck at this dumpy job because of the economy. When people asked him where he worked, he just told them F&S construction because he was too ashamed to admit the name of the company he worked for.*

I got out of the truck and watched him park." I don't have extras of anything so you'll need your paddle and flag. Safety glasses too if you feel like

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wearing them. I won't say nuthn. FlaggerSource don't take care of me well enough to care." I joked. I wasn't joking. But I didn't want to say it in a serious voice to make him think I was a big time grouser. Nobody likes a poopy pants. It just really sucks wearing safety glasses in this heat when we're not exposed to flames or debris shooting in our face like welders and carpenters. Leslie picked up his beat up red flag and stop/slow paddle and headed over towards my truck. He smiled that big toothy grin once again for me. "I don't even think I have any safety glasses with me. They never issued me a pair."

I reached up behind my driver's seat and pulled out a brand new pair of safety glasses still in the wrapper." I got an extra pair if you want it." I said dangling it like a freshly caught fish. Leslie opened the hatch of the truck and tossed his gear in with the rest of the equipment." Naw, forget it. Wouldn't surprise me if we don't even go out today. I got 4 hours in yesterday and 8 hours was all I got in all last week. This shit is killin' me."

I tossed the safety glasses back behind the seat." Yeah, I hear you on that one. I'm in their crappy truck and I'm getting some hours now but they have me driving all over the country for it. I was in Gettysburg all last week. Almost a two hour drive. The traffic coming home on 30 is a real bitch!"

Leslie looked around as if he was expecting somebody. I knew it was shut up time about bitching about the company. This guy looked like he was one of those *seen it all, did it all* type of guys. There was a good chance we'd be spending the next couple of hours sitting in the FlaggerSource truck telling funnies about just life in general. The look on this man's face told a story all in itself. There was maybe a chance we were cellmates at one point and time years ago and just forgot about it. If that were the case then our conversations would probably be of a cooler topic. A cooler topic like um..say...women. If that were the case then I would have some stories for Leslie as well.

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