

ALL AROUND MAN: PAUL DUFFICY

When I was sixteen, I got a Christmas holiday job in a small auto parts factory in Condell Park. I started work at 7am, had thirty minutes for lunch, and knocked off at 3pm. For six weeks I sat in front of a moulding machine and on my right was a box of spark plug attachments destined for Austin 1800s. My job was to lift a protective cage on the machine, take two spark plug connections and place them into slots, close the cage, press the green button, press the red button on the sound of a bell, lift the cage, remove the now moulded ends, put them in the box on my left and repeat the process. I have been a strong advocate of automation ever since.

Apart from the boss the only other person who spoke English was a young man of about twenty called Gary who seemed to choose clothes based upon some kind of tightness index. His shirt sleeves struggled to fit around his biceps, especially the right one which perpetually held a packet of Rothman cigarettes. His short hair was tight too - held in place permanently with an enormous amount of Brylcreem. In his top pocket he kept his lighter and his comb. I think Gary knew the boss or had something on him because the only job he had was to lean against the roller door in the docking bay combing his hair and having the occasional smoke.

One Friday afternoon Gary offered me a lift to the station. The Holden motor company had just released the Kingswood range the year before and Gary had managed to get his hands on a sky-blue Belmont model which was really just manufactured for people like him who one daydreamed of robbing the local Commonwealth Bank. They should have just called the car the Lennie McPherson.