

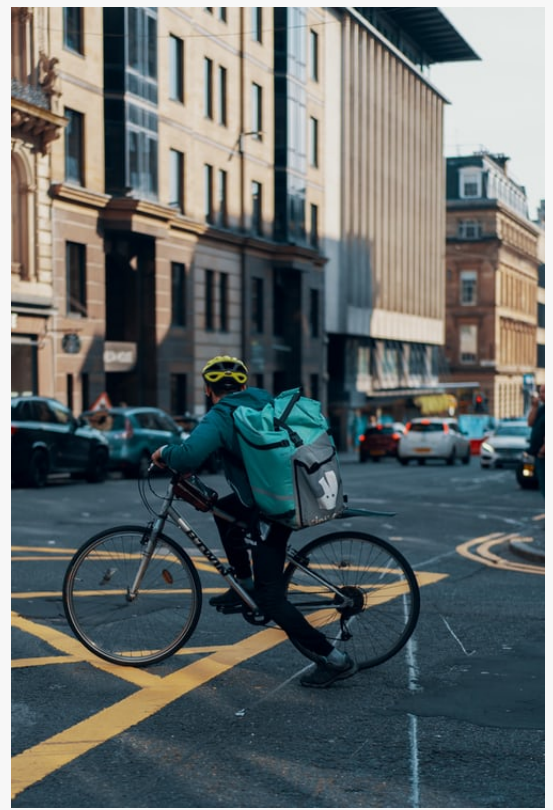
Day In The Life Of A Gig Worker

Frank, you see, has been working late delivering food for a well-known firm.

COVENTRY, UNITED KINGDOM, November 5, 2019 /EINPresswire.com/ -- It's not the push bike that's jammed into the small recess opposite the kitchen that first draws my attention, but the strong smell of coffee. Frank apologises and tells me that his first cup of the day was made with the last of the coffee beans. After a few moments of digging in the far recesses of a cupboard he produces some tea and sweeps away to make me a brew.

When he finally returns I've wrestled the contents of my bag onto the small dining room table and tracked down my voice recorder. I gratefully accept the cuppa and he settles before me with a barely stifled yawn. For once I console myself that it's not me that's infecting the room with my own particular brand of dullness; Frank, you see, has been working late delivering food for a well-known firm.

I begin by asking him about his experiences. He tells me that everything you read in the news is true, except it's often a lot worse. I assume he is talking about the precariously low wages and the lack of job security, but he smiles and says, "well there is that of course - and there's no getting away from it. What you don't get to hear quite so much of is the reality of doing this day in and day out. For me it's my primary source of income. It means getting on my bike in all weathers and running the gauntlet of abusive motorists and intolerant customers who've sometimes had to wait - heaven forbid - an extra five minutes for their food."



Frank Gig Worker

“

For most people on the coal-face, the reality is rather different. If the dust rut remuneration doesn't get you, the working conditions probably will.”

Daniel Whittle Chief Editor

It's not first time I've heard this kind of testament. The faces change, but the weary sentiments are the same. Since the explosion of the "gig-economy", a new underclass of workers has been created. In some circles - probably cigar smoking Tories and tech savvy entrepreneurs - it's a triumph of the British economy's versatility. For most people on the coal-face, the reality is rather different. If the dust rut remuneration doesn't get you, the working conditions probably will.

I ask Frank whether the much-vaunted "flexibility" that comes with the territory is worth having. He says that the initial burst of enthusiasm soon wears off after an entire shift of being bossed around by an inscrutable app. Then there's the lack of guaranteed work, minimum wage, holiday pay or sick pay - all of it outweighs any of the perceived benefits.

My time is nearly up. Frank needs to grab a few more hours sleep and I need to scuttle back to

my desk. I thank him for his time and turn to leave. On the way out he shows me a card made by his 5-year-old daughter. He explains that he and his partner split up six months ago and he doesn't see his daughter so much these days. He hopes to get a new job so he can fund travelling to see her more often. "I suppose it's just one of those things..I can't seem to get enough money together and I can't take a break and be secure in the knowledge I am still getting paid."

Later I trawl through the transcripts of various interviews I've conducted. They'd make a fine sonic art installation - an antic amalgam of tired and cracked voices trying to maintain their dignity against apparently insuperable odds.

We're constantly hearing that the [gig economy](#) is the way of the future, but whose future? Capitalism, it was said, would eliminate junk jobs - or at the very least, enough of the benefits enjoyed by those who create them would trickle down to the people on the front line. In fact, the opposite seems to have happened: governments can point to high levels of employment and feel that in itself is justification for the economic policies of the last 30 years, and yet the uncomfortable truth is that many of these jobs add little value to the tax base of the country, are determinedly low wage; and fail to provide those that do them with even the most basic of protections.

As dismal a picture as this seems to be, there is hope. A remodelled type of union is on the rise, and with it, a belief that there are better ways of organising people to achieve improvements in pay and conditions. These 'nu-unions' are smaller, more wieldy beasts than their traditional rivals and most of them are happy to disassociate themselves from leftist propaganda - thereby quashing any suggestion that they're cut-price set-ups fighting the battles of the 1970s.

[The Workers Union](#) is a leading voice amongst this new vanguard of GIG workers. General Secretary Colin Mahoney describes it as "creative disruption" and believes that in the new world, smaller is better. "If you look at where the large unions are now, you'll see the same story. Falling membership, an inability to attract young people to join up and a certain reticence to take on the kind of cases that we like to get involved with. There's no baggage here you see - we're not backwards looking and we don't specialise in supporting one part of industry that's still has notions of a job for life hanging around it. We're completely open to members from every sector of the UK economy and we've invested in understanding how the world of work is changing and is going to change over the next 15, 20 years."

I ask him to elaborate and the conversation turns from the gig economy to the increased use of tech and the likelihood of more automation in the coming years.

"Whether we like it or not, elements of the gig economy are here to stay".

Daniel Whittle
Chief Editor
TWU

Daniel Whittle
The Workers Union
+44 24 7798 1194

[email us here](#)

Visit us on social media:

[Facebook](#)

[Twitter](#)

This press release can be viewed online at: <http://www.einpresswire.com>

Disclaimer: If you have any questions regarding information in this press release please contact the company listed in the press release. Please do not contact EIN Presswire. We will be unable to assist you with your inquiry. EIN Presswire disclaims any content contained in these releases. © 1995-2020 IPD Group, Inc. All Right Reserved.