

# You have to work hard to get this much bad press

The Ohio Civil Rights Commission is investigating a possible abusive environment at Chrysler's Toledo North Assembly Plant in light of 45 civil rights complaints made by workers there in just 18 months. The suits—coupled with Chrysler's decision to dramatically cut production of the Jeep and Dodge SUVs built in Toledo—have spawned a flurry of negative news reports on the plant.

Over the past four years, employees in the Toledo plant have filed nine sexual harassment lawsuits against the company. Several of the lawsuits accuse union steward Richard Lott and supervisor Torrence Frazier, workplace pals, of asking women for sexual favors in exchange for favorable assignments. One woman who settled a lawsuit this spring said Frazier disciplined her after she rejected his sexual advances. When she complained to management, she claimed Frazier became enraged and vowed "to take care of" her.

Other plaintiffs have reportedly been punished and fired for complaining.

The media blitz—including extensive coverage in the *Detroit Free Press*, the automotive industry's newspaper of record—has brought renewed scrutiny to Chrysler's controversial pre-employment waiver, which reduces the time employees have to file for legal claims from the federally granted 300 days to six months. One judge has called the practice "unconscionable."