**Is Working Forty Hours a Week Closer to Freedom or Slavery?**

Today, some people might feel that working forty hours a week is like being a slave. This short essay asserts that nothing could be further from the truth.

First, look at the numbers. There are 168 hours in a week, and forty hours is less than one-fourth of that. Thus the slave's obligation is more than four times greater than the obligation of a full-time employee.

Second, compare the options of a full-time employee to those of a slave. The employee is free to quit and find a new job at any time, but a slave does not have this option. Worse, a slave can be sold, separating them from their family forever.

Third, consider the physical punishments. Keeping a slave in chains is acceptable, and made unnecessary only by the constant threat of severe physical torture.

A slave owner can legally subject a slave to punishments such as flogging for any infraction whatsoever. An owner can inflict hundreds of lashes at a time, which can actually kill the slave. At best this left the victim scarred - physically and emotionally - for life. In contrast, today a boss who inflicts any sort of physical punishment on a full-time employee is subject to criminal prosecution.

Finally, sexual abuse of a slave by their owner is completely legal. A slave could be raped repeatedly, and a woman could be forced to bear the child of her rapist, without any recourse whatsoever. These days, however, simply making a seemingly innocent comment about their employee's appearance can make a boss the defendant in a sexual harassment lawsuit.

It is certainly understandable how on-going financial and family obligations might make a person feel trapped in a job they don't like. However, the notion that someone working forty hours a week is anything like a slave is preposterous.

Anyone claiming there is more than a superficial similarity between slavery and full time employment is likely just feeling a bit grumpy on a Monday morning, and has not given the notion serious, objective consideration.