

## **THIS IS THE BOOK BOSSES DON'T WANT YOU TO READ!**

**WHO'S AFRAID OF THE  
BIG, BAD BOSS?**



How to Survive 13 Types of  
Dysfunctional, Disrespectful,  
Dishonest Little Dictators

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### **PERSONAL PROPERTY SEARCHED**

*"...I'm...presently working in [a shared space]. As I went to take off my coat, the assistant took my bag with my supplies. The assistant returns, telling me the lady boss asked her to open my bag to make sure the [contents] didn't belong to the company. WELL THEY DIDN'T! I should have said something but I didn't! And the assistant (my friend) should have thought twice! What do I do?"*

Dear Searched,

This boss behaves as if she either doesn't trust you or wants to make you unhappy about working there. And the assistant who searched your private belongings, whom you call your "friend," does not behave like a friend. This could be a one-time incident, or it could be the beginning of an attempt to make you want to leave. Until you know what is going on, try this approach.

The boss is behaving as if she suspects you of stealing and mistrusts you. So you are going to make it difficult for her to find fault.

1. Make sure there is no written policy that states that the management may search your belongings. There probably isn't, but be sure—there's little you can do if such a policy exists.
2. Do not confide in this "friend." Keep your distance and observe her relationship with the "lady boss." Just be superficially polite.
3. You are going to treat the "lady boss" with the same mistrust she shows you. Get a small luggage-combination lock and a bag that will hold all of your things and also allows you to fasten the lock to it. Treat your personal property as if it is likely to be stolen—never leave it unattended—and always keep it locked while it's in the shared space.
4. Once you've secured your belongings, if anyone wants to search your personal property,

they'll have to ask you first. If they ask, tell them they may only search your personal belongings if a police officer is present, so you will have a witness to your innocence and to their accusation (and so they can't plant something to make it look like you stole property).

5. If they insist on the search (they probably won't), call the police and ask to have an officer present so you cannot be falsely accused. After the search, file a harassment incident report with the police.

Be aware that defending yourself in this way is going to create more tension in your workplace—be sure you're okay with that before you do anything. If you're not okay with it, then start carrying a clear bag that allows the contents to be seen from the outside—this way, there can never be a question.

I hope the whole thing just blows over—but this "lady boss" may want you to leave, so consider other opportunities.