

## Live Bait & Ammo # 52

I ask the straw boss for a week off without pay. I have my reasons but suffice it to say like an outlaw on the run, I needed time more than money to get ahead.

But Delphi needs me too bad. Can you believe it? A certified slacker like me? "Gotta have them parts," the straw boss said panting and stuttering like a junky chasing a fix.

Delphi needs a shot of Uncommon Sense, but the head dickheads appear immune to verbal inoculations. We may have to resort to old fashion strong arm persuasion like rolling strikes, wildcats, random epidemics, and work to rule disruptions at strategic locations.

Steve Miller, aka "The Hatchet", told the press, that even if Delphi files for bankruptcy, they will not interrupt the flow of parts especially to GM.

No shit, they won't interrupt the flow of parts to GM because GM runs the show. The Hatchet can blow smoke until the cows clean up after themselves before they come home. But in the end, Wagoner is his daddy, and daddy wants the parts on time.

Just-in-Time is our trump card. We can work to rule. If The Hatchet thinks he can take our pension (our life savings) without retaliation, he's inhaling more smoke than he's blowing. Delphi can't expect to steal everything we ever worked for without retaliation (and GM knows it).

Speculators are betting on the power punch of pension extortion via bankruptcy to win concessions. From the docks to the air to the ground breaking Caterpillar company, corpo-gangsters have taken the gloves off and put the brass knuckles on. They make no bones about intentions to hijack pensions, benefits, and wages. The notion that hard work pays off has been trashed. In conventional capitalist wisdom workers must pay for management's crimes and failures. This audacious perversion of justice is rarely questioned by the press.

For instance, it appears that syndicated corporate mouthpiece, Rick Haglund, spent too much time sucking smoke at the hookah bar with his patrons. He doesn't make

sense. He defends lucrative compensation of Delphi executives by comparing them to an even bigger corporate crook at Kmart. In his column on August 17 Haglund stated: "Former Kmart Corp. Chairman Chuck Conaway, for instance, received nearly \$23 million in compensation for just under two years of less-than-stellar work at the retailer, which he ushered into bankruptcy in 2002."

A week later the Detroit News reported: "The U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission on Tuesday charged Kmart's former chairman and CEO Charles Conaway and its former chief financial officer with misleading investors about the company's financial condition in the months before Kmart's 2002 bankruptcy filing. In a civil case, the SEC is charging Conaway and John McDonald with securities fraud."

Haglund's rationalization is intellectually appetizing as a thick layer of bullshit covered with a frosting of lies. His fallacious analogy doesn't answer the average UAW member's question: Why the hell should we make concessions for criminals? Incompetent criminals at that.

Isn't that the real question analysts and main stream media parrots should be asking? Not how should we punish workers, but how should we punish the putzes who turned the US auto industry into a demolition derby? Shouldn't their deferred compensation be threatened, not ours?

In the same column Haglund reported "the cost of an hourly, UAW-represented Delphi worker is \$130,000 a year including wages, health insurance and pension benefits." It's an outrageous lie, but it stands uncontested because UAW VP Shoemaker admonishes union officials not to talk to the press.

Shoemaker doesn't return calls or make comments to the press himself, and the UAW Public Relations department doesn't like to relate publicly. Therefore, corporate opinion monopolizes the media. Since UAW officials shirk their duty to defend us in public, truth is reduced to whatever the press will let their sponsors get away with. As a result distorted facts are mass marketed by corporate hacks until delusion wears the uniform of conventional wisdom, i.e., workers make too much money.

Wall Street front men would have us believe our pension is a welfare program. Our pension and benefits are earned. The real free loaders are the overpaid, incompetent frauds who are driving the flagship industry of America into the scrap yard. UAW members are too heavily invested to let corporate con artists steal their life savings without a fight.

The Hatchet complains about the cost of contractual responsibility to workers that Delphi deprived of jobs through negligence, mismanagement, and dishonesty. In February 2003 an arbitrator rejected that feeble evasion of accountability. The Dayton Daily News reported: "Delphi Corp. would violate an agreement with The International Union of Electronic Workers-Communications Workers of America if it allowed the number of employees at the company's Moraine and Kettering plants to drop below 1,500 an arbitrator ruled...."

Delphi claimed the job guarantee was part of a "nonbinding memo of understanding." The arbitrator, Anthony Sinicropi, refuted Delphi's distortion of fact. Union members are dealing with executives who have no honor. Their word, their contracts, mean nothing to them. The predominant UAW strategy is cooperation, but cooperation with criminal behavior isn't realistic, it's aiding and abetting.

The Hatchet thinks it is unfair that Delphi should have to compensate 4,000 UAW members whose jobs were sold out from under them. If the UAW enforced the Secure Employment Level GM agreed to in the 2003 contract, those employees could transfer to GM, but three out of four new Chevy models are built outside the US. [The HHR is built in Mexico. The Equinox is built in Canada. The Aveo is built in South Korea. The Buick Regal is made in China. Etc.etc] GM's complaint that the active US workforce cannot support legacy costs is a direct result of their sourcing strategy.

The 2003 UAW contract Highlights claimed that "GM agreed to award approximately \$1 billion in new business to UAW-represented Delphi operations." But the minutes of the UAW International Executive Board meeting in November 2004 confirm that the billion dollar promise was a boondoggle. Shoemaker reported: "Delphi's GM North American content per vehicle in the third quarter was \$2,495, a loss of \$252 of content per vehicle over third quarter 2003, and a loss of \$82 in content per vehicle over second quarter 2004."

Content per vehicle is the most accurate measure of GM's commitment to Delphi. The misrepresentation was intentional. The failure was calculated. GM undermined Delphi's success with one goal in mind: concessions.

Remember the IPO? Remember when shares of Delphi sold for \$20. Remember the hype? Remember Ed Northern saying, "I don't close plants. I build plants." Remember when the pension plan was fully funded just a few short years ago? Where has all the money gone? Overseas. All the profit from Delphi operations was invested outside the US.

The Hatchet insists Delphi will only file Chapter 11 for US operations and the court proceedings won't affect Delphi's international business. Leave it to a screw machine operator, Mark Presler, to detect the silver thread in that twisted scheme. Mark said, "If Delphi gets away with selective debt evasion, I'm going to sell everything, buy property in Mexico and invest all my savings outside the US. Then come home, max out the cards and declare bankruptcy." Why not? Mark has all the rights of a person just like a corporation.

At the last sub council in Chicago, Shoemaker tried to soften the target for concessions by scaring UAW members with the threat of bankruptcy. He says we have to help GM and Delphi. Gettelfinger insists there must be an equivalence of sacrifice. I couldn't agree more.

If cuts must be made, they can start at Solidarity House. IRS documents show that in 1994 GM funneled \$8.2 million dollars to the International through the conduit of Joint Funds. We don't know how much that sum may have increased because the union won't reveal the figures to its members, but 19 cents for every hour we work ca-chinks into the joint fund kitty to help fluff the featherbeds. Cut the fat not the meat.

Meanwhile, back in Coopersville Delphi can't afford to give me a week off without pay because GM needs the parts too bad. In fact, I was forced into work last Saturday. I tried to turn the overtime down, but GM is desperate for parts. UAW members at Delphi still have some power.

Bury the Hatchet and Raise the Fury.

In Solidarity,  
UAW Local 2151