

Live Bait & Ammo # 65

Wagoner winked. Miller bit his tongue. Gettelfinger whispered out the side of his mouth to Krell, "How should I know? Tell them, 'No comment'."

Then the trio filed out of Judge Drain's chamber and disappeared like humor in a paternity suit. Nobody wants this baby.

Meanwhile, Russ Reynolds, president of UAW Local 651 Delphi Flint East, is praying for more rain because he's running out of excuses not to fight. Mobilizing@Delphi is in "raging defense of the status quo" as Brother Tucker would say with a face stone blank as a pitcher who just finished dusting off the batter. There's a persistent sound of drilling in the background. Someone keeps whistling the refrain from "Working to Rule" with the mindless repetition of a chain gang. And I'm just sitting here humming, "Stuck Inside of Delphi with the Whipsaw Blues Again."

All this waiting makes me feel like I have a hole where my brain used to be. A delay is not a reprieve when you are standing in front of the firing squad. When two thirds of the workforce is scheduled for execution the remainder don't feel safe, they feel terrorized. When "progress" by Miller's definition means demolition, the partisans go underground and resistance spreads like a vicious rumor — without discretion or restraint. It appears Wagoner wants to squeeze the last drop of sweat from Shoemaker.

Miller isn't amused. He has better things to do than watch a patsy squirm. Miller has good reason to be antsy. He needs to accelerate the bankruptcy because Delphi has really become a sinking ship. \$1.1 billion in the last quarter. Work to rule is drilling holes in the boat and it won't get better when The Hatchet cuts wages, benefits, pensions, and bends the work rules to suit his highness.

Delphi's losses up to now could be attributed to the "business plan", but the losses are spinning out of control. GM-Delphi engineered the bankruptcy through fraud, racketeering, and investing profits overseas while undermining factories in the US. For example, Delphi Coopersville is selling parts to China below cost. The transfer of profits to China delights workers. Especially the Vietnam vets who know instinctively you never bet a man at his own game. You take him off his square and break his marbles. Miller's train is derailed. The loudmouth got bitch slapped,

probably by the Japanese. Toyota doesn't need Delphi. GM is setting up new suppliers to replace Delphi. Workers are exerting pain the only way they know how, by raising production costs for Delphi. Miller isn't used to street hockey — players who won't play by the rules. He wants to take his puck and go home but nobody will give it back to him. Miller's game is in the court room but apparently we have taken him off his game because against this better judgment he has delayed three times. He's not known to equivocate, but he's having second and third thoughts now.

If Miller were left to his own devices he would hold a fire sale, and pass the patent portfolio to his old friend Wilbur Ross. Wilbur isn't in the game for money. He already has all the money. He wants power. If he gets his mitts on the patents he can control the industry and that will be Miller's revenge. We might have to give the Hatchet a golden parachute without a rip cord, but I expect Wagoner will do the dirty work when the resistance begins to deconstruct GM.

Miller's game is bankruptcy. We can't beat him on his own turf which is why we had to take him off his square. He thinks we will settle for half a share like we're ignorant palookas fresh off the boat. What he didn't count on is that in a game of Mutually Assured Destruction the party with little or nothing to lose grows more murderous by the hour. "Let's just get it over with," is the phrase I hear every day. My fellow workers aren't talking about the job. They're talking about "The Job".

I mean to say that working to rule is almost as hard as running a Fortune 500 company — with no debt, a fully funded pension, a patent portfolio with more jewels than the Queen of England's crown, and a guaranteed market with the world's largest automaker — into the ground. Working to rule isn't easy but given the right incentive, say, revenge, or survival, it can be successful. Once you get the knack of it, losing someone else's money is easier than punching holes in an inner tube.

GM picked up the tab for the UAW's legal fees in the phony lawsuit for retirees. We saw how that played out. Now it's Delphi's turn to date the "escort" and pay the fancy man. What the trio didn't count on was the fourth stake holder, the rank and file with a fist full of cards and all of them wild.

First rule of the street: Never fight a man who has nothing to lose but his anger. For example, a Vietnam vet who knows the drill: frag or be fragged. SOS is like a phantom at the table because the honchos can't put a collar on it and rein it in and out on command. SOS doesn't have a leader to buy or a structure to undermine. The resistance doesn't need to hold meetings, pass motions, collect dues, and pay dividends. The guerillas don't wear badges, wave flags, or blow trumpets. It's the dog who doesn't bark one must beware of.

All Miller knows for sure is that someone is taking a bite out of his pie every day. Even salaried employees are working against him as they see the writing on the wall — Senior supervisors and engineers will be replaced with rentals. Only top executives in the Rapture Club will be spared the axe.

Miller can't afford to delay much longer. Delphi's last reported 10Q revealed that Delphi mutually agreed with the SEC to extend the statute of limitations against Delphi until April 6th, 2006 — one week after the deadline. The SEC has already dragged its feet too long. We deserve to know the extent of corruption between GM and Delphi before we ratify anything. Why should we pay for their crimes?

The Concession Caucus will spring a concession contract on us sooner than later. The Shoeshiner has already indicated he expects us to take it in the neck. It won't be pretty but they will warn us if we don't comply, all bets are off, and the retirement is in jeopardy.

I got news that isn't news to anyone who's been listening. There is no guarantee. The only promise is that wealth will flow to power. Labor's power is collective. As individuals we don't have a chip to bargain. Which reminds me, I need to apologize.

I stated publicly at the February Union meeting something which I have often reiterated privately, that is, we shouldn't criticize an individual who works voluntary overtime because we do not know what a fellow worker is facing at home. We should be respectful and understand that our coworkers are anxious about their mortgages, their bills, their children, and their health care needs.

In Live Bait & Ammo #63 I wrote: "Either Delphi has a sufficient inventory as a result of all the sucking sissies, or GM has another source for injectors." I was referring to workers who believe that feeding the wolf will keep him away, i.e.,

workers who double up on jobs or break the rules in order to over produce and make the boss happy. But in the context it was reasonable to assume I was blaming members who worked over time. I apologize. Men and women who struggle to provide their families with a decent standard of living don't deserve ridicule. I thank the brother who had the honesty and forthrightness to point out my mistake.

We are entering a period of increased urgency. The March 30 date is neither a guarantee nor a sign of progress for Delphi workers; it's a trip wire and a punji pit. It gives GM-Delphi more time to build the inventory. They had nine months to craft a "consensual" agreement. The only thing we can be sure of is that GM-Delphi is delaying for its own advantage not ours. The length of the strike will be directly proportionate to the size of the inventory. Of the three parties, GM stands to lose the most. Once the inventory runs dry GM will come to the table. We have a practical economic interest in limiting the size of the inventory by working to rule, declining voluntary overtime, taking vacation days and PPA days, conducting a strike vote, and voicing our contention that concessions don't save jobs.

The losses we may sustain in a strike pale in comparison to the losses we face in a "consensual" agreement. If they cut our wages \$10 per hour we will lose \$20-\$25,000 per year. Our pension and health care in retirement may be adversely effected and we may want to hire an independent attorney to review the plan and make sure the liability for pension isn't administered by a dummy company scheduled like Delphi for bankruptcy in the near future.

The UAW appointed three UAW International reps, Joe Spring, David Shoemaker, and Jim King, to oversee the Delphi pension fund. They didn't serve us very well. I don't know why we should trust them a second time. We should trust ourselves, not some porkchopper in Detroit who won't have to live under the contract he negotiated. We should put union officials in their place. Remind them they are reps not leaders. The real leaders are the rank and file, the folks who do the work and pay the dues. We have a right to be informed and to be treated with respect. We have a right to voice our opinion through motions at union meetings and at Conventions. The call letters for the Convention are coming out. Let's send an army of delegates to the Convention to demand No Concessions, No Retreat.

sos, shotwell

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