

Live Bait & Ammo # 64

“These people [Japanese] are very good at connecting the dots. Pickets. Auto Show....Coopersville. Shotwell,” Cole said. [“Is Toyota Scared of this Man?” Grand Rapids Press, 2-10-06]

Few things in life are as amusing as an educated fool. I was standing in line at a book store when I overheard some Japanese gentlemen talking.

“What’s up with this David Cole?”

“Really. He tells the press we are afraid of some factory worker in Coopersville.”

“Where is Coopersville?”

“Who cares? The point is: Cole complains this Shootwell character...”

“Shortwell, with an R.”

“Whatever. Cole complains Showtell gets too much publicity so he runs his mouth to the press and quadruples his publicity over night.”

“Let’s connect the dots.”

“Unknown factory worker. Coopersville. Cole. Press. Television. Notorious.....”

David Cole told the media that he saw some Japanese executives at Cobo Hall look out the window at an information picket across the street. Cole claims he overheard them say that they wouldn’t build a plant in Michigan because they learned that “Gregg Shotwell” organized the picket. At least that was his original story. He has since elaborated but his sources, anonymous

“Japanese executives”, have not been identified and Toyota declined to verify Cole’s story.

Apparently hearsay passes for research at the Center for Automotive Research in Ann Arbor and “news” on WOOD TV.

Cole is a fabricator. It’s safe to assume on January 8, 2006 Japanese executives were busy as always conducting business, not looking out the window like some lazy rich man’s son.

Furthermore, though I have and will continue to be a spokesperson for soldiers of solidarity, I did not organize the event at Cobo Hall on January 8. I wasn’t even there. I was in Lockport, NY at an SOS meeting which I helped to organize. Cole can’t connect his own dots.

I am not the leader of soldiers of solidarity. I am one of many leaders. In fact our motto is,

“We are all leaders.” Cole, the darling son of a former GM president, has no business telling us how to conduct ourselves. GM-Delphi is threatening workers, not academics. We are the ones who stand to lose our homes and everything we ever earned.

Cole told the press, “It’s a very dangerous period.”

Dangerous to who? Cole hasn’t gone under the knife for repetitive stress injuries or contracted industrial disease from exposure to toxic chemicals like freon and metal cutting fluids. Three workers in the Delphi Coopersville plant have contracted brain cancer in recent weeks. Who the hell is David Cole to lecture us about danger?

Cole thinks we should silently go to our graves and give up the health care and pensions we earned. Cole thinks we should silently accept 60% wage cuts so the corporate criminals responsible for Delphi’s failures can reap the benefits of bankruptcy.

Cole is using the hypothetical scenario of Toyota building a plant in Michigan as a smokescreen to divert the public's attention from the real issue which is fraud, mismanagement, and racketeering at GM-Delphi.

Racketeering is a serious allegation. What else can you call it when GM forces Delphi to sell spark plugs below cost. [Lehrer Report, 1-26-06] Or when Delphi Coopersville sells components to China below cost [Bargaining Chairman Randy LeMieux's report at UAW Local 2151 membership meeting February 6, 2006]. We don't need to hire an analyst to figure out why Delphi is claiming bankruptcy in the US and bragging about profitability overseas.

Cole isn't providing the public with legitimate research, he's conducting a smear campaign aimed at undermining the resistance of rank and file members. Cole contends that workers should pay the price for GM-Delphi's crimes and failures for a good reason — he's on GM's payroll. GM pays Cole for regular speaking engagements to captive audiences at PEL conferences [Paid Educational Leave].

We object to the notion that workers should lose everything they ever earned so corporate criminals can reap multimillion dollar bonuses. We refuse to be the patsies. Toyota was adamantly anti union before they ever heard of me.

Rank and file members expect to be attacked by management but Jack White, president of UAW Local 167, had no reason to contribute to the smear campaign. On February 9, Jack White told Wood TV News that my local union president has told me many times to shut up. Jack White lied. No UAW official — Local, Regional, or International — has ever tried to shut me up or restrict my right to free expression and dissent.

Jack White not only slandered me, he slandered the entire UAW by implying that our union represses free speech and dissent. For all its faults the UAW is not a fascist organization. The UAW respects and protects the rights of members to express dissent. On numerous occasions in the past few months International leaders have been questioned by the press about SOS activities.

They have in each instance asserted our right to dissent and noted that dissent is a tradition in the UAW. Not content with slander, Jack White asserted on Wood TV News that I should be brought up on charges for conduct unbecoming a union member.

What sort of charges? Protesting against Delphi's threats to cut our wages, slash our health care, steal our pensions, and liquidate our jobs? Or inciting activism in the rank and file? I am a member in good standing who has paid dues for 27 years. SOS is a Sign Of Solidarity not anti union behavior.

Jack White claimed that I had my own agenda. But I am not the one traveling around the country on the Local's nickel. My union activism comes out of my own pocket. If Toyota is afraid of me, it's because they know that I traveled to Georgetown, KY at my own expense to interview volunteer organizers and write a series of articles about them and for them. [See Live Bait & Ammo #47 and #48 and Truth for Truth Finders at www.gregshotwell.net, and the Labor Notes feature article on Toyota in the September 2004 issue at www.labornotes.org]

Jack White aligned himself with the anti union David Cole and publicly attacked a union brother not on a question of policy but rather a basic human right.

Dissent doesn't destroy democracy, repression does. Leaders who side with management against rank and file activists are the most vile and destructive contagion in our union. I have never taken management's side against a union

member. I have never attacked a fellow union member in defense of an anti union company like Toyota.

Jack White owes every UAW member a public apology for implying that our union punishes members who speak out against corruption and injustice.

If the UAW International allows Jack White's irresponsible comments to stand uncontested, they are complicit. White's threats to bring me up on charges are a violation not only of the UAW Constitution but the National Labor Relations Act and the Labor Management Reporting and Disclosure Act.

Connect the dots. David Cole. Anti Union. Toyota. Anti Union. Jack White.

sos, shotwell

www.soldiersofsolidarity.com

www.futureoftheunion.com

www.uawndm.com

www.gregshotwell.net