

Live Bait & Ammo #187: Shop Talk

I haven't forgotten the factory: dull, dirty, ugly, loud, and dangerous. The shopfloor teemed with angry people who hated their jobs. Every day was face to face, core to core, class conflict. The only successful organizing strategy was—fight the boss and win. I miss it.

Shop talk's never far away in my memory. I still confront in cursive. I never forget the traitors. Maybe that's why I'm so angry. We sold out our children with two tier.

A scab is not the most repugnant of all monikers. Not by a long shot. The traitor promised solidarity and delivered a fractured, hogtied, barbwire-bound, rank and file carcass to the company in exchange for a VEBA scam. Now the Cons are lounging in luxury while the rank and file look forward to a retirement without health insurance. Never forget: the union does not have a legal or moral right to represent the company, ever.

Never forget: the union does not have a legal or moral right to negotiate concessions for retirees, ever. The union cannot legally represent people who aren't working. Retirees don't vote on contracts. Retirees can't even vote for bargaining representatives. One needs support from a corrupt government to pull off a scam like GM and the UAW and VEBA (Voluntary Employee Benefits Association—a tax free, unregulated, insurance investment fund.)

I haven't forgotten the layers of betrayal and the pervasiveness of corruption in the UAW Con Caucus. But after I retired I got distracted by the correlations. Like the old bluesman said, "There's high water everywhere." And the feds have a finger in every pie.

Since the federal government crackdown on opioids, death by overdose has skyrocketed. These evil bastards aren't stupid. They know what they are doing and they got what they wanted: an unregulated market with no overhead, no taxes, no liability, a product that sells itself, and a consumer who buys till he dies, broke and alone. The Black Market is a Capitalist Dream come true.

The talking heads read the script about smugglers south of the border and the danger of immigrants, but we know who's who. Generals, diplomats, private jets, blow through customs like smoke through a smog hog. The anonymous elitists have a vanishing pass. No one inspects their bags. It's like being a UAW member; you pay and they play. Our brothers and sisters got shot up in Afghanistan for nothing. Or was that Vietnam?

Excuse me, not nothing. Somebody special got to bring home Armani suitcases full of dope.

The rank and file get two tier, speedup, wage cut, and union labeled disempowerment. Autoworkers' lives are swapped for profit while office rats like Bob King enrich themselves off Perry Ice Cream workers in upstate New York, among other gifts.

The King of UAW Organizing, never organized anybody Ford didn't tell him to. He was kicked out of the Rouge plant by rank and file workers fed up with his lying crap. Where is he now? How rich and happy do you think he is with his fat retirement and a body that never worked a day on the factory floor? His daddy was head crotch in HR at Ford. Where do you think his loyalties are?

With people who work rather than con others for a living?

If you don't yell, no one will hear you, and if you don't curse like combat, no one will listen because they assume you aren't willing to fight for it. That's just shop talk.

Let's get straight. There's no opioid crisis. There's an opioid profit scam.

US drug policy is driven by capitalism. Drugs don't kill people, laws kill people. In Portugal death by overdose has plummeted to zilch because of government policy. Does the US Congress want to deliver a public health system as safe and effective as Portugal? Hell no, there's no profit in treating citizens like human beings. Criminalize a disease and profit is guaranteed.

This isn't conspiracy theory. It's in plain view. Illegality generates profits in a tax free unregulated market, and people die. Wars grease the profit skids, and people die. A global company goes bankrupt but production and sales are never interrupted, and people die. It isn't ethical, but in the US it's all coded legal by the same one-eyed courts who tell us to believe a corporation is a person.

GM/Delphi didn't declare bankruptcy anywhere else in the world. GM/Delphi got away with that scam in the US because the feds backed them up. And the feds are doing the dirty work again. Workers should trust the feds?

A few UAW officials get thrown under the bus and GM is the good guy? Rory—what's his ass?—Gamble? Is trustworthy? Did I never work a day on the shop floor? Did I never witness the UAW Con Caucus in action at a Constitutional Convention?

GM switched pensions for workers at American Axle to Delphi. People who never worked at Delphi lost their pensions when Delphi declared bankruptcy and moved all production overseas. Which judge rubber stamped an imprimatur on that dirty deal?

Workers don't kill unions. The UAW Administration Caucus kills unions in conjunction with the corpos and the feds. The reason the UAW fails repeatedly to organize a transplant is because workers aren't stupid.

The dumb bells know damn well when you're dumbing down to them, Bob King of Bullshit.

I have interviewed workers at Toyota and Volkswagen during organizing drives. They hate UAW organizers because the smell of cheat on their breath is worse than last night's moonshine, and the aroma of bullshit wasn't coming off of anybody's boots. The stench was treachery, hypocrisy, and grift. The UAW Cons never intended to organize a transplant. And the UAW Con Caucus won't succeed at organizing until the boss tells them to.

In Portugal the government of the people chooses to protect citizens and treat addiction like the public health problem it is instead of a crime. The Portuguese strategy saves lives and stifles illegal profits. Public health and crime prevention are not legitimate goals in the eyes of US statesmen, because a civilized drug policy, just like a civilized labor policy, would benefit sundry workers and deflate a Capitalist Dream—the Black Market.

The Feds, the Corps, and the Cons in the UAW have teamed up to deliver the rank and file to a sham democracy controlled by the Con Caucus. If the Cons win, we can expect more weak contracts, lost organizing drives, and a membership threatened with extinction.

Voting won't be enough to win this battle. It's time for some serious shop talk.

stay solid, shot