

Live Bait & Ammo #62

Whenever someone tells me that Miller has toned down his rhetoric and softened his approach, I recall what Vietnam veterans told me about the jungle when it got real quiet.

Wagoner said it would take GM six months to switch suppliers if the UAW struck Delphi.

Miller called for a cease fire.

Delphi workers from Athens, Alabama to Lockport, NY report management is stockpiling. Workers at plants that supply Delphi report a jump in orders as well. Looks like Miller took a page from Ho Chi Minh.

The facts on the ground lead me to believe that Miller's idea of labor peace is Shoemaker holding his coat while he beats the snot out of a lineworker.

Coincidentally, "soft landing" is street lingo for a quiet fleeing where the mark is too frightened to squeal.

Corporate mouthpieces talk about "restructuring" in the same tone of voice that chicken hawks talk about "collateral damage".

The wheels are greased. Union officials police the peace. No one has heard anything in weeks. Mobilizing@Delphi makes the sound of one hand clapping. I don't need to speculate. I got eyes, man.

I know when the leopard lies down in the grass he's prepared to attack, not live and let live.

In Coopersville Delphi hired twenty new workers. One was a former contract engineer. He came in as an electrician. He doesn't even own tools. A few of the new hires were former supervisors.

One man's hunger is another man's weapon.

Gettelfinger gave GM the largest health care concessions in UAW history. Look what it got us. Plant closings. Job cuts. More threats.

No sooner is one concession made than another one appears. Bill Ford with one hand over his heart and the other in his pants.

2007 contract negotiations have already begun but UAW officials haven't taken a strike vote or asked the rank and file for resolutions. The Concession Caucus says, "We have a plan," but all we have seen so far is an orderly retreat turned into a rout.

If Delphi members had a Benefit Guarantee from GM, it wouldn't be on the table. But apparently it's in negotiation. GM is dictating the terms and Shoemaker is taking shorthand.

The Concession Caucus accuses SOS of being divisive. My favorite accusation is "socialist". The capitalists are eating our lunch every day and we are supposed to be afraid of socialists? GM is partners with Communist China and the Concession Caucus tries to redbait me?

The SOS goal is straightforward: save jobs, pensions, benefits, wages.

Where's the wedge?

If UAW officials don't agree with those goals they should stand up and state their case for concessions publicly. If UAW officials don't agree that workers are worth fighting for, than we should elect delegates to the National Convention who will demand "equality of sacrifice" from the International. Cancel their pensions, cut their wages, slash their health care, and eliminate their jobs.

It's time to ratchet the jack another notch.

Put the backbone back into the UAW.

Delphi workers are facing the bayonet today, but the impact of the attack will be broad and deep. Workers at the Big Three and every supplier in between are staring down the barrel of a long range cannon.

If GM wants to sell cars in America, they'd be wise to treat workers fairly. Our pensions were earned. We secured the investment with our lives. Hours worked is our collateral. The pension fund belongs to us.

After reading my article, "The Answering Machine", in the Uncommon Sense, Tom Seymour asked:

1. Were "Legacy Benefits" earned in the past by the retirees for each car they built?
2. Did GM include that cost in the price of the cars the retirees built?
3. Did the public pay for that cost when they paid for the GM cars?
4. Was any of that money put into a trust fund?
5. Did that trust fund KEEP records?
6. Did GM pay taxes or get tax breaks for the money put in the trust fund?
7. Can a rank and file UAW Member get a written answer to any of these questions?

An auto industry analyst, David Cole, said on the Leher Report [6/26/06], "The union as a traditional adversarial or confrontational party to management is gone, it's dead. The union in collective bargaining negotiations has no ability to define wages and benefits anymore. The market is defining them and the only hope for the union is as a collaborative partner with management." His message couldn't have been better scripted from GM's point of view -- right down to describing the UAW as collaborators.

David Cole is the son of a GM president. David never had to work for a living. His "legacy" is not threatened. GM's favorite son doesn't understand that workers are

consumers and investors. We are the market. We won't work for Chinese wages until GM starts selling cars built in America at Chinese prices.

The same segment of The Leher Report described how GM bought spark plugs from Delphi for an average price of \$1.50, fifty cents below cost (conduct commonly referred to as racketeering), but still fifty cents higher than the Chinese version. What the Leher Report failed to mention is how much Mr. Goodwrench charges American consumers for a spark plug. (I was quoted \$6.49 for an AC/Delco platinum at NAPA). GM not only rips off workers, they rip off consumers.

SOS isn't buying Cole's collaboration crap. Wagoner isn't our daddy. We earned everything we own. We're not "adversarial," we're street wise. SOS intends to extend its reach, unite autoworkers across all sectors of the industry, and raise the level of debate inside and outside the UAW.

We know for a fact that concessions never save jobs. We know in our hearts that two tier isn't a union solution. Two tier is organized fratricide.

It's time to elect delegates to the National Convention who dare to pose the question: Which side are you on? I am not suggesting SOS turn into a slate, an election vehicle for union politicians. We need a militant rank and file organized on the shopfloor and outside the bounds of official union sanction.

What I am saying is this: Work to Rule inside the union just like we do in the factory. Challenge the authority of the Concession Caucus. Raise the ante. Let the International know they will face a guerilla army of No Concession delegates at the Convention in June.

It's not personal. It's just business.

The fiasco at GM and Ford demonstrated that the rank and file must exert control of the ratification process, if we want a valid vote count. Members must demand accountability, full disclosure, and at least a week between the information meeting and the ratification vote.

If the Concession Caucus argues against full disclosure and adequate time to evaluate the contract, we'll know which side they're on. If the Concession Caucus

objects to observers or an independent audit, we'll know they have something to hide.

We've got eyes everywhere.

Delphi members recall that in the '99 agreement we were not informed that all our pension credits were transferred from GM to Delphi. Nor were we informed that the pension credits of International Reps who formerly worked at Delphi stayed with GM. If you vote strictly on the Highlights, you get sucker punched.

Would you buy a house from a realtor who said, "You can't look in the basement"?

Would you buy a car from a dealer said, "You can't look under the hood"?

Vote No until you Know the Whole Truth.

We've seen the two tier supplement that the Concession Caucus negotiated for new hires at Delphi and didn't permit anyone to ratify. \$14 per hour. No COLA for four years. 10% copays. No defined pension. The new hires don't even get insurance for the first seven months. That's not a union contract, it's a company mandate.

The Concession Caucus will try to divide us again. That's not speculation, it's historical projection, an entrenched pattern. They drove a wedge between new hires and high seniority workers; between assembly workers and parts workers; between active and retired members; between liberals and conservatives.

We can expect more of the same.

Mark my words. At some point the Concession Caucus will present a contract that saves some at the expense of others. They will throw us up against the wall of a court deadline. A deadline that has already been postponed twice and could just as easily be postponed again. A rush job is a con job. Don't take the bait.

Any proposal that splits the union is unacceptable. Burning bridges is not in our self interest. Gettelfinger raised copays on retirees in the middle of the contract. What do you think he will do in 2007? Fight for retirees? Hold the line on health care? Protect new hires?

Management likes to throw money at problems. We need to create a problem for management to throw money at: a big problem, namely, production.

Put the backbone back into the UAW. No Concessions, No Remorse.

VOTE NO UNTIL YOU KNOW THE WHOLE TRUTH
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