

Live Bait & Ammo# 154: Whipsawing is an STD

The UAW International's plan to whipsaw GM stamping plants into submission begins at UAW Local 23 in Indianapolis, Indiana.

The plant is scheduled to be closed. J.D. Norman, an independent metal fabricator, offered to buy the plant but refused to honor the current contract's successor clause.

Norman wants to cut compensation in half.

Local union members passed a motion affirming their decision to uphold solidarity with other stamping plants in the GM-UAW system and honor the master agreement. They'd rather shut down than act like scabs. That motion could be overturned by a two-thirds majority, but under the leadership of the new UAW International president, Bob King, union democracy can apparently be swept under the rug. King doesn't respect the rank & file. He prefers to carry water for J.D. Norman.

The UAW Constitution forbids any union official from negotiating with an employer without approval of the membership. But under Bob King's leadership the UAW Constitution should only be used to control and manipulate workers.

The UAW International went behind the backs of the members and their elected Bargaining Chairman, Greg Clark, and negotiated a cut rate contract with J.D. Norman.

In defiance of the local union, the UAW Constitution, and the fundamental union principle of solidarity, Bob King demands that members vote to break the master agreement at a special meeting this Sunday and ratify the scab contract on Monday.

All UAW members are threatened by Bob King's arrogant behavior, but members at stamping plants should feel particularly offended. The Indianapolis plant has 1.2 million square feet to fill. As soon as the domino falls in Indianapolis, Bob King's henchman will be knocking on other local union doors and demanding wage cuts. Submit, or GM will transfer your work to J.D. Norman, a shop represented by the new UAW where members work for non union wages under non union work rules.

Under the tentative agreement workers will get less than if the plant closed and the workers transferred to other GM plants with the enhanced relocation allowance rewarded to sites under closed plant status.

Plus, GM is eager to replace veterans with second tier new hires and thus likely to offer retirement incentives as soon as possible after they get the government off their backs. The prospect of paying new hires half the wage and no pension turns retirement incentives into investments for GM. The pay off kicks back in less than a year and compounds faster than a trip hammer every week thereafter.

Members at Local 23 have a personal financial interest in rejecting the concession contract with J.D. Norman. All UAW members have a personal financial interest in supporting Greg Clark and the members of Local 23 in their struggle to resist Bob King's attempt to break the master agreement and decimate UAW solidarity.

If King succeeds at lowering union standards in Indianapolis, he will attack other UAW locals with the same tactic. The whipsawing will spread like a socially transmitted disease.

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