

Live Bait & Ammo # 60

GM-Delphi's hired gun, Steve "the Hatchet" Miller, is playing coy. He copped a new attitude, pulled his death threat off the table, and vowed silence until GM, Delphi, and the UAW can work out a "consensual" agreement.

He must think we don't know a whisper from a snake in the grass.

Rope-a-dope worked for Muhammad Ali but Miller is not the King of the Ring, he's a sociopathic schemer, a con man, a creep. Soldiers of Solidarity [SOS] won't drop their guards or stand down. We know his history. We know his character. Miller doesn't negotiate. He breaks contracts, bankrupts companies, dumps pension and health care responsibilities onto tax payers, and rips off investors. The only way to repel brute force is with greater force.

Miller isn't backing down, he's maneuvering. Anyone who believes otherwise is ignoring the fact that GM-Delphi is building an inventory and preparing for a long strike. A strike GM-Delphi will provoke when they are good and ready.

GM-Delphi is damn good and ready. The showdown has been a long time coming. The only one who doesn't appear ready is Gettelfinger. The Concession Caucus has done nothing to prepare the rank and file for a confrontation that appears inevitable. Maybe that's the plan the CC has been alluding to: the we-were-caught-by-surprise plan. Remember how Shoemaker was surprised by the spin-off, and surprised by the bankruptcy. What will surprise him next?

I don't believe in speculation. I study history, patterns of behavior, and the facts on the ground such as vehicles on lots and parts stashed in filing cabinets. That's right, in Coopersville screw machine operators discovered filing cabinets stripped of their paper piles and jam packed with components. Apparently, there was no where else left to stash the over supply. Union members working over time are extending their days on the picket line.

Production isn't exceeding demand because GM-Delphi wants to drive down prices. Management wants to drive down wages. The strategy isn't complicated. A controlled strike is needed to appease irate union members.

The fix is in.

The Concession Caucus has a long history of appeasement and compromise. Contrary to Doug Fraser's comments in the Automotive News ["UAW Rebels Gain Clout in Delphi Fight" by David Barkholz, 12/12/05] concessions in the 1980's were not "pragmatic". We have proof.

The UAW lost more than half its membership while the Canadian Auto Workers doubled in size after splitting with the UAW because the CAW refused to compromise. Only a company-union man could call that result "pragmatic". The UAW membership never won an iota of job security from concessions. To the contrary, we lost 800,000 jobs while the Big Three churned out more vehicles than ever. Market share went down, but productivity went up. We produce more vehicles with half the number of workers. Now the final payoff for that compromise is due.

Both GM and Delphi have more plants overseas than they do in the USA. While we were busy buying American, GM-Delphi transferred all the money they saved on concessions overseas. And you wonder why they advocate free trade? The plan to evade legacy costs and become an importer to America has been in the shuffle for a long time.

Shitcan the rhetoric and study the action. The CC chose not to enforce the Secure Employment Level. They chose to side with their corporate partners year after year. As a result UAW membership declined. That's not pragmatism, it's collusion.

Last spring syndicated columnist, Rick Haglund, reported that Dale Buss writing for the anti union Mackinac Center for Public Policy "gushes that the cooperative attitude of Fraser and Bieber pales in comparison to the UAW's newest strategy under President Ron Gettelfinger." ["UAW Gets Praise from Unlikely Source" - Grand Rapids Press - 3/2/05]

How should we assess a union leader who makes our enemies gush with praise?

Miller may be the King of Crap but Gettelfinger is the King of Concessions. In the Delphi-UAW Supplement signed on April 29, 2004 the Concession Caucus agreed

that \$14 per hour was fair pay. After four years at that rate and no COLA, no defined pension, and increased co-pays on health care, an auto worker with a family would be on food stamps.

What can Delphi-UAW members expect now?

More of the same.

Disregard opinion. Look at the facts.

In 2003 Gettelfinger promised to hold the line on health care. In 2005 he promised not to open the GM contract. He hasn't made any promises to Delphi-UAW members. It's just as well. His word isn't worth a rat's fur.

UAW members at both Ford and GM are questioning how the ratification vote on health care concessions was handled. Members complained that they were not adequately informed, nor given time to consider the consequences. Bargaining Committees counted ballots at some locals. Allegedly, no shows were counted as yes votes. Take heed. A lesson that isn't applied isn't learned.

Delphi members who want a fair shake should take steps to ensure that those irregularities are not repeated. Go to your January membership meetings and pass motions demanding that:

- (1.) No ratification vote shall take place less than a week after the information meetings.
- (2.) Ratification shall be conducted and tabulated by the Election Committee if an independent audit is unaffordable.
- (3.) The ratification procedure shall permit at least two rank and file members to observe the process at all times and to video record the process.
- (4.) The actual contract changes, not just the "Highlights", shall be scanned and posted online for all to read during the one week waiting period.

We have a legal right to an informed vote. The Highlights will focus on the money but GM-Delphi's long term goal is to bust the union. It's not just about the money. It's a battle over who controls the conditions of our labor -- union or management. A non grievable, no excuse accepted attendance policy means favoritism will rule. The Concession Contract will erase lines of demarcation and permit unlimited

outsourcing. Seniority will be meaningless. Older workers will be reduced to walking targets.

No one who attends "UAW Leadership Conferences" which are really Concession Caucus meetings should be permitted to count ratification votes as they have an inherent conflict of interest. The Concession Caucus always holds meetings after UAW Leadership Conferences. Local Unions pay travel, expenses, and lost time for officials to attend these fake state of the business reports which are in effect a legal foil for the Concession Caucus to conspire on our nickel. At the last leadership conference the Concession Caucus told the assembled officials which International officers were chosen for "election" at the Constitutional Convention in June 2006.

It's vitally important that rank and file members prepare themselves for the fight of their lives or we may very well lose it all. The Concession Caucus will try to split the membership along the lines of old and new, active and retired, skilled and unskilled, as if self interest and solidarity were opposed.

SOS has an alternative vision and a plan of action. On January 22, SOS will hold a meeting in Troy, MI restricted to active Delphi union members. Plant ID cards will be checked at the door. We want to get down to the brass tacks of preparing for strike actions, working to rule, and other "protected concerted activities" at the point of production. Our goal is to resist concessions and exert rank and file power. The meeting will be held at:

Polish American Cultural Center
2975 E. Maple Rd. (UAW/Delphi Members entrance faces Dequindre St.)
Troy, MI 48083

On January 23, we will picket Delphi Headquarters and demand our legal right to examine the annual audit of the pension. We ask retirees to support the picket and active workers to use vacation days to bring our message directly to the source of the problem. Go to [soldiersofsolidarity](http://soldiersofsolidarity.com) for updates on SOS events.

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