

## Live Bait & Ammo & 109: Partnership Forever

The Concession Caucus agreed to give Delphi CEO, Steve Miller, almost everything he wanted. Miller chopped off the pension, sliced the wages, diced the benefits, shut or sold 75% of plants in the US, and transferred assets overseas without spilling the tempest in Gettelfinger's tea pot.

I say "almost" everything because Miller wanted the retirees to die and they didn't comply.

Despite the splurge of concessions Miller burrowed deeper into debt. Delphi lost \$589 million in the first quarter of 2008 which is \$56 million more than in the same quarter last year. Miller has failed to exit bankruptcy or devise an orderly retreat from mismanagement.

### **Can it be possible that workers aren't the problem?**

The morass of fraud, mismanagement, and racketeering at Delphi lent Miller a juicy spectacle for his look-at-me splash. But at the climax, the sixty-six year old "Turnaround Kid" fell on his pompous ass.

Miller's book, *"The Turnaround Kid: What I learned Rescuing America's Most Troubled Companies"*, is a chest thumper, but critics are too embarrassed— by its lack of literary merit, meager business acumen, evident blunders of leadership, and the cold shoulder he gave his dying wife— to skewer the most salient fact of his bombast: Miller is literally not worth a buck.

Miller cut the reward for productive work in half and still can't show a profit. No wonder Delphi hasn't attracted investors. Smart money wants the "Turnaround Kid" turned out.

**American Axle CEO Dick Dauch is following in Miller's footsteps.** American Axle like Delphi was a GM spin off with sweetheart contracts; a mother lode of ready made tools, patents, designs, and supplier networks; and an experienced workforce.

As with Delphi the Con Caucus delivered a two-tier, union shattering contract to Dauch's door in 2004. In mid contract the Cons agreed to help Dauch close the Buffalo plant in violation of the 2004 agreement. Now the old dog is back for the only trick he knows. Gettelfinger's show of surprise is coy as the grin on a coyote in heat. He'd love another little VEBA in his pack.

Given guaranteed profit margins from GM, American Axle was always a money maker. But GM CEO Rick Wagoner wants a discount and Dauch isn't about to take it out of his bonus. He'd rather shoot a race horse. Right after GM's \$200 million offer to "help with buyouts", Dauch decided to close a fourth plant. [Buffalo, Tonawanda, Detroit Forge, Cheektowaga]

Wagoner must get a kick out of watching Gettelfinger "throw tantrums" ["The Turnaround Kid"]. How else explain why Wagoner disperses money like a drunk tossing dollars at a stripper?

If GM wanted to resolve the strike, Wagoner could threaten to resource axles and make sure that Dauch would never play hard ball at their expense again.

Instead, **Dauch is doing Wagoner's bidding by stripping more jobs from the UAW.**

This war of attrition may have an unintended consequence. US automakers are deep sixing their most loyal customers. Perhaps they expect us to retrain in other fields and stay loyal to the brand. But resentment, not fealty, has been seared into our hearts.

We've learned to hate our employers for good reason. They're treacherous. And the jobs are dull, dirty, ugly, loud, and overloaded. Line workers are wearing out faster than boots in sand.

The strikes at American Axle, Lansing, and Fairfax may backfire in bargainers' faces. Strikes lead to expectations. Bargainers can't come back to strikers who've lost wages and stockpiled anger with the same old schtick: "It's worse than what you had before, but better than the company initially offered." That crap won't fly. It won't crawl out of the union hall alive.

The Cons can "postpone" the battle against American Axle, but they can't postpone the war on workers or play coy about their partnership forever.

sos, GreggShotwell@aol.com

[www.soldiersofsolidarity.com](http://www.soldiersofsolidarity.com)

[www.factoryrat.com](http://www.factoryrat.com)

[www.futureoftheunion.com](http://www.futureoftheunion.com)

Labor Donated