

# A Letter to Fidel

Dear Fidel:

I read the transcript of your twenty million word speech to the Cuban people denouncing the multi-trillion dollar transfer of wealth from the working class to the capitalists and the capitulation of labor union leaders.

Basically, I agree with you, but before I ingratiate myself further I'd like to suggest that you invest in an Answering Machine. I mean, twenty million words without a teleprompter?

An Answering Machine like I have would quadruple your cigar time. Union members call, the Press calls, whoever, the Machine says, "No Comment" and I'm off the hook. The only time I answer is when the president of some company calls and then I just say, "Yes, sir." In either case, two words, not twenty million. You see?

But believe me, Fidel, I'm in totalitarian agreement with you about the extravagance of the latest capitalist crime. They are draining the treasury dry and there's really not much for a labor leader to do anymore except help keep the workers orderly while the companies eliminate jobs, slash wages, and ship the pension fund to a Swiss bank account. I mean, a comrade has to eat and provide for his retirement which brings me to my next point.

I need a place to stay. I think they call it sanctuary. I have body guards to protect me from homicidal union members but even the B.G.s are acting suspicious and I pay them. You, on the other hand, can afford to snub your nose at Del Monte, you have an army, a police force, a secret service, an underground network of snitches. You can throw gadflies in jail, pull out their fingernails so they can't type anymore, and erase their names from public record. But what do I have? I have to build a corral of pomp with picards every four years and drum roll delegates into applauding everything I want. —\$75 million here, \$200 million there—.

I'm not complaining, it's easy work,  
but the fact is, unlike you, I have to retire next year  
and I don't have anywhere to go.  
You have an island, an army. What do I have?  
A country club in northern Michigan  
that laid off autoworkers can't afford  
which only serves to piss them off.  
How can I concentrate on my putt knowing  
how many autoworkers with scopes on their rifles  
are in deer blinds overlooking the greens?

Sure, I'm rolling in payoffs, just like you, but  
it's not like I can blow my wad at the crap tables in Vegas.  
I need some cover which is where you come in.  
Here's the deal. I make inflammatory remarks about  
nationalizing the auto industry at the next convention  
and that blowhard Corker from Tennessee  
comes apart at the seams  
and accuses me of being a communist.  
I flee to Cuba and you give me asylum and  
my legacy as a tough cigar smoking union leader is secure.

What do you get?  
Beside me and my millions which I will be blowing  
at the crap tables in Havana, I will teach you  
the perfect Ponzi scheme.  
You see, Ponzi schemes always fail at some point because  
more investors demand returns than there are new investors  
forking over their bucks. But here's how I run it.  
I convince workers that all they have to do to save their jobs  
is make concessions. It's the gift that keeps on giving.  
The trough has no bottom. I'll fill you in on the details but  
first I need to answer my Answering Machine.  
It's Allan Mulally, the head honcho at Ford.  
I'll get right back to you.

Viva la Revolution,  
Comrade Ron.

(by Gregg Shotwell, sos)