

The tale of two tax returns: 1988 and 2010

Letter from a GM Lordstown worker

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The following letter was sent to the WSWS Autoworker Newsletter by a third-generation autoworker at GM's Lordstown Assembly Plant in Ohio.

I'm a third-generation autoworker who was raised in the UAW. My wife is the same way. But let me take you back to the year 2008.

As a laid-off autoworker things were tough. I had only been hired a couple months and poof, my job was gone. I quickly went looking for work. Most would laugh off my resume because I worked for the "Lazy 3," as they called it. I offered my work free of charge one day to get in at a job where I earned \$11 per hour for a 10-12 hour day.

Sadly during that time I lost my grandmother. My papa had passed in 1988. I was renting a crap apartment paying way too much when my family offered me a deal. Pick up the rest of my grandparents' house loan, utilities, property taxes, etc., and you can live there.

Gee whiz, what a deal for me, except my grandmother saved everything and damn do I mean everything. The house was jam-packed with everything from magazines to yarn. I even found a stash of my parents' booze from their wedding reception somewhere in the house! I was allowed to stay minus the house note if I sifted and sorted, saved and threw away dumpster after dumpster.

I came across a box that was titled, "Tax returns," so, being nosy, I looked. Why not? I had just worked my first full year at GM without layoff and it felt damn good. Until I saw the 1988 tax return for my grandfather, who, in his defense did work in the repair zone so overtime was readily available.

In 1988, working 7 and a half months before his death, he made more than I did 22 years later. That should send a chill down your spine. It really did to

mine. I had no words. I was in shock. They made me feel like I was lucky to be working, like I owed the company and union something. Yes, I will admit I'm lucky to have a weekly paycheck, but that's about it.

Tier ones, ask yourself how much farther did your money go seven, eight, nine, or hell, 10 years ago, because that's the last time you saw a wage increase. Tier twos, hell, I just told you my grandfather made more working 7 and a half months in 1988 than I did in all of 2010. Not to mention Ford and GM have just posted the largest profit years ever. I think it's time for a real raise now...

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