

WHO KILLED THE COMBUSTION CAR?

I have to admit, it's pretty gloomy in MI right now. Suppliers are doing quarterly plans—but putting a giant asterisk on the plan saying "If GM fails, we don't know WTF happens." Ford is trying to anticipate how they can chase down and reclaim the tools from dying suppliers in time to keep their own supply chain alive. And a local environmentally-focused pol and I started plotting yesterday to turn MI into the beacon of new agriculture—not just because we've got the foundation to do so, not just because we need to think about what to do when our economy dies completely, but out of spite at the Californians who seem ready to jettison the Midwest and its jobs of late (soon their dying way of irrigation-dependent industrial Ag will be begging MI for a bailout!).

So it's tough getting back on the automobile beat, when I can just blithely read tea leaves in the Blago mess. That said, readers are rightly kicking me in the ass for avoiding this very important subject. So I'm watching an empty Senate on CSPAN 2 and making a list: a list of all those who, either out of self-interest or because they are salivating to bust the union, have decided to let the American auto industry—and with it, the economy more generally—die.

That list starts, of course, with the self-interested union-busters: Richard Shelby, Bob Corker, Jeff Sessions. Mitch McConnell has officially jumped onto the union-busting Japanese SUV, though it goes against the interest of a goodly number of his constituents. And Jim DeMint seems anxious to jump to the head of this class, with his call to free car companies from the "barnacles of unionism wrapped around their necks."

Fuck you, Jim DeMint.

But I am taking a perverse kind of solace out of the discovery that the guy who's on top of all my other shit lists is on top of this one too.

Dick Cheney.

You see, Dick went to Congress to try to get them on board with the idea of saving the auto industry. And that made it worse.

Yesterday, [in spite of Cheney's similar failure at rallying support for the financial bailout in September] White House nevertheless dispatched Bolten and Cheney to meet with Senate Republicans about the auto bailout plan, where they "heard a barrage of criticism – and offered few satisfying answers." "They probably left with less support than they came in with," said Sen. Bob Corker (R-TN). Sen. John Sununu (R-NH) said that Bolten and Cheney were unconvincing, admitting "that the bill wasn't as strong as they would have liked.

Dick Cheney. Your one stop object of blame for all the US' failures in the last eight years.

There is a tiny bright spot in this (we need it here in MI, we're short on bright spots in the winter, which is the biggest problem with my new Ag plot).

It is increasingly clear that if this bridge loan fails, the responsibility will ultimately rest with George Bush, and particularly his refusal to let Treasury or the Fed take any actions directly, which wouldn't require any Congressional action. As failure looks more likely, I think it more likely that Bush will be forced to reverse that stance.

A pity that the union-busting assholes like Jim DeMint—and not a principled stand from Democrats in Congress—would be what brings that about.