FINAL OFFER

(Music)

**Male Singer**

Foot on the gas  
Hand on the wheel  
Goin' to get lost in the city.  
Spend my week on the line  
Nickels and dimes  
I'm not looking for pity.  
Money in the tank  
Not much in the bank  
My baby thinks I'm getting richer,  
But I've been workin' so hard  
In the big man's yard  
I'm thinkin' maybe maybe I'll get you.  
Road block  
I think we're headin' for a road block  
Road block  
I think we're headin' for a road block.  
Road block  
I think we're headin' for a road block.  
I'm going to bust right through, yeah.  
To you.

**Worker**

That's for your strike vote this Sunday. We'd appreciate it if ah you came over Sunday.

Road block  
I think we're headin' for a road block.  
Road block  
I think we're headin' for a road block.  
Road block  
I think we're headin' for a road block.
I'm goin' to bust right through, yeah.
To you.

**Narrator**

Once every three years, Canada's auto workers send their union representatives to Toronto, to negotiate a new contract with the General Motors Corporation. As the Canadian section of the United Auto Workers' Union is setting up offices in the Royal York Hotel, no one expects the negotiations to result in anything extraordinary. But before the 1984 talks are over, one of North America's most powerful industrial unions will have been shaken to its very foundation.

**Nickerson**

We're lucky we got out there on the Canadian one.

**Narrator**

At the center of the talks is Robert White, 49 year old director of the union's Canadian section.

**White**

Use these.

**Narrator**

In White's inner circle are his two administrative assistants, Buzz Hargrove and Bob Nickerson.

**White**

Now what problem -- where they eventually end up.

**Narrator**

And his chief economist, Sam Guindon, the architect of White's policies.

**Guindon**

Not a job security plan. UAW.
Narrator
And across the border from them, on the other end of a telephone line, Union President, Owen Bieber.

White
I came .. yeah, I came back from the officers' meeting. I told the guys we have the flexibility. I pushed it past the council. I'm .. I'm pushing the deadline past the ratification of G.M. Now, I mean, I went through this for Chrysler and the God damn plants went nuts on us the last time. And, you know, these guys ...

Narrator
White has a reputation as a maverick inside the Union. As Canadian Director, White still has to get authorization from the International U.A.W. president in Detroit before he can finalize his strike deadline. It irritates the independent-minded White.

White
I .. I can't do that, Owen. I mean I got two committees over here. I've got national agreements. We've been sitting waiting. Why I .... it's just going to cause all kinds of hell over here because it's taken so long. I mean it's going to make it tight but I'll do it. I'll do it on the 17th. Okay. Bye bye. Nah .. tried to push me off to that 22nd.

Nickerson
Fourth call cri... crazy. Can't do it. Okay?

White
Yep. 17th.

Nickerson
We go tomorrow?

White
Go tomorrow.
Narrator
Union boss, Owen Bieber, has given the authorization. Tomorrow, White will announce October 17th as the strike deadline. White's relations with the International Union have been strained ever since he became Canadian Director in 1978. He's a man who likes to make his own decisions and he chafes whenever the Americans interfere.

Secretary
Bob?

White
Yeah?

Secretary
Owen wants you to call him right back.

White
(Chuckle) Go get 'im. Now what's important now. Maybe he wants me to hold the announcement.

Secretary
Owen, just a minute.

White
Hi. Yes. Yeah. Probably be about noon tomorrow. Yeah. Bye bye. Yeah. Just he wants to know my time so's he notifies the board members. That's fair. I don't have any problem with that. Need..... I understand Owen's position. He's..

Narrator
Privately White has been anxious about the upcoming talks.

White
... complicated with having to deal with ...
Motors

Narrator
But after weeks of sitting around waiting, White is relieved to be getting on with it.

White
Have to go to Ottawa, Saturday, for the NDP meeting. Sunday I'm going to run in the ..

Secretary
Celebrity Chase for Charity.

White
Celebrity Chase for Charity. Monday, we're going to go to work. We're going to finally get our hands on the steering wheel. Our foot on the gas and get the money in the tank.

Narrator
In Canadian auto towns like Oshawa, Ontario, Bob White has become something of a hero. At a time when organized labor everywhere is under attack, White has steadfastly refused to make concessions. When he asks his members' support to call a strike if he has to, the outcome is more or less inevitable. Still, someone in Phil Bennet's position is bound to worry.

Bennet
I'm like a pregnant father.

Narrator
Bennet is the political boss of Oshawa. Home of the U.A.W. largest and most fractious local. He is also Chairman of the Union's master negotiation committee.

Bennet
94.3 percent in favour of strike.
Narrator
The need for collective bargaining originates in places like G.M. South Plant in Oshawa where, for generations, workers and managers have perceived each other as enemies.

Weslak
It's not one big happy family like you would like to think it is. No. Oh, I would say it's kinda that way, yes. Worker versus the company - worker versus the foreman. I would think so.

Morris
Hello Mel? Could you get ahold of Tommy. We're out of about 4 valances down on the line.

Narrator
In one section of the South Plant assembly line, G.M. management is embodied for foreman Fred Morris, a hard-nosed manager of the old school.

Morris
Yeah, I know. I seen 'im earlier, but I can't find 'im right now.

Narrator
Confrontations erupt almost every day on Morris's line. Each one heightens the barrier between the two sides.

Johnson
We had no fights for a while .........

Narrator
Danny Johnson is an amateur weightlifter who assembles cars at the back of the line. He and Morris have been at odds for months. Now, the foreman wants to move him. Danny doesn't want to go.
Johnson
And the contract states any man coming off of .. let me see here, I believe it's medical reasons, personal reasons, .......... Page 149, Paragraph 45. Uh - man is entitled to his job when he returns. Now Fred tried to give me another job. So I .. ha ha .. he wants to move me up by the office - to keep an eye on me. We don't see eye to eye.

Morris
One time we used to be able to take the guy, if he was having troubles like that, or we figured he was givin' us a hard time, we could maybe put him on a job that wasn't so nice and maybe they'd get the message that, you know, that that's kind of the old-fashioned way of it always worked. You can't do that anymore, there's .. the rules changed enough that we can't do that.

Johnson
He wants to keep an eye on me up front. Down here - this is where I like to be. Down here with the guys. Up there I'm right in front of his office.

Narrator
Complex work rules may mean that Morris can no longer order Johnson to move. But Morris has other ways of exerting his authority.

Blakeney
I'm more or less the .. here to ..

Narrator
Brian Blakeney is the group leader ...

Blakeney
... to answer ....

Narrator
.. although he's a union member, he works for Morris.
Motors

Blakeney
... to their needs, eh? Since they're tied to the line, and uh they can't leave the line, so they need somebody to ah fetch things for them, get things for them. To look after them. More or less to just like a babysitter would do. To watch over them.

Narrator
One of Blakeney's duties is to come to the aid of workers who need to urinate. When a man needs to be relieved, he rings a bell, and Blakeney comes running to replace him. Usually. Danny has been ringing the bell but no one has answered.

Johnson
He let two men go to the washroom, no questions asked. Right? Obviously must be a change in policy here.

Morris
All right.

Johnson
Good for one but not the other.

Narrator
Bickering about when you can and cannot go to the bathroom may seem absurd, but it demonstrates how ridigly controlled men's lives are working the line.

Morris
Put another call in for Dan Johnson.

Narrator
Within minutes the District Committee man arrives to take Danny's grievance.

I can't work .. like I'm a prisoner in a jail.
I'm not giving him the slightest edge -- I want to fight this on his grounds, by the book.

**Narrator**
The nature of the assembly line virtually dictates that workers view management as their adversaries. At the bargaining table, Bob White fights for increased benefits. On the shop floor, the committee man sees to it those benefits are protected. But every passing year the conflict thus becomes more entrenched.

**Blakeney**
So what was happening over ....

**Narrator**
Within a few days there were signs of rebellion on the line. Siding with Danny, the men start ringing their bells. Some even leave the line.

**Morris**
One, two, three, four, five first aids. One, two, three, four, five, six .......... eh? Gettin' pretty heavy.

**Blakeney**
Yeah.

**Morris**
All in ... all in around the same time. Just before dinner there ..

**Blakeney**
Yep.

**Morris**
.. the whole bunch of them wanted to go. Well you can't do all that too. But that shouldn't .. that's .. that's not normal.

Is that ours?
Blakeney
Yeah.

Morris
Well. Better see what it is, I guess.

Blakeney
You ring? Who rang the buzzer?

Narrator
With things heating up in the plant, union committee man Jeff Lotte arrives at Fred Morris' office.

Morris
You know it. Leave the group.

Yep. Not puttin' up with you anymore.

Lotte
Tell me, if I wait, by 45 minutes the guy doesn't have to stand.

Morris
Leave Jeff.

Lotte
No guy has to stand down there 45..

Morris
Leave.

Lotte
.. fuckin' minutes
Morris
Leave. Leave.

Lotte
.. to go to the washroom.

Morris
Leave. You caused it.

Lotte
You caused it because because I told you you need another fuckin' group leader in this group.

Morris
Are you are you goin' to leave?

Lotte
And you're the one that was opposed to it.

Morris
I'm askin' you to leave. You gonna leave?

Lotte
You're the one to know. You're the one that was fuckin' opposed to it. I'm not leavin' till I find out what the hell you're going to do about the problem.

Morris
Come down to my office for a minute.

Lotte
This isn't one - this has been five guys in a week.

Narrator
Ignoring the committee man, Morris waits for his superior to arrive.
Lotte
I can ..I can take you down and show you four guys that have got to wait 45 minutes to go to the can. There's one fellow right over.... right over there that has never walked off his job. Last week he put in a call for relief, waited 45 minutes, went upstairs to the can, came back and Fred goes over and gives gives him hell for walkin' off the job. I had another fellow out the back that had to wait 45 minutes.

Manager
I'll talk to Freddie and I'll talk to the relief man .. er ah the group leader, but that's about all I can do. Right at the moment.

Narrator
Conflicts like these have helped put the North American auto industry in crisis. At G.M., management believes that it's time for a change.

Lotte
He's got to wait .. there's another fellow right over there, you haven't had any problems wth him.

Narrator
Ever worried about losing money and markets, they have decided that 1984 is the year to convince workers that their well-being and the company's well-being are one and the same.

Lotte
... thirty minutes.

Oh yeah ...

Narrator
After years of distrust, workers are skeptical, wary. Across the Detroit River at G.M. world headquarters, Company Chairman, Roger Smith, is determined to use the upcoming negotiations to radically alter labor management relations
at G.M.

Smith
I'll tell you it makes the jobs more interesting. It makes .. you know .. when you make a contribution to anything you feel better about it. I .. I think.
There. Put it on there the end of that.

Narrator
One of Smith's priorities is a profit-sharing wage scheme that is intended to force workers to share economic risks with management. In good times workers get generous bonuses. In bad times, their wages shrink. August 29th Dearborn, Michigan - Bob White attends a meeting of the UAW's officers to examine the details of a new American contract which the union and the company are close to signing.

Board Members
'Lo Ray.

Hello Joe.

Robert. How are you? Good to see you.

Welcome to United States.

White
Thank you. Thank you.

Welcome to the land where there's no money, right? According to the corporation?

Narrator
What he sees he doesn't like. The new American contract signals the end of guaranteed annual hourly wage increases.
White
The problem I see is the whole direction that pro... not the amounts or anything, it's just the direction the corporation wants to take. And I think it's trying to set a stage for the future.

Narrator
Union President, Owen Bieber, is a man with a problem. Almost a hundred thousand of his members are still on layoff. American jobs continue to be exported overseas. G.M. is saying American labor is just too expensive. Under the circumstances Bieber finds it hard to argue. In an historic turnaround, he agrees to G.M.'s profit sharing scheme, effectively ending the guaranteed hourly wage increases that have been a part of the union's tradition for years.

Returning to the Royal York to meet with his inner circle, White spells out how the new American contract will affect the Canadian talks.

White
You look at the direction this takes, no increases in the second and third year. To say we would have a problem, I think, will be a slight understatement.

Narrator
In the U.S., Bieber has sacrificed hourly wage increases for guaranteed job security. It's a trade-off the Canadians don't feel compelled to accept.

Clancy
They've had a lot of guys that have been out of work for a lot longer than our guys have been out of work and that makes all the difference.

White
It's a very important principle.

Narrator
Canadian auto workers are fully employed. So the union leadership sees no
reason to abandon traditional wage increases.

Guindon
We're just looking at this in terms of some straight numbers.

Narrator
But keeping those increases will not only pit them against General Motors, it'll pit them against the union leadership in the U.S. as well.

White
No question. The money's a problem for us. There isn't any question. I mean this is not ratifiable.

Bennet
We've got a hard fight ahead of us.

Narrator
If the 1984 talks turn into a brawl, Bob White will be exchanging blows with Rod Andrew, chief negotiator for G.M. Canada. Born in Dayton, Ohio, Andrew is a former professional baseball player. Like Bob White, he is also the son of working people.

White respects Rod Andrew. He believes that Andrew, unlike most American executives, understands Canadian realities. In fact, White takes pleasure in having taught Andrew about some of those realities.

White
For 25 bucks. Less than it cost you for dinner last night, right? You are cheaper than I thought you were.

Andrew
All right, all right.

(Laughter)
Narrator
With a revolutionary new U.S. contract almost settled in Detroit, serious negotiations get under way in Toronto. Straight off, White warns Andrew not to bring the American deal to Canada.

White
I want to tell you the direction of that proposal in terms of the areas it's going in. It's completely opposite to where we intend to go in Canada. If we start to see that kind of an indication across this table, that that's the direction that G.M. of Canada wants to go, then I can tell you we are headed for a confrontation.

Andrew
We've made money. There's no question about it. And I can understand your apprehension about what you saw and what you saw come across the table in the United States. But there's there is also no question in my mind that we're not at a position where we're so stable that we can return to the things that we've done in the past. Because there is strict competition still out there. We're not on our own. We're not as viable as everybody thinks we are. What we're doing ...

Narrator
G.M., successful at getting what it wanted in the U.S., is determined to do the same in Canada. Although his company has recovered financially, Rod Andrew will attempt to convince the Canadians that G.M.'s profitability is fragile.

Andrew
Okay, thanks.

Negotiator
And Phil, you'll call me after the meetings and we can set up some firm schedules.
Narrator
Bob White and the auto workers he represents will be a hard sell. Since its inception in 1936, the U.A.W. has negotiated contracts which have steadily transformed its membership into an industrial elite. Auto workers believe that high pay is their just reward for the tedium of working on the line. And they protect their rights zealously. With a strike looming, a routine line speed-up immediately excites resistance.

Morris
Okay Kevin, try this one, eh? What do you mean no?

Worker
I don't know if you heard to well. I want a lead man here and I want a time here no one'd be .... if I do that.

Morris
Look, I'm asking you to do that job.

Worker
Well why -- can't we have to do anything.

Morris
Brian! Do that job there and I want him in the office. Okay? You better get down to the office and .......... You're refusing to follow my instructions?

Worker
No, that's not it at all.

Morris
Well then you start doin' the job I'm asking you to do.

Worker
That's not it at all, Freddie.
Morris
Go down to the office. And there's a lunch area..

Worker
I told you that ... I told you that yesterday when you came down. I said ah..

Morris
I don't care what you're tellin' me. Go down ...

Worker
... Of course you never tell anybody. But you don't listen ...

Morris
.. to the lunch area and I'll get your committee man.

Worker
You don't listen to nothin' anyway.

Morris
All right? Go ahead.

Narrator
Back at the Royal York, lack of progress at the talks is making Bob White apprehensive. Two weeks ago he warned Rod Andrew not to bring the U.S. deal to Canada. The G.M. negotiator has remained evasive about the company's intentions ever since. Now with only a week before the strike deadline, Andrew finally calls White up to his room to show him the company's first offer.

White
How are you.

Andrew
How are you?
White
Fine.

Andrew
Good to see you.

This is what we're gonna show you today across the table. It contains ah basically every aspects of the things that you're going to ...

Narrator
As White scans the document with Andrew, the union leader's worst fears crystalize. G.M.'s defying him.

Andrew
... Together. The rest of the committee we ....

Narrator
The corporation intends to impose a variation of the U.S. contract on the Canadians.

Andrew
I'll say a few words about it.

White
Looks like its tracking the U.S. monetary thing, eh?

Andrew
It's tracking the U.S. monetary thing.

White
Oh, oh there's some problems. Okay.

Andrew
Okay?
White
Yep. See you down there.

Andrew
All right.

Narrator
White leaves Andrew's room stunned. It has now become clear to him that just to win traditional wage increases for his membership will require a bitter struggle.

White
I told Mr. Andrew across the bargaining table this morning, and I'll repeat now, unless there's a fundamental change in direction, it will be almost impossible to avoid a strike at General Motors on October 17th.

Narrator
Not unexpectedly, the union's negotiating committee had rejected the company's offer almost as quickly as it was tabled.

Background
Yep. Fine.

Document might be ....

Give me a call on one one ten, will you? Let me know.

Narrator
All of these men are tough, shop floor politicians, elected directly by the membership. Their careers are on the line with this contract. If the rank and file don't like what the committee brings back, all of these men including Chairman Phil Bennett, could be back on the line driving bolts after the next election.
Clout
I got the impression the other day when we met with Andrews - when he talked about people's expectations....

Narrator
John Clout is the Chairman of the St. Catherines plant. Intelligent, not given to compromise, Clout provides White with his main opposition on the committee.

Clout
Management's attitude in the plant is that, you know, there's a strike. Do you get that reading from him that ah that we're into a strike situation?

White
Last night was the first time he said to me that we can't do this before Wednesday - that we're into a into a strike. Now, I mean I'm going to level with you guys. He looked me right in the eye and said you better fuckin' understand my friend, if we go in the ditch you ain't fuckin' around with Chrysler. And if we get into a strike it's going to cost you a lot of fuckin' jobs in this country.

Clout
If they're reading that it's going to take a short strike in order to sell whatever they want to sell, I'm goin' to tell you that they're misreading the membership bad on that. Very bad.

Narrator
The committee knows that because G.M. has just reported the biggest profits in its history, workers expect a big pay increase to come out of these talks.

Not enough. They're goin' to have to give me a raise. We're goin' to have to go for more bucks.

Narrator
Rumours are circulating about the first offer. The men don't like what they
Motors

hear. They don't want profit-sharing or bonuses. Unlike their American brothers, they want an hourly wage increase just like they've always had.

Weslak

I like the money up front. I like to see the money. At least you know what you're getting, anyway. Profit sharing you wouldn't know what you were gettin' at the end of the year. At least this way if we're gettin' 40 cents an hour, we know at the end of the year we've got 40 cents an hour.

Narrator

Men like Al Weslak feel that G.M.'s bonus plan will mean they have to make more of the same concessions they made in 1982 in an effort to save jobs. American workers made the bulk of those concessions, but it didn't help them. Though G.M. is now enjoying record profits, many of the Americans are still on layoff.

Weslak

We give 'em concessions in the last contract to save what we got today, this contract they want us to give some more to save what we got? Just look at how many American fellows are out of a job today. They still got an awful lot on layoff. Didn't save their jobs. It's not bringing them back to work. Never will either.

Narrator

In the end, the Canadian workers are opposed to sacrificing traditional wage increases in exchange for a bonus scheme because it would make them feel dependent on the company's good intentions.

Weslak

How far can you trust G.M.?

Narrator

Two days before the strike deadline, G.M. is still pressing a variation of the American deal. If the company doesn't alter its position in 48 hours, the U.A.W.
will hit the picket lines.

Television Reporter
If Canadian workers at General Motors don't have a new contract on Wednesday, they'll go on.....

Narrator
The impact of a strike will be felt across the country and Bob White knows it.

Television Reporter
For the Canadian economy, some experts say an auto strike is like pulling a lynch pin from the economic recovery. For the last two years the auto industry has given the economy a real boost. General Motors, for example, has never been more profitable. Labor costs here are cheaper than on American assembly lines. So the workers argue the company can afford to give them some breaks and an uniquely Canadian deal.

Narrator
With pressure on the outside mounting, White comes under attack from within. The Canadian strike will begin closing U.S. plants within a few days. Concerned, Union President, Owen Bieber calls demanding to know from White why the calls are deadlocked.

White
Well I'm not going to a fuckin' agreement with this membership I know's absolutely not ratifiable. I'm not going to tear the union apart over here, my friend. I know where I'm going. I'm a responsible bargainer and I'm going to try and get this thing done by Wednesday, and if I can't, I'm going to stay till I do it. But I think I know my way around here.

White
Yes, I understand that. Last thing I want to do is put this thing in the ditch and start affecting the income of the U.S. workers, I can assure you of that.
Okay. Take care. Huhhhhh. Well we're getting the starch.

Nickerson
...... now, is he? Tryin'?

White
Trying.

Hargrove
Well you give him a good message.

Nickerson
He was a little hot was he?

White
I don't know .. he's get more edgy than Rod Andrew. Well, I mean, his point is he .. he says, I don't want .. you know, I gotta look at the total union. This thing goes in the ditch and what it does to everybody. I said, I understand that.

Bennet
What did he say? That he may not allow us to strike?

White
Well ...

Bennet
He wouldn't give us strike benefits?

White
Yeah. That's the inference, but ...

Hargrove
.. how he's going to do that.
White
I won't lose one second of sleep over that because I know come Wednesday noon we are on the march.

Narrator
But White fully understands the power Bieber has over him. As President, he could revoke the Canadian's right to strike and block their access to the union's 500 million dollar strike fund.

White
If that happens we gotta talk about how things are done here.

Narrator
Pressure on White continues to build. Rod Andrew reminds him that a Canadian strike will quickly affect the entire North American auto industry.

White
The other interesting thing he told me this morning is that uh about three days into our strike we'll start to seriously affect some of the U.S. Ford operations.

Caucus member
Ford? Ford?

White
Ford. So this thing's getting a little more ... that before we get through we'll be into Bulgaria .... Ethiopia. How's it that Nassar car plant in Egypt .. if we can shut that down it will be a miracle 'cause it don't work anyway. And .. I mean when they start shutting down the U.S. operations there's goin' to be a lot of people calling.

Caucus member
Bob? An urgent call from Helen.
White
As I said there'll be a lot of people calling right? You think I don't know what I'm talking about eh? You guys'll believe me one of these days.

Caucus member
Yeah.

Tell her ... all this time ..... 

White
Hi.

Secretary
Bob? Rod Andrew just called. There's a wildcat at the Oshawa truck plant.

White
Okay. Got a work stoppage at the truck plant but we gotta get 'em back to work.

Caucus member
Any sense of .... going back?

Narrator
The wildcat causes White's worst fears to surface. It could incite all of G.M.'s Canadian workers to walk off the job early. And if White his heading for a confrontation with Owen Bieber, it's imperative that he maintain firm control of the plants.

Bennet
What shift is on? Who's the committee man?

Narrator
Bennett moves to restore union discipline in Oshawa - 35 miles away.
White
... it'll spread like wildfire. You know what I mean?

Well let me just say a couple of things about this because you know I'm not going to share with you guys all the phone calls I have except to say that we're in some tough times now. We ought not to .. we ought not to misunderstand what's happening. I got the authorization to strike with a deadline of Wednesday, at noon. And if somebody fucks that up, and these plants go before Wednesday noon, you're exactly playin' the fucking games some people want to play. I don't have to draw any more drawings on the blackboard than that. If you think the authorization won't be withdrawn for a legal strike - if these plants start going down today - that's out of my hands.

Narrator
Almost unwittingly, White has become a victim of circumstances beyond his control. G.M. is intransigent. The negotiations are deadlocked. In the wings, Owen Bieber threatens to intervene. And now the plants are becoming restive.

White
What have we .. 48 hours?

Clancy
48 hours from now, Bob, we'll be out.

(Telephone ringing)

Background
(Caller on one one seven calling ...)

White
Phone.

Nickerson
Somebody.
The Oshawa wildcat has been averted but workers in the plant are edgy anticipating the first strike against G.M. since 1970. And the days before the deadline, the mood on Fred Morris' line is more mutinous than usual.

If I send him down do you think he can do a better job....

Same as these brackets, you don't get anything done about them either, do you?

What ....

These brackets here. These here. I told you about them the other night. What did you do about it?

.... them down. I don't.......... they gone up.

Then how come I'm still gettin' them then?

The disorder angers Al Weslak. As a repairman on Morris' line, it's Al's job to fix other people's mistakes. And the mistakes are increasing.

This is getting ridiculous.
Weslak
Does look ridiculous.

Morris
Yeah.

Weslak
Well get it fixed.

Morris
Let me know when you're gettin' 'em and I'll see what I can do. Or you tell him, he should be catchin' it, eh?

Weslak
Same old problem. Leave it with me, eh? Just like ...

... the guy over there. You cross your arms and leave it with me. Yeah.

White
He's still sitting in the same position.

Narrator
The strike is now 24 hours away. Neither General Motors nor Bob White have altered their positions. Again, Owen Bieber calls from Detroit demanding to know why.

White
Well as of now we're going to be out on strike over AIF's and Cola Travel and Cola Diversion and time off the job, local agreements and working conditions. That's about the list as of now.

Narrator
Bieber's call irritates White. He feels both his ability and his right to conduct a
separate Canadian negotiation are being called into question.

White
Well I ... I mean .. but that's that's a fundamental issue .. issues that we're going to have to to come to grips with 'cause I can't fuckin' keep doin' this every two or three years. I'm just not goin' to do it. Arguin' with my own God damn people about puttin' together a settlement. I understand that. I understand that. I will. Okay. He's going to put this out to the officers today.

Narrator
This afternoon Bieber will call a meeting of the Union's executive to discuss whether the Canadian strike authorization will be revoked. In his place, White has sent his Quebec lieutenant, Claude Ducharme, to attend Bieber's meeting. Ten hours later, Ducharme returns from Detroit with unsettling news. White has no allies among his fellow officers.

Ducharme
Cass Stevenson said that you .. you really deceive him because apparently you were strong on pattern negotiation. And now you're running away from that. Efflan said, well it's all one union and it's about time that some people learn .. some people learned about it.

White
Was there discussion at the board about Canadian ...

Narrator
No one on the union's executive is prepared to argue on Bob White's behalf. It now appears likely that his authorization to strike will be revoked. Tomorrow morning, the executive will take a final decision.

Ducharme
... meeting, he just said we might have to take a decision tomorrow.
Hargrove
Board will be on the other ... council ...

Ducharme
Because they are there for for for ..... 

White
Well, let 'em take it.
Hum?

White
Let 'em take it. The strike's on noon tomorrow.
... yeah, the one ......

Nickerson
He he's going to do it to us before we get out.

Hargrove
Can't do it to us before we get out.

Nickerson
What did he say, Claude? Is he going to deal with that tomorrow morning?

White
He said he might have to.
Eh?

Ducharme
He was going to call Bob.

Nickerson
He's gonna call Bob?
Ducharme
Yeah.

Nickerson
I'm sayin' he's goin' to do it before we go out, my friends. I've been tryin' to tell you he's going to call them and do it. He said I'm going to the board and he's going to tell 'em.

White
So what are we going .....

Hargrove
We gotta go ahead.

Nickerson
Yeah. We gotta go on strike.

Narrator
Rod Andrew, leaving it to the last possible moment, tables G.M.'s final offer before the deadline. The media, anticipating the collapse of negotiations, congregate outside the caucus room.

Press
Mr. Andrew, tell us what you had to say to these gentlemen today.

Andrew
I've got to get the union response ....

Press
Did you give them a new offer?

Andrew
Yes, I did.
Press
What about the chances of averting a strike at noon tomorrow?

White
I ..I think that's almost impossible. Thanks.

Press
Thank you.

John Sinclair....

Narrator
The committee rejects Andrew's offer unanimously, labelling it a carbon copy of the first.

Caucus Member
And I would never, never stand up and recommend that bag of shit to my membership in Local 222.

Caucus Member
It has nothin' to do with the reality of of what we proposed. That's all I have to say of it. It's a waste.

Caucus Member
It just seems to me that they don't want to settle the son of a bitch either. So I'm dead opposed to it.

Narrator
With the strike now seemingly inevitable, White informs the committee that there is a threat of U.S. intervention.

White
There has been no decision taken. The board was advised this afternoon that depending on the issues they may have to make a decision tomorrow about whether or not to authorize a strike in Canada. I just want to make it
Motors

absolutely clear that these fuckin' plants are going down tomorrow at 12 noon.

Caucus Member
Good show.

Narrator
But White is wrong. 16 hours before the deadline, union dissidents leads Oshawa workers in a wildcat strike. For weeks the plants have been a tinderbox, now not even Bob White can keep the men on the job. News of the wildcat hits the committee hard. Just when they need to be united, dirty local politics is driving them apart.

Caucus Member
They've got the uh they've got all the signs up. All the plants .. all the plants but the battery is out. They are parading up and down with signs...

White
I hope those guys are just as militant at Christmas as they are tonight. Really .. I mean it really hurts us but it's nothing... I'm not going to lecture anybody. There's nothing you can do now.

Narrator
The wildcat is especially devastating for Phil Bennett. Oshawa is his personal fiefdom and it's out of control.

Nickerson
You better get the word in there that they don't have the right to do that and the day shift is supposed to go in tomorrow.

Clout
Well by then leadership should be out there tomorrow morning then.
Caucus Member
Christ. They're up there now and I'll tell you right now Lord Jesus would never get 'em back in there ......

Clout
Talkin' about tomorrow morning.

Caucus Member
I'm talking about tomorrow morning John.

Clout
.... God damn drinking. Somebody ain't doin' their God damn job that's fuckin' all of us. Christ almighty, now what the hell's goin' to happen when that gets to St. Catharines. I'm going here to the God damn phone. What am I goin' to do if fuckin' St. Catharines goes now. 'Cause of that horse shit.

Bennet
But I don't give a fuck if they lined up .. if I went down there tomorrow morning, with John Sinclair, and all of the district committee men that are elected, there's no fuckin' way that you'll get them back in that plant. I'm telling you that John. I'm just bein' straight honest. Because some people that went around bullshitted them and told them that in order to help us out here in this fuckin' table in Toronto, you gotta walk out of the fuckin' plant.

Caucus Member
That's right.

Bennet
I feel worse than any person at this fuckin' table. I'm tellin' you that. Because for two months I've been layin' in that fuckin' bed upstairs, and I've been gettin' phone calls, and they have fuckin' union meetings that I could feel the fuckin' hide bein' tore off me 35 miles away - to fuck me politically. And I tell you they ain't fuckin' me. They're not fuckin' me! They're doin' it to the membership and they played with the membership.
White
Let's try and not tear each other apart here. It's .. it's a difficult situation. So I'd just say the leadership ought to try and get at least an announcement out that the plant should operate tomorrow until 12 o'clock.

Bennet
I'll do that soon as ..... 

White
And the responsibility belongs back there in the local union.

Radio
The actions by the workers have seriously jeopardized negotiations at the Royal York Hotel. Local 222 President, John Sinclair, and Plant Chairman Phil Bennet, said and they urge all G.M. workers on the day shift to report for work this morning.

Narrator
But the plea has come too late. When Oshawa workers show up for the morning shift, bonfires are still burning and the plant is shut tight. An hour before the strike is to be officially announced, White and Bieber have an angry exchange on the phone.

White
I'm trying to get a fuckin' agreement, my friend.

Narrator
White has been waiting anxiously for this moment. Will the American union revoke the right of the Canadians to strike G.M.

White
Well, I mean, we're going to have a strike. I don't know what you'll .. where we're going to end up, but we're goin' to have a strike.
Narrator
If Bieber's to act, he must do so now.

White
Well what are you tellin' me this morning?

Narrator
Pressed by White, Bieber issues a threat. He will revoke strike authorization if White's only issue is whether Canadian workers receive an hourly wage increase in each year of the contract.

White
That's not the only issue in this strike. I mean .. there's a number of other issues and we won't be settlin' them before 12 o'clock today. I hear what you're saying and you'll have to make a decision if that becomes a last issue, I guess. That's fine. Okay. Bye bye. God he's an unhappy President.

Hi. Morning.

Narrator
Miraculously, White has been given a stay of execution. When he challenged Owen Bieber to shoot, Bieber didn't pull the trigger. He didn't cancel the strike, for now. In a few moments, Canada's auto workers will strike the world's largest corporation over a trade union principle, the right of workers to an ever-improving standard of living.

White
Try and get along. We got enough fights in this hotel this morning. At 12 o'clock today we will be commencing the first Canadian strike against General Motors in 14 years. We got another offer from General Motors yesterday which was almost identical to the offer that we'd received 10 days ago. I talked to Mr. Bieber this morning and acquainted him with the situation here. We have to find a solution to this this problem in Canada. We intend to do that.
Press
What did he have to say to you?

White
Good morning and how did you sleep.

Narrator
Within 24 hours, the mood on the picket line in Oshawa turns nasty as vandalism erupts.

In Toronto, Phil Bennet acts quickly to quell potential mob rule.

Bennet
Should get a tow truck and tow that out of there. I don't want you to win' that out of there, John. They got cameras and everything there. I mean, what the hell's wrong with them. They're crazy. Like dogs, pissin' on the Globe and Mail box. I want this thing put to bed. I don't want .. I want .. I don't want no foolin' around any way, shape or form. You understand me? I want everyone to stick together, be together, get together and put this thing to bed. They harrassed the um they harrassed and .. and the women goin' in there this morning - I'm told that one woman was pregnant and they pushed her around. They .. they .. abusive language and they .. some of them have pulled their penis out. And the women going by. I mean, they're crazy. They burnt a car. Dragged a car up there and set fire to it, in front of the gate. It's gotta stop. This ... it's got to stop now.

Caucus Member
I think we can put some documentation ....

Narrator
With G.M.'s plant down, the stakes at the Royal York increased dramatically. White learns that Company Chairman Roger Smith has intervened directly in the talks. To slash his labor costs, the G.M. Chairman is prepared to break the Canadians and he orders Rod Andrew to so inform Bob White.
White
He just called me up about five minutes ago and said that Roger Smith has said there is no fucking way they're going to put anything but lump sums in the second and third year, and if this means 1970 all over again, then that's the fucking way it's going to be. And it's going to mean a lot of jobs and it's going to be a lot in investment in this country, but the corporation is not going to start down the fuckin' road of putting money in the paycheques in base rate - on a cents per hour basis or a percentage basis in the second and third year of the agreement. There's no question. This is tough stuff. And my guess is when Roger Smith says that today, he probably means that. I'm tellin' you guys - I mean, if .. I want you to know what's goin' on up there. I've been threatened today with the sale of the diesel plant, the closing of the Ste. Therese plant..

Narrator
The committee is alarmed. They fear that Smith is taking a hard line because he fully expects Owen Bieber to deny Canadians their strike benefits.

Caucus Member
... between Bieber and the Canadian sector and .....  
The strike fund?

White
I got that behind me with Andrew. I just told him if you're hearing any rumours about that, don't worry about it, I got 10 million dollars in my hip pocket from the Canadian labour movement so the strike stays on. It's no problem. I don't have ten cents, but we'll get that.

Narrator
Away from the committee, White and his inner circle are worried men. It has become clear to them that G.M. is counting on Owen Bieber to abort their strike.
Nickerson
They're relying on the big guy - he's goin' to cancel it.

White
I think they're depending on somebody taking it out of their way.

Nickerson
Yep. They're relying on the cancellation. There's no question.

White
However, that's for another day. As they say the party's not over 'til the last
dance is played.

Phil, what do you think kid?
Before I met you I had no trouble ..... 

Bennet
Yeah.

White
Ever since I met you I've been up in shit over my ears.

Bennet
Yeah.

Better get ....

White
Turn out the lights, the party's over.

Narrator
That night, White and his boys are forced to acknowledge a hard truth. They
can't fight both Roger Smith and Owen Bieber at the same time. If they're
going to win a made-in-Canada agreement, they'll have to make peace with the U.A.W. president.

**General background**

He taken this ..... 

... Oldsmobile, Cadillac ...

They're not ....

The line is ...

**White**

The party's over. Into your Caddies. Get those expenses in quick, Helen.

Hello.

**Narrator**

To secure Owen Bieber's co-operation, the Canadians will have to back off on their key principle, symbolically at least. So White offers to camouflage the A.I.F. - the Annual Improvement Factor - in the workers' hourly wage rate by calling it something else.

**White**

I ... that's what .. well that's exactly what I'm trying to do here. I was prepared to call .. I was prepared to call it C.F.I. Canadian Fuckin' Increase.

**Narrator**

Bieber agrees to White's scheme.

**General Office**

Four point what? One percent or 4.2 percent?

Right.
Motors

.... under this?

No, the 38 cents ...

The old ...... this ...

Narrator
Over the next few days they hammer out a deal.

White
But if we can unlock this we can put some subcommittees, we can put the locals on ..... 

Narrator
Although it is fundamentally different from the one signed by the Americans, Bieber, satisfied he can save face, agrees to sell it to Roger Smith. When he tells White it won't be easy, White reminds him that if the candidate White supported for Union President had been elected, Bieber wouldn't have this problem.

Just think if Magurish hadda got that job you wouldn't have to worry about this. Yeah, we don't have to talk about that. Okay. Talk to you.

Did he say yes?

Okay, both ..... 

White
He said, I'm just going to go in a cold-turkey the bastard and say the fuckin' committees are trying to file, there's 11 cent start ...

Nickerson
That's it!
White
... that's how they get it. Now go to work.

Guindon
But what are you talking about then.
Let's see ... he's got the 30-30 -

White
Well we haven't got it, what the fuck we shaking hands for? We don't even have this by the committee ... 

Hey, fuck you.

He's talkin' about 220........

Narrator
The threat of a fight within the union has been averted. But negotiations remain stalled. Hoping White may not enjoy complete support inside the union, Rod Andrew requests a meeting with the whole committee to see if there are any weak links. Two hours later, he leaves the room subdued. The committee is lined up behind White in an extraordinary display of solidarity.

Press
Any breakthroughs?

No, not right now.

Andrew
The ...... did well.

White
It's a very important meeting. I understand it. I gotta do it. I believe it. I just want to give 'em a little fuckin' history. And I think we just gotta hang tight for a few hours and see what happens. And we may have to play a little
hardball later today, so I'm .. I'm just proud of the committee and let's just keep 'er goin'. Let's not panic. I love it.

**White**

Love it. Because we're absolutely right. And when you see them fightin' so hard on pennies in this agreement, do you not think they understand what this means to working ... working people.

**Caucus Member**

I didn't know you had that cheque?

(Laughter)

Yeah.

**Narrator**

Andrew realizing the union can't be bullied into an agreement, gives White a new proposal to end the stalemate. But White isn't interested. He has his own president dealing directly with the corporation's top man in Detroit. He sees no percentage in negotiating with Andrew in Toronto.

**White**

That's why I won't go with this. I won't mess with this.

**Nickerson**

Oh, don't touch that, that's right. Oh sure.

**White**

I ain't messin' with this. I got the Presidente in the perfect position.

**Nickerson**

My God.
White
He wanted in, we got him. Come on down.
You see? Price is right.

Nickerson
He hasn't ...

White
Come on down!

Nickerson
I couldn't figure out.

White
So I'm go to have a shower, relax. Freshen up, shave, get ready for an evening.
I would just say that I'm more hopeful tonight than I've ever been that I think we're going to break this log jam.

Narrator
Feeling that Bieber is on the verge of getting him a settlement in Detroit, White asks the committee to stick round the hotel.

White
... stays in this room, because I'm giving no indications.

Narrator
None of these men know the contents of White's deal. Briefing them, White is purposefully vague. After four months in the dark, John Clout begins to rebel.

Clout
And I'm supposed to be on the Master Committee, and I don't know where we are any longer on the wage issue. Now that's okay for a while, but the clock's
fuckin' tickin'. I know where my fuckin' membership is on the wage issue, and I'm not sure if the union's there anymore.

White
Let me tell you John, if I get to where I want to get, I haven't sold out your membership. I think I know where your membership are, and you've expressed that. If I have, you guys will turn the fuckin' thing down and the strike will continue.

Bennet
That's right.

Narrator
For three days, the Canadians think the deadlock will be resolved at any moment, but the word never comes. Then suddenly, White receives a call from Detroit. But it's not from Owen Bieber. A secret source inside the union gives White news that dramatically alters event. Owen Bieber is making moves behind White's back. Unable to sell the Canadian package that had been agreed upon, Bieber is now discussing a variation of his own American deal - without White's permission.

White
We're gettin' it put to us.

I've got all the information. I would blow it open if I have to.

Nickerson
He didn't even God damn well try it on you.

White
I'm just goin' to let it .. let it fester a little bit today and see where it's comin' from. My guess is I'm going to get a call soon, from over there, saying this is the best we can do. I'm going to say forget it.
Narrator
White has been warned that Bieber will call to seek his approval for the deal Bieber has negotiated on his own.

Hargrove
I thought the big guy would have called by now.

White
Oh. Oh. I'm so disappointed in my own organization, boy.

Secretary
Bob, Owen's on line 3.

Narrator
White listens to Bieber dispassionately. He gives no indication that he feels Bieber has deceived him.

White
Leave it with me. Thanks. G'bye.

Narrator
The deal Bieber has negotiated contains lump sum bonuses, the very thing White has vowed he would never bring to Canada.

Nickerson
Great guy, eh?
Is that the final offer?

White
No. He said he's prepared to go to Roger. He thinks it's pretty close to the final offer.

Nickerson
Ahhh.
White
But once he goes, it'll probably lock it in pretty good.

Narrator
Cornered, White goes up to the 13th floor. He has to act quickly or he'll be forced to accept the Detroit deal. He has one last card to play. Amazingly, it's Rod Andrew.

Andrew
How are you?

White
Fine, how are you?

Andrew
Okay.

Narrator
White believes that Andrew will allow him to keep hourly wage increases in Canada, at a price.

White
But the problem is, and it's very simple, he's saying to me, you want the principle, you're gonna pay. You ain't going to get both. It think the best thing is we get it down and if it's a few pennies short in the committee I just keep arguing with them. At least it's on the table.

So - you guys understand, we really are talking about the end of the International Union because Owen Bieber will go absolutely bananas. Absolutely bananas.

Yeah.

Narrator
By accepting Andrew's deal, White knows he's playing a dangerous game. He's
not only going behind Owen Bieber's back, he's testing the support of his membership. If he's to keep hourly wage increases in Canada, he'll have to settle for much less money than the membership is expecting. And that could incite rebellion.

**White**
Just... let's agree just to keep our... keep our temper here.

**Nickerson**
Oh... sure, eh?

**White**
Get into the costs if we have to.

**Nickerson**
How come you're looking at me when you say that.

**White**
You're the guy I'm pointing to. And you keep a check on me, too, eh?

**Nickerson**
Hi, Ronnie, good morning.

**Narrator**
But one last surprise awaits Bob White. When he reaches for Andrew's new offer, it vanishes. G.M. is offering even less money than White has been led to expect.

**White**
I said don't try the package on me like that. I mean we're just not going to play the game here. Yep. I know what's happening.

Yes sir.
White
No, sir. Not today. Not today. Not for sale today. He said just .. your package is 50 cent an hour too high. I said don't waste my time with the arguments.

Bennet
I'll say you're going to have a different opinion of Rod Andrew before you get out of this set of negotiations ...

White
I'm not worried about him.

Bennet
And you remember what I'm saying?

White
No, I'm not worried, but I know what's happening.

Bennet
Yeah.

White
I know what's happening and I looked him in the eye and he knows what's happening.

Bennet
Yeah.

White
That's fine. That does ... not a problem for me. Yep.

Secretary
Rod Andrew on 12.
White
Okay. I'm going to a caucus, 8 o'clock and .. when do you want to put that garbage on the table? It won't be tonight. So if you wanna set it up for 10 o'clock in the morning let's get the garbage on the table and the negotiations are finished. Okay. Bye.

Nickerson
Okay. Here we go fellows. Everybody in the same barrel here.

Narrator
His strategy in a shambles, White will now likely have to lead his members into a long, crippling strike with the possibility of no financial support from Detroit and the probability of G.M. moving work out of the country - perhaps forever.

Nickerson
Don't mean nothin' now Sam. Take all them figures off the board and .. don't mean a thing.

White
Yep. Hi. Sorry to keep you.

Narrator
Down, but not out, White comes back at Owen Bieber with the only weapon he now has left - his membership's willingness to fight to the finish.

White
... and they're going to make us pay for the God damn thing and they can't do that today. Now they may do it in Christmas, or they may do it a month from now, but they can't do it today. And when we get through this weekend, I'll tell you, when I lock that son of a bitch in, now I know Roger Smith is tough and I know he's going to move some jobs but I'm going to lock that son of a bitch in this weekend, and I told Andrew across the table when I lock it in it'll stay for six weeks without us even having a meeting. The G.M. can't win this. I'll wrap the fucking Canadian flag around me, these multi-national corporations with
Roger Smith and 146% increase - there's -- I've told him all of that. And when I get through, the membership will sit. Now we'll pay a hell of a price for that. We will pay a hell of a price for that. But we are not going down the road and I'll love to look Roger Smith in the eye. We're not going down the road for nickels and dimes. And as of 10 o'clock tomorrow morning, I will have Andrew at the bargaining table here and tell him these negotiations are finished. Okay. Thanks.

Bennet
Very good.

Nickerson
Right on.

White
These guys ...

Hargrove
You won't tell him that White was quiet this time.

White
You're fuckin' right he won't tell him White's quiet.

Nickerson
All right.

White
Those guys are going to find out my friends - I ain't fuckin' around.

Now I .. I tried everything. Sand shifted a few times. People started to play around and I played it all both ends, and up the middle and around sideways and I thought I had something moving and I did. Not enough. And then people started to shift all over the place again. I said I'm all through fuckin' around with you guys. If we reach in the hat we get a rabbit and then we just get the
rabbit and there's another hat over here with another rabbit in it. So .. I don't play that game. I don't care about your costs. I don't care about your numbers. The facts are there's plants are down and General Motors doesn't understand they're going to fuckin' stay down. And I just told Owen Bieber that I may get grey hair but I'll get grey hair fighting the God damn corporation before I'll get grey hair going to those ratification meetings to have the membership cut me up. Ain't going to work that way.

(Applause)

White

Now I don't .. I got no guarantees. You guys know this isn't Joe's Garage, I keep saying. This is a tough mother-fuckin' company we've got. And they are mean fuckers. And they're going to grind. Make no mistake about it. Make no mistake about it.

This is going to be a classic in my judgement. And we've got to make sure the membership are with us. I just told Owen the same as I told Andrew, when I wrap that Canadian flag and I talk about Roger Smith's 146% and all the money you guys have made, and the workers gave up, if I can't win that argument with the workers. I won't be the director of the union and you'll have your settlement. My guess is we'll win that one.

Narrator

With the union and the company now totally polarized, the consequences of a long strike sink in. For the membership weeks, perhaps months, on the picket line. For the company, idle plants and millions of dollars a day in lost production. In the end it's become a game of chicken. At the last moment, in a surprising turnaround, G.M. backs down. Roger Smith flinches. Bob White doesn't. Early on the 8th day of the strike, Andrew calls agreeing to White's terms.

White

What .. explain it to me. Can you talk?
Narrator
G.M. offers a special Canadian increase in the hourly wage rate.

White
But the first year. Umhum. Okay. Now where is it in the third? Right. Is he going to get them? Yeah, okay, I ... that's for you and I. Fuckin' right. We're gonna break this thing, man. I know it. We're gonna break this sucker today.

Bennet
They fuckin' well know you mean business now. They know that for sure. Yeah, they really do now. I mean they like to blow your fuckin' brains out. No doubt about it.

Boy they fuckin' hate you, I'll tell you.

White
I'm not here to get people like me.

Bennet
No, I'm just saying that ...

White
... Respect is what you get.

Narrator
With the deal almost in place, White has one last battle ahead of him. He has to sell the package to the committee. Knowing it'll be a hard sell, he steals himself for the moment.

White
I need .. I need a shower and ..

Bennet
I do, too. I need some shaving ....
I need about 5 bottles of coke to get some fuckin' energy.

White
I need .. you gotta reach the next couple of days, guys.

Narrator
White may be on the verge of making a bold and historic declaration; namely that Canadian workers are entitled to determine their own future.

White
This is not obedience school. It might be a while. Thanks.

Narrator
But as he enters the caucus room, White knows that before he can enjoy his victory, he must first prove to the committee members that he didn't sell them out to achieve it.

White
Holy Christ, where did they all come from?

(Laughter)

And I have no hesitation in saying to anybody in this room that you may not like the amounts and we can fight about that, but there's no fuckin' question that that's a major, major move in terms of the whole question of lump sums and whether or not we were going to get money in the workers' pay cheques on an ongoing basis.

All I can say is ....

Narrator
While White has been negotiating on his own, committee members have been nursing their expectations. Bottom line, they want to see a traditional 3% increase in the hourly rate. White is bringing them only 2%. To sell the deal,
he'll have to remind these men of the harsh economic realities of the 1980's.

Caucus Member
That might have been General Motors' last offer, but I don't believe it. I don't believe it's their last offer.

White
Believe me, Bob.

Caucus Member
Well I'd like to do that too. Because I likely deal with those pensioners in another year from now. And I'm gettin' my gut feeling. I don't like to give up that 3%. I've seen it for years and years and years, and I don't want my kid or my son-in-laws, or the other guys having to give it up. And I said at the Canadian Economic thing that through the years we've been inched and inched and inched and if you took everything we've been inched through the God damn years, we'da had a strike issue all by itself.

White
I'm not attacking anybody. I understand that. I understand how you feel about that. But if anybody asked me the question, is that G.M.'s bottom line? Can you hang on and get 3 - 3 and 3. My friends, the answer is no.

Caucus
Well I say - right, Bob, appreciate what you done, but I think it's gotta be ... 3 and 3 and 3 all the way through. So my vote right now is no.

I'm .. I'm opposed to this. There's too much ... there's too much hanging out there.

Clout
Well we're in one fuck of a box with this fuckin' thing, I can tell you that.

Narrator
At the end of the dissidents roll call, is John Clout.
Clout
Geez, I dunno. I... seems to me we got the fuckin' driving seat here. They're in big fuckin' trouble......

Narrator
He may lack White's polish, but nevertheless he's the only committee member capable of successfully mounting a challenge to the U.A.W. leader. To carry the committee, White will have to neutralize John Clout.

Clout
That God damn thing has got to change from what it is. And we're betrayin' the God damn membership if we... if we buy this bag of shit for what's left and end up terminatin' the God damn strike short, there. Five fuckin' days, and we want to run for the fuckin' hills? Geezus, jumping Christ, I don't know what's going on here. Sure is a lot of fuckin' guys swimmin' the other way.

White
Well let me say something, John. You and I might as well get into it. It's one thing for you to tell me I didn't do good enough. But don't ever fuckin' tell me that I'm betraying the membership with this proposal.

Clout
I'm not talking of....

White
Yes, you are. So's you know.. So's you and I get it off on the right foot from day one, I come to this committee with this recommendation and I ain't betrayin' the membership to recommend it. Now you and I may disagree on what's in it, but don't ever fuckin' accuse me of betraying the membership, my friend, because that's bullshit. Okay. Let's start now. Now let's look at reality. John Clout's plant. Do you think you're not going to lose fuckin' jobs if we keep out another month? You know there... you know the answer to that. I've been told the answer to that. You know it, John. And let's look at what Rod Andrew does tomorrow. He goes to the press and he says, Bob White said
he's made an agreement. What did he want? Up front money? More money up front than there is in the U.S. agreements. No lump sums? No lump sums in this agreement. Cost of living protection? A new COLA - Canadian COLA formula better than anything else in the rest of Canadian industry. 74 cents new God damn money? And the Americans? And you think the ... you think the telegrams are going to come in from the American worker saying keep right on guys. You guys are right on the fuckin' money? Or from your membership? If that's a betrayal of your membership, John, I'll go with you to the membership meeting. It's a betrayal to the membership for us to keep 'em on strike for another month, then go back to 'em and say, you know what we did guys? We had 'em by the fuckin' balls, and we moved to ..... your increase up to 3%. And we got you another 15 cents. Man we are sure fuckin' tough.

Clout
You wanna tell the membership that they can't get what they had for God damn - 30 God damn years, for Chrissakes? They can't get God damn 3% with the money that this corporation's making after they've been on the street for a week? You might tell 'em that if you've been on the street for two God damn months. You might even convince me of that. But you ain't convincing me that it ain't there within the God damn week. And .. and on that, I'm saying that that's a betrayal of the God damn membership. And I'm not telling you're betraying the membership, or this God damn committee. I'm sayin' I am if I God damn go back and recommend that shit. Because we put 'em on the God damn street.

White
Just listen to me my friend, and it's not .. I'm not Rod Andrew telling you. I rolled the dice with Ioaccoca and we got a buck 15. And that cost us an engine plant and make no mistake about it. I don't want to roll the dice for another 10 or 20 cents here, John, and some jobs. I want to say to the corporation that we fought you on a principle. We were right. We found some common ground. We got some money. Let's get back to work and let's understand that this is ... makes sense economically. And let's talk about the future.
Clout
Well .. I ain't changed my mind on it.

Bennet
All in favor of accepting this proposal and gettin' off dead center and every ... raise your right hand.

Narrator
After five hours of bitter debate, White prevails.

Bennet
Opposed? Carried.

Television
.... UAW strike talk. Bob White, the union's Canadian director said the union agreed tonight to a formula that will allow what he calls serious negotiations. He also says he's optimistic for the first time since the strike began a week ago. Bargaining will resume tomorrow morning.

Narrator
Two days later White and Andrew meet across the master table for the last time.

Andrew
This is an outstanding new plan. It's innovative. It's truly Canadian.

Narrator
After a gruelling four month fight, Andrew admitting G.M.'s defeat on the key principle of the '84 talks, formally offers White what he's fought so hard to win.

Andrew
In response to the concerns indicated by the U.A.W., lump sum payments are deleted in this offer and going -- ongoing increases are provided with a 25 cent per hour special Canadian adjustment. S.C.A.
Narrator
On October 29th, Oshawa auto workers, like Brian Blakeney arrive early at the Civic Center to vote yes or no on the new contract.

White
A hell of a crowd boy.

Narrator
White, concerned that local union politics may mar the ratification vote, comes to Oshawa to oversee the proceedings personally.

White
So I say guys, I understand the local politics. I've been around it for many, many years. But let's not play it at this meeting. Let's tell the membership where it's at. You either recommend it up, or you recommend you stay on strike and you stand according to that issue.

Narrator
In 1984, G.M. management has argued that workers' interests and the company's interests are one and the same. Bob White has disagreed. On that very principle he has challenged both the world's largest industrial corporation and America's most powerful union. It appears as though he has won. It remains to be seen, however, whether workers like Brian Blakeney will eventually have to pay a price. Whether G.M., confronted by traditional unionism, will continue to make massive new investments in Canada. And whether Canadian auto workers will now have to compete directly with their American brothers for jobs.

Blakeney
Let's go back to work.

Union Worker
U.A.W.
Narrator
For now, back at the Royal York, Bob White savor's his victory as ratification returns flood in from across the country.

Union Worker
85.7 ... trade 71.3

Union Worker
Oh no. Ow ... we just got the transmission plant windows open.

Union Worker
85?

Union Worker
Yeah.

Union Worker
We're running at 87 and a half on a whole.

White
87 and a half percent. I knew we'd do it men.

Nickerson
No problem. Okay.

Union Worker
Okay, well we're kinda waiting for him. I think .. White's waiting for him right now.

Nickerson
Let's call the local. Let's call 1163.

White
Okay. Fine. Okay, John, thanks.

Nickerson
Holy Christ.

Workers
Where was John from?

91?

Tons.

I told you I could sell a bag of shit, he says. I said, he sure did.

Nickerson
So he'll be calling your guys. So you'd better call him. Okay, John. Bye bye.

White
Okay, that's fine. You phone the numbers in as soon as you get it. Thank you.
Ste. Therese - he says no question it'll run 75%.

Worker
Who's that - Johnny you're talking to?

White
That's Pierre Lepage. Says a little rough but no question we'll run 75%.

Get Trim. Get Moran. We're gone. Call Wendy, tell her I'm on my way up.

Narrator
Before meeting the press, White calls Rod Andrew to tell him the strike is over.
White
Hello. Whyn't you go out and buy yourself a double dip of ice cream? Okay. All right, away you go. And just while you're doing it, make sure you put that P.E.L. in three years instead of five. Okay. Talk to you.

All right.

Worker
Congratulations.

White
Oh man, ah?

Worker
You're tough, but you're good.

White
God damn right. Tough but steady.

Worker
All right.

Narrator
The membership has overwhelmingly approved the new contract. 12 days after he called it, White officially ends the strike. And 36,000 Canadian auto workers return to their jobs on General Motors assembly lines.

White
Well, well. I feel good. I feel good. Mm mm mm.

.... go out now?

Gotta go and call my mother. She called me -- called me Saturday night and I forgot all about it.

What ya got .......
Narrator

Within six weeks of the conclusion of the 1984 contract talks, divorce proceedings between the U.S. and Canadian sections of the U.A.W. begin. The grounds? Irreconcilable differences. The action is not contested.