

I am just a man

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I found a job working on an assembly line that paid a few more dollars than most.

I felt blessed to have that job and worked hard at it.

I felt pride in the job I did each day even though it was hard and heavy and sometimes dangerous and the hours were very long, but it paid my bills and my taxes and at the end of my day I had my dignity and felt satisfied because I knew I did that job to the best of my ability.

I became a member of the union and I felt blessed because I knew that that union meant a better life for its members but also that it would see its way to bringing a higher standard of living to some other man who was working on an assembly line somewhere near by and did not have the ability to strive for a better wage himself but that he too would benefit from the good my union could provide and he too could share in the dignity of earning a decent wage to provide for those he loved.

The company I worked for flourished and made record profits, and the men who managed the company were joyous and celebrated those profits amongst themselves because money was plentiful, life was now and tomorrow was a world away.

I married and started a family.

I felt blessed that my job could enable me to support my family and buy a decent home for us to live in. It wasn't a luxurious home and I knew it was over priced but it was what I could afford and again I felt blessed to have it.

I paid my bills and taxes and contributed to the community around me through those taxes and donated to various charities and food banks, knowing there were many less fortunate than I was and I felt lucky that I could help in whatever way I could.

The company I worked for made some poor choices and there were losses, but from the position I was in standing on that assembly line I was powerless to help because I was just a man and they were the company and they made the choices.

The union I pay dues to suggested we give to the company from our own pocket and give up benefits to aid their financial crisis but that 700 million dollars was fast forgotten. I don't even remember if anyone said thank you.

The government I pay taxes to did not seem to notice my sacrifice.

Times got a little tougher but I still managed to make ends meet between the layoffs and wage freezes. I tightened my belt and I hoped that things would pick up for the company and that the people in the community I lived in would once again start to buy our products.

I paid my taxes and my union dues, which sometimes seemed like a conflict of interest because the government my taxes went to did not agree that my being a member of that union was a good thing and sometimes that government slandered me in that community my taxes supported and caused some of the members of that community to become jealous and target me because I perhaps earned a few more dollars than they did.

The banks made some poor choices, and there was talk that some of the bankers were greedy and set up home owners with mortgages and bonds that were meant to fail just so they could pad their own pockets at the expense of all.

I continued to work, and watched the government I paid taxes to give those banks billions of tax dollars to try to fix the damage some had caused.

The people in the community I lived in could no longer afford to buy the products my company made and there was no longer credit available to them from the banks because the bankers decided to give themselves bonuses with the cash my government had earmarked for them to use to fix the problems that some had created.

The company where I worked fell onto hard times, some said it was caused by the banks but there was also talk that the company caused some of the trouble itself due to poor business choices and not planning for the future.

Some members of the government I pay taxes to said that my wage was to blame because my company paid me a few dollars more than other men who worked on an assembly line made.

Some journalists and economists made up stories that exaggerated and completely fabricated my life to the point of grandeur and the public took it as fact.

Then some of the people in my community started to target and abuse me. Others spread rumours about me saying I was greedy and had more than everyone else and I was a parasite.

I was shocked and saddened because this was the same community I had given to, and some of the people were my neighbours and our children played together.

My son came home from school crying because the teacher who earns much more money than me had spent time explaining to his class that my greed was the cause of my company's troubles. Of course I didn't expect him to defend me, children should not be disrespectful or correct teachers but I knew he felt shamed and helpless about not being able to and that he saw this as a blow to my dignity and his own.

Friends or some of the people I thought of as friends started to circulate email jokes about the company I worked for and though some were laughing I was unable to find humour because I had now become part of that joke and it was me they were laughing at.

The government I pay taxes to agreed to help the company I work for with loans of billions of dollars in the hope they could once again become the giant profit making machine they used to be.

I felt shocked because the government I pay taxes to offered the company I work for money from my wage and said to the company I work for and the community I live in that yes I was the problem and I should carry the blame and be ridiculed for choices I had no roll in making.

The union I pay dues to and the government I pay taxes to looked the other way so it did not see my struggle as I lost the respect of the community I lived in and and gave to. Nor did they see me lose the dignity I once had at being a contributing member of that community because I could no longer hold onto the hope of a better standard of living for myself, my children or those around me.

The government I pay taxes to thinks men who work on an assembly line should not have hope of a better life and though my cost of living will remain higher than many countries who pay their workers peanuts for

their hard work, I will be expected to blend in and become one of them.

After all, I am just a man who works on an assembly line and my value as an employee or a member of my society is nothing more than they say it is.

Kerry Hinzman
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(This was written from the view point of an man because that is for the most part how society views the average auto worker so that is the belief I wrote to)

For the record I am not a man, I am a mother of 3 who has been an auto worker for almost 23 years. AND I will not nod and smile while someone tries to get me to vote my rights away. If Stephen Harper, Dalton McGuinty and my own national union want to away my wages or my sub or any other benefits I need to raise my children they can come pry them from my cold dead hands because that is the only way I will be giving them! I will be voting NO to any further concessions. If the 700 million didn't do it for them nothing else will and they need to find another pocket to dip into. Mine is closed!

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