

# Working Class Heroes.... Stiffed! John Lennon

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Region: [USA](#)

Theme: [Poverty & Social Inequality](#)

*John Lennon, prolific as a writer as much as a performer, wrote this:*

## Working Class Hero

As soon as you're born they make you feel small  
By giving you no time instead of it all  
Till the pain is so big you feel nothing at all  
A working class hero is something to be  
A working class hero is something to be

They hurt you at home and they hit you at school  
They hate you if you're clever and they despise a fool  
Till you're so fucking crazy you can't follow their rules  
A working class hero is something to be  
A working class hero is something to be

When they've tortured and scared you for twenty-odd years  
Then they expect you to pick a career  
When you can't really function you're so full of fear  
A working class hero is something to be  
A working class hero is something to be

Keep you doped with religion and sex and TV  
And you think you're so clever and classless and free  
But you're still fucking peasants as far as I can see  
A working class hero is something to be  
A working class hero is something to be

There's room at the top they're telling you still  
But first you must learn how to smile as you kill  
If you want to be like the folks on the hill

A working class hero is something to be  
A working class hero is something to be  
If you want to be a hero well just follow me  
If you want to be a hero well just follow me

This was powerful stuff in the 70s as it should be now, 40+ years later. Sadly, nothing has changed for the better for us working stiffs. Matter of fact, it is even *worse* in 21st Century Amerika!! As this writer and countless other great writers have offered, the disparity between the *Haves* (1/4 of 1 % of our nation) and *Have Nots* (the rest of us, especially the working poor or 'near poor' is comparable to the *Gilded Age* (1870s to 1900 approx.).

This *Military Industrial Empire* has seen corporations literally *eating up* Mom and Pop America for generations. All one has to do is observe those Amazon delivery trucks flowing through your neighborhoods to realize the impact. Drive by those Wal-Mart Supercenters any hour of the day, even in this pandemic, to see how powerfully these giants control things. How many Wal-Mart Associates (don't you just love how they call clerks such a nice name?) have to get food stamps and need Medicaid? As it is, over half of the corporation's employees are Part Time, which means they get less in the way of benefits. Of course, both Amazon and Wal-Mart are NON UNION, thus, not so great for any such benefits that even terrible unions would secure them.

This writer remembers, with a sad prism, of when my late parents were in a nursing home from 2000-04. Of course, this was one of the millions of corporate owned and operated nursing homes, where top mgmt made out like the *bandits* they were, and the lowest tier employees.... How about the janitor they employed, who earned less than \$8.00 an hour? This fellow, with an infirmed mother at home, had to work 33 hours weekly at the place (this was so he would *not* qualify as a Full Time employee), and then he picked up a 2nd job as janitor at the local hospital (also P/T) at about the same pay. No sick pay, no vacation pay, no holiday pay (I actually wrote about him when I saw him working on Christmas day), no health coverage... no nothing!

One day, when I visited my parents (I went by three times a week) I arrived as an aide was going to give my mom a shower. It was very difficult to move my semi invalid mother in and out of the bathroom and shower. I asked the aide 'How much do you make an hour?' He replied 'Nine dollars an hour'. Nine dollars!! I knew that the nurses at the place were getting around \$ 22 and hour... and they deserved more! But \$ 9.00 and hour to wipe our parent's asses clean when they sometimes shit themselves? Can one even imagine how difficult it is to do such work? For \$ 9.00 and hour? No union, no real benefits to speak of. I remember, before my mother passed away, and I received, as their legal representative, a printout of the monthly medications she was getting, along the costs billed to Medicaid. It was astounding! What they were pushing into her old and frail body was incredible! Did anyone ever hear of homeopathy? Of course, the elder care doctor assigned to her came and went 'whenever' as the nurses and aides did all the grunt work. Her doc did such a great job that my mom died because she got gangrene in her foot from an infection that it seems no one seemed to notice. They finally hospitalized her and had to cut off BOTH her legs from the knee down... and she died a few days later... better for her, believe me.

As the late Edward R. Murrow would say it "This is Amerika" Maybe this tragic pandemic will finally wake up the 'Sleeping giant' of our mass of working stiffs. Yes, the Wobblies were correct. We need ONE BIG UNION to save us from the vipers of this empire.

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