

# UNNATURAL CAUSES

...is inequality making us sick?

Produced by California Newsreel with Vital Pictures. Presented by the National Minority Consortia.  
Public Engagement Campaign in Association with the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies Health Policy Institute.

## Not Just a Paycheck

TRT 30 min

Time Code offset 01:07

### *Tracking shot Electrolux factory*

MITCH EVANS, V/O:

Well when they said the big wigs from corporation were there, and they were going to have a pow-wow with us, or something, and everybody wondered what they were going to talk about...

SANDY BECK, V/O:

You could hear a pin drop in the crowd, and people were gasping...it was a funny feeling, just kind of like, you were on up on a ride that drops down real fast, makes your stomach feel queasy, that's how I felt.

JERRY JONES, V/O:

It was once the largest refrigerator manufacturer in the entire world.<sup>1</sup> Now moved away. And what sits is an enormous building that covers the acreage of a small farm...

JERRY JONES, O/C:

And it's so empty that if a family of rats wanted to move

00:43

### *B-roll of congregation*

JERRY JONES, V/O:

...from one end of the building to the other, they'd have to pack their own peanut butter and jelly sandwich.

### *Workers at a roundtable*

LOWER THIRD: DON PELLOW  
Former Vice President  
UAW LOCAL #137

DON PELLOW, at roundtable, O/C:

They called the bargaining committee in, and they told us that they was closing the plant, so when I walked out on the floor, everybody's looking at your face, you know...

### *Electrolux gates with stop sign closing*

---

<sup>1</sup> Julia Bauer "Electrolux layoffs resume in 60 days", The Grand Rapids Press (1/7/06)

**NARRATION:**

**In the winter of 2006, the Electrolux Corporation closed its refrigerator manufacturing plant in Greenville, Michigan and moved it to Juarez, Mexico.<sup>2</sup>**

01:12

*Workers walking outside the Electrolux plant in Greenville, MI*

**The Greenville workers earned \$15.00 an hour, with about \$5.00 an hour in health and pension benefits. The Mexican workers made \$1.57 an hour—plus bus fare and lunch<sup>3</sup>**

JOHN HERNANDER, V/O:  
Electrolux's decision to move the...

JOHN HERNANDER, O/C:  
...plant from Greenville to Mexico is basically just the result of them facing a very competitive environment.

*Interior idle factory shots.*

JOHN HERNANDER, V/O:  
It is a disaster for many people when they've been laid off. But our view is more to look at the company. And

*LOWER THIRD:* JOHN HERNANDER  
Stock Analyst  
Sweden

JOHN HERNANDER, O/C:  
unfortunately, to say that sometimes the stock market creates the pressure on the companies to act in that respect.

*Map animation*

01:49

**NARRATION:**

**In a global economy, corporations move capital at breathtaking speed to maximize profit for shareholders.**

**Electrolux is a multinational corporation based in Sweden.**

**The company has also moved plants from western to eastern Europe, in pursuit of the cheapest labor.**

02:11

**Moving the Greenville plant to Mexico will add 81 million dollars a year to the corporate bottom line.<sup>4</sup> Good news for shareholders, many of whom are already in the upper income brackets.**

*Workers walking outside the Electrolux plant in Greenville, MI*

---

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Don Pellow, president of UAW at Electrolux Greenville (phone conversation of 3/20/07); Greg Burns: "City left in the cold as refrigerator factory closes", Chicago Tribune (11/6/05)

<sup>4</sup> Greg Burns: "City left in the cold as refrigerator factory closes", Chicago Tribune (11/6/05); David Moberg, Salon.com (2/7/04); Hernik Denta, Danish TV (email of 4/14/06)

**But the 2700 people who once worked here<sup>5</sup> lost a union job, a decent wage--and ultimately much more.**

RICK PRICE, V/O:

A lot of people are left behind. And when they're left behind, they're left behind with really diminished lives and with a whole...

*LOWER THIRD:* RICHARD PRICE  
Psychologist  
University of Michigan

RICK PRICE, O/C:

...array of health problems and stresses that they didn't have beforehand.

*Rick Price driving in car*

**NARRATION:**

**Rick Price is a psychologist whose researched the impact of plant closings in Michigan for decades. He's studied the consequences of job loss for workers' health.**

02:59

RICK PRICE, O/C:

Involuntary job loss isn't just something that affects a particular individual who suddenly has got to find a new job, because it ripples through whole families and communities...

*Workers outside plant*

RICK PRICE, V/O:

...and becomes a major challenge and a major life event and one that lots of 'em simply don't recover from.

**NARRATION:**

**It's not just happening in Greenville.**

*Tracking shot of empty lockers.*

03:19

**All across the U.S., the transfer of work to low wage countries undermines the kind of job security and benefits that made the American dream a reality for millions.**

*Greenville series: man mows his lawn; downtown series*

**Electrolux workers led a middle class life—owning homes, buying new cars and taking vacations.**

**Now most are scraping by on severance pay, unemployment benefits and a health plan that will end in a year.<sup>6</sup> As personal finances spiral downward, health follows.**

*Waitress delivers "Electrolux sucks" cake to roundtable of workers*

03:53

---

<sup>5</sup> Leitch, List & Waldon: "Layoffs at Electrolux leave more than 1650 jobless as plant closing nears", The Daily News (12/31/05)

<sup>6</sup> Don Pellow, president of UAW at Electrolux Greenville (phone conversation of 9/14/06)

**Two months after the closing, some of the laid-off workers meet at a local restaurant.**

*Workers at roundtable:*

*LOWER THIRD:*       BRENDA BISSEL  
Machine Operator  
27 years at plant  
Husband also lost job

BRENDA BISSEL, O/C:  
When you gotta go to unemployment, I don't know if that's anxiety or what, but I didn't really think about it until Marcella said today, like my jaws been hurting, like I'm clenching my teeth or something when I'm sleeping...

*LOWER THIRD:*       MITCH EVANS  
Torch Operator  
29 years at plant

MITCH EVANS, O/C:  
I get nauseated—I'll be laying there, and I'll just get – my stomach will be nerved, and I'll be just nauseated...some nights I'll wake up, and I'll be up at one o'clock in the morning, I got up, was sitting in the chair and was watching TV until four o'clock, went and laid down, and tossed and turned until six o'clock and got up, and I don't think I got two hours sleep all night.

04:36

MARCELLA ORT, O/C:  
And I've started thinking more about needing a drink, which I don't need, and I've stayed away from that, so then I go and eat. But, I have never weighed this much in my life...

RICK PRICE, V/O:  
There are a lot of adaptive things we do...

RICK PRICE, O/C:  
...in response to stress that long term produce liabilities for us...

*Roundtable*

RICK PRICE, V/O:  
...it's not just people self-medicating for alcohol. It's even chronic eating. They're really treating themselves for anxiety and distress.

*LOWER THIRD:*       MARCELLA ORT  
General Assembler  
38 years at plant  
Husband also lost job

05:04

MARCELLA ORT:  
I think it's adding to Richard—his depression—because he's having health problems, and he's old enough to draw social security and his pension, so he's fortunate there, but I do think that he's feeling like he needs to do more, we don't have anything coming in and he

isn't able to do more, so I think he's getting more and more depressed.

*ER window*

05:21

DAN ELLISON, V/O:

I've been doing some thinking about some of the things that you were saying...

*Dan Ellison in hospital room with Dick Ort*

DAN ELLISON, O/C:

...with regard to, I guess the best way I can say it is, depression.

*LOWER THIRD:*

DAN ELLISON

Clinical Social Worker

Spectrum Health United Memorial Hospital

DAN ELLISON, V/O:

A little bit of ambivalence. Taking your medicines here or there.

DICK ORT, O/C:

I don't miss it too often—

DAN ELLISON, O/C:

Not too often.

05:40

DICK ORT, O/C:

It's just that some days, I just forget, it's not that I do it intentionally.

DAN ELLISON, V/O:

OK. Your wife was laid off after almost 38 years. Your daughter

DAN ELLISON, O/C:

was working there also, is that correct? And she moved to Minnesota?

*LOWER THIRD:*

RICHARD ORT

General Assembler

38 years at plant

Hospitalized for kidney problem

RICHARD ORT, O/C:

Her husband and two of the kids already moved to Minnesota because he had a line-up on a job, cause there wasn't any around here.

DAN ELLISON, V/O:

How big a financial impact is that for you? I mean, is it a stress?

RICHARD ORT, V/O:

I've got a set amount of money that's coming in.

06:07

RICHARD ORT, O/C:

She gets a pension, but the unemployment, she's — in order to keep it, she's gotta go to school, and she's been out of school since—well we've been married 40 years, so she's been out of school for 40 years.

DAN ELLISON, V/O:  
...We are seeing a lot of walk-ins to the ER, just coming in and saying they just...

DAN ELLISON, O/C:  
...don't know how to cope with everything that's going on in their life anymore.

*Marcella enters hospital room.*

MARCELLA ORT, V/O:  
...Nice to meet you

DAN ELLISON, V/O:  
Medical issues are also increasing, cardiac or gastrointestinal issues that are related to stress and anxiety.

06:37

*Dan, with Marcella in ER*

DAN ELLISON, V/O:  
We were talking about some of the finances, the impact it's had on him, on you, and how those stressors impact him. And my thought was, I'm seeing...

DAN ELLISON, O/C:  
...a lot more ambivalence of just: "whatever happens, happens."

MARCELLA ORT, O/C:  
Right now we still have a little money there, but when it's gone there's no way to replace it...

06:58

DAN ELLISON, V/O:  
There's worry about losing their home, losing some of their belongings, having things repossessed, not being able to meet the bills, not being able to afford their medication—they stop their medicines and...

DAN ELLISON, O/C:  
...I would think that usually the first one I see that gets stopped is the antidepressant...

*Dan in hospital room*

DAN ELLISON, V/O:  
... that just spins and cycles and becomes worse when they don't have any hope.

*ER Scenes*

**NARRATION:**

**In 2004 this local hospital treated 80 cases of depression, attempted suicide and domestic abuse. In the year following the Electrolux closing, that caseload nearly tripled.<sup>7</sup>**

07:39

---

<sup>7</sup> Dan Ellison, Spectrum United Memorial Hospital, Greenville, MI, phone conversation (3/20/07).

RICK PRICE, V/O:

These external life events do get under the skin. They do create

RICK PRICE, O/C:

...changes in the way our psycho physiological system operates. They create elevated stressors – stresses responses that ultimately lead to both acute and chronic health problems...

*Aftereffects: Marmot study<sup>8</sup>*

**NARRATION:**

**How do these stressors get under the skin? That's one of the questions Sir Michael Marmot explored for over more than thirty years in the Whitehall studies<sup>9</sup> of British civil servants.**

*LOWER THIRD:*

SIR MICHAEL MARMOT  
Epidemiologist  
University College London

MICHAEL MARMOT, O/C:

The two pathways that have most been studied (and we ourselves have also studied them) is the pathway that goes from the brain to affecting cortisol, and the pathway that goes from the brain to affecting adrenaline, epinephrine, the acute stress response.

*LIVE ACTION: bills falling one after the other...*

**NARRATION:**

**When stresses just won't stop--as bills keep coming, and there's no hope for work--the level of these stress hormones can remain high.**

08:30

*Turret transition to cortisol pathway to larger body meridians<sup>10</sup>*

MICHAEL MARMOT, V/O:

...when you stress people in a prolonged way, you get changes to that cortisol pathway, and that seems in turn to lead to a whole set of metabolic biochemical disturbances in the body...

08:47

**NARRATION:**

**High Levels of cortisol can trigger increases in blood pressure, blood sugar -and even inflammation – all risk factors for disease.<sup>10A</sup>**

---

<sup>8</sup> Marmot MG, Davey Smith G, Stansfeld S, et al. Health Inequalities Among British Civil Servants: The Whitehall II Study. Lancet. 1991

<sup>9</sup> Sir Michael Marmot, The Status Syndrome, p.3; Marmot: "Cause specific mortality...", International Journal of Epidemiology, Feb 2006

<sup>10</sup> Animation sequence (visuals and voice over) approved by Judith Saide & Jim Head (email of 2/12/07)

<sup>10A</sup> Chang, Louise, "Job Street May Raise Heart Disease Risk," 9/23/05; "Stress: Unhealthy response to the pressures of life," Mayo Clinic

HARVEY BRENNER, V/O:  
The types of illnesses that are...

*END ANIMATION*

*LOWER THIRD:* HARVEY BRENNER  
Epidemiologist  
Univ. North Texas; Johns Hopkins Univ.

HARVEY BRENNER, O/C:  
...associated with higher rates of unemployment are, first of all, the cardiovascular group of illnesses, and these are heart disease, stroke...

*Empty factory close-up series*

HARVEY BRENNER, V/O:  
...kidney disease...many other illnesses involving alcohol, suicide, homicide, accidents and the like.<sup>11</sup>

09:16

**NARRATION:**

**For forty years,<sup>12</sup> Harvey Brenner has studied the relationship between unemployment and death rates.**

**In reports for the US Congress and the European Commission,<sup>12A</sup> he developed models to predict what epidemiologists call 'excess deaths' -**

*Tracking empty factory and tombstones*

**...deaths that are over and above what would be expected under ordinary conditions..**

09:38

HARVEY BRENNER, V/O:  
Our research has shown over the years that there is a reasonably direct relationship between unemployment changes and mortality changes. These changes in mortality occur...

HARVEY BRENNER, O/C:  
...over about a ten year period but are heavily concentrated within the first five or six years.

*Electrolux night drive-by*

**NARRATION:**

**At the time of the Electrolux closing, unemployment rates in Greenville's Montcalm County jumped to 14%, nearly double that of the previous year.<sup>13</sup>**

---

<sup>11</sup> All statements by Harvey Brenner approved by David Dooley (email of 8/2/06)

<sup>12</sup> Harvey Brenner confirmed (phone conversation of 9/8/06)

<sup>12A</sup> UN Texas, website bio; European Commission Conference, "Health & Quality in Work"



**Among the twenty-two thousand households here<sup>13A</sup>, Brenner predicts that this surge in unemployment will result in 134 'excess' deaths over the next ten years.<sup>14</sup>**

*Exterior, Reno Bar; bar interiors*

10:18

GARY WHITE, V/O:

After my last day of work....I just thought, well, I haven't had a vacation in thirty-two years I think I'll take a vacation.

*LOWER THIRD:* GARY WHITE  
Machine Operator  
32 years at plant

GARY WHITE, O/C:

And um... The vacation got to the point where I started looking for jobs, started doing everything to find a job and there aren't any jobs anyway. You can't even find a job at a third of what I was making before.

10:43

*Customers in bar*

GARY WHITE, V/O:

I used to run around feeling like a 25 year-old when I was working. I'm starting to feel my age now because I'm just sitting around not doing anything.

**NARRATION:**

**The free market environment that allows Electrolux to prosper comes at a price.**

*Gary smoking outside Reno Bar*

**NARRATION:**

**3 million American manufacturing jobs have been lost in the last ten years.<sup>15</sup>**

*Tracking Ore-Ida factory.*

**Here, in Montcalm County, the decline started in the late 1980s with the closing of the Ore-Ida potato processing plant,<sup>16</sup> the rise of corporate agribusiness and the demise of small family farms.**

11:24

JERRY JONES, V/O:

Many of those farmers already had been feeling

*LOWER THIRD:* JERRY JONES  
Pastor  
First Congregational Church

---

<sup>13</sup> Jim Rhein, Michigan Dept of Labor

<sup>13A</sup> US Census Bureau, 2000

<sup>14</sup> Alfredo Cateriono (email of 9/17/06) per Harvey Brenner's model

<sup>15</sup> U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics

<sup>16</sup> Ryan Jeltema (email of 4/7/06): closed in 1988

JERRY JONES, O/C:  
...some economic pinch. And their spouses often went to work for industry to have health insurance, or just to add to the family income.

*Desolate farm*

JERRY JONES, V/O:  
When they lost the manufacturing sector, then it kind of put a double-whammy on those families.

*Series of factories in Montcalm County:*

11:47

*Hitachi Factory*

*TITLE:* Hitachi Magnetics  
Closed 2005, 600 jobs lost<sup>17</sup>

*Greenville Wire.*

*TITLE:* Greenville Wire  
Closed 2005, 150 jobs lost<sup>18</sup>

MEIZHU LUI, V/O:  
...In 1965, 1/3 of workers in the US had manufacturing jobs. Now it is under 13%.<sup>19</sup>  
12:04

*Northland*

*TITLE:* Northland Corporation  
Currently employs 115,  
down from 240 in the late 1980's.<sup>20</sup>

*Tower*

*TITLE:* Tower Automotive  
Closed in 2006, 350 jobs lost<sup>21</sup>

12:16

*LOWER THIRD:* MEIZHU LUI  
Executive Director  
United for a Fair Economy

MEIZHU LUI, O/C:  
We used to make airplanes, we used to make steel, we used to make cars. Now we make beds; we make pizza; we make hamburgers. It's quite a shift.

---

<sup>17</sup> Ryan Jeltema (email of 4/7/06); Franz Mogdis: 150 jobs lost since 2000 (email of 6/2/06)

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> BLS: Employment, Hours and Earnings from Current Employment Statistics survey (National, establishment)

<sup>20</sup> Craig Averill, HR Manager, Northland Refrigerator

<sup>21</sup> Source: Joe Kirik, Tower Automotive Communications (email of 8/23/06)

*Sandy Beck at work*

**NARRATION:**

**And a painful shift in wages. When Sandy Beck was a supervisor at Electrolux, she earned over 21 dollars an hour. After Electrolux, she made 7 dollars an hour, with no benefits and no job security.<sup>22</sup>**

**For the first nine months after her layoff, Sandy received compensation from a federal program tied to the North American Free Trade Agreement. And Electrolux provided a severance package for her.<sup>23</sup>**

12:47

**But now these supports have run out.<sup>24</sup> Her future is anyone's guess.**

*Sandy loads coolers, walks to kitchen*

SANDY BECK, V/O:

I'm a little concerned that we can meet our budget, and have enough money

13:08

*LOWER THIRD:* SANDY BECK  
Plastics Facilitator  
31 years at plant

SANDY BECK, O/C:

...for taxes and emergency funds. Right now we're busy paying bills off and cutting down our monthly budget.

*Sandy Beck opens barn door and feeds cattle, Bruce out in pen, colt, cattle, Sandy feeding cattle.*

SANDY BECK, O/C:

Back up, back up!

**NARRATION:**

**Sandy is better off than most. Her husband Bruce was also laid off by Electrolux, but he has a pension of about one half his former salary. And they live on a farm that's been in Sandy's family for three generations. It's their safety net.**

SANDY BECK, V/O:

My grandfather bought this beautiful farm on the lake back in 1917--Then my dad took over the farming. And that was when the small farmers couldn't make it, so he had to get a job at Electrolux to help make things meet.

13:48

*Sandy pushes boat, Bruce on boat, McMansions along lake.*

SANDY BECK, O/C:

I'll turn you around then you won't have to wonder.

---

<sup>22</sup> Sandy Beck email of 9/15/06

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

**NARRATION:**

**Sandy's farm sits on Clifford Lake, a tranquil spot that middle class families long called home. But many are leaving, their houses leveled to make way for high end second homes - creating higher assessments and higher property taxes.**

*Bruce on boat*

SANDY BECK, V/O:

We're part of the eroding middle class that's seen our income recede. It's not good every year to see your tax report...

SANDY BECK, O/C:

...and know that next year it's going to be more than it was this year.

14:22

*Mc Mansions along lake*

SANDY BECK, V/O:

First I didn't like seeing big houses in our hay field...but it's part of life, and...

SANDY BECK, O/C:

I've come to accept my neighbors now as OK people (laughs).

*Mc Mansions along lake*

JERRY JONES, V/O:

There's something unfolding here in Greenville and all of Montcalm County that might have been what Dickens was talking about when he said "the best of times, the worst of times". Because we are having an economic boom in some sectors:

JERRY JONES, O/C:

There are new houses being built here that makes it into a bedroom community for some of the larger areas around.

14:53

*Pan Wal-Mart*

JERRY JONES, V/O:

We have had some national franchises move in here and build significant buildings here. At the same time, there's this...

JERRY JONES, O/C:

...loss of jobs in west central Michigan that goes far beyond Electrolux.

*Houses in disrepair*

JERRY JONES, V/O:

And it seems to me like there's a growing chasm between the haves and the have-nots.

*Gordon Stauffer opens his garage door to show cars, heads into house*

15:16

GORDON STAUFFER, O/C:

So, please join me. I'm very happy to finally have some of my cars in one location. So please join me. This is the addition of the house that we're just completing...

**NARRATION:**

**Gordon Stauffer lives down the road from Sandy's farm. His lakeside home is a showcase for the high-end appliances his company manufactures.**

*Gordon shows his refrigerator*

GORDON STAUFFER:

Refrigerator/freezer. In stainless steel inside and out.

*Factory shots, Gordon around the factory.*

15:52

**Stauffer is Founding CEO of Northland, one of Greenville's last working factories. His company is riding a wave of new consumption by the wealthy.**

GORDON STAUFFER, V/O:

We certainly anticipated that there would be growth in the super high-end portion of the home appliance industry. There are probably more million-dollar homes built last year than any time in our history.<sup>25</sup> And there is

*LOWER THIRD:*

GORDON STAUFFER  
Founding CEO & President  
Northland Refrigeration

16:05

GORDON STAUFFER, O/C:

... a lot of disposable income going to second homes, high-end second homes, and when they build these high-end second homes they expect an icemaker...

*Gordon shows appliances*

GORDON STAUFFER, V/O:

*Very, very good ice.*

GORDON STAUFFER, V/O:

...they expect a wine cooler, they expect all these high end appliances.

*Gordon shows doggy pantry area and hot tub*

GORDON STAUFFER, V/O:

Pet food, ice for the pet's water.

GORDON STAUFFER, O/C:

The hot tub is right through those doors.

*Factory shots*

---

<sup>25</sup> CNNmoney.com 7/28/05; "Million-Dollar" Homes and Wealth in the US, Joint Ctr for Housing Studies, Harvard University, Jan 2004

**NARRATION:**

**Trends in the appliance industry reflect growing inequality in America. CEO salaries are now more than 250 times the average worker's pay.<sup>25A</sup>**

16:37

MEIZHU LUI, V/O:

...the number of products produced per workers has actually gone up. However, workers have not shared in the benefits of that greater productivity.

MEIZHU LUI, O/C:

It has gone to those at the top of the pay scale within the companies.<sup>26</sup>

*Gordon's lake front home exterior*

**NARRATION:**

**And where you stand on the economic ladder is a good predictor of health.**

16:58

*Gordon walks on deck*

MICHAEL MARMOT, V/O:

The higher the grade, the better the health.<sup>27</sup> The lower the grade, the higher the mortality rate and the shorter the life expectancy...

MICHAEL MARMOT, O/C:

..in this remarkably graded phenomenon. So if you were second from the top, you had worse health than if you were at the top; if you were third from the top, you had worse health than if you were second from the top – all the way from top to bottom.

*Gordon walks out on deck.*

GORDON STAUFFER, V/O:

I have been very blessed, and I've got exceptional health.

I do like to work out, in fact I'm waiting for this construction to be completed so that I can put my basketball court back in operation, because I still play basketball.

17:37

**NARRATION:**

**Stauffer and other wealthy Americans have more options, resources and power to control their lives. All contributing to better health.**

*Gordon points out photos with Bush family that are displayed in his home*

GORDON STAUFFER, O/C:

---

<sup>25A</sup> Economic Snapshot from "The State of Working America, 2006/07," Economic Policy Institute

<sup>26</sup> Steven Greenhouse & David Leonhardt: "Real Wages Fail to Match a Rise in Productivity", NYTimes, 8/28/06; Ian Dew-Becker & Robert J. Gordon, NBER Working Paper No. 11842 (Dec' 2005): "Where Did the Productivity Growth Go? Inflation Dynamics and the Distribution of Income"; "The rich, the poor and the growing gap between them", Economist.com (6/15/06); CPB, BLS: "Usual weekly earnings of full-time and salary workers..."

<sup>27</sup> The Status Syndrome, Sir Michael Marmot

I told George W. that I had a photograph of myself with his mother, and he said ‘that’s the one to keep—keep that photograph....’

GORDON STAUFFER, V/O:

There is a perception that the CEO gets all of the stress,

GORDON STAUFFER, O/C:

...actually if you’re a good CEO maybe you give the stress, rather than get the stress.

18:02

MICHAEL MARMOT, V/O:

Autonomy, control, empowerment

MICHAEL MARMOT, O/C:

...turns out to be a crucial influence on health and disease.

*Sandy at work*

MICHAEL MARMOT, V/O:

People who are disempowered, people who don’t have autonomy, people who have little control over their lives, are at increased risk of heart disease...

MICHAEL MARMOT, O/C:

...increased risk of mental illness, in the Whitehall studies, increased risk of absence from work, and increased risk of decrements in functioning.<sup>28</sup>

*Tracking Electrolux at night*

18:31

GARY WHITE, V/O:

You can’t effect change in your life right now. Because there’s nothing you can change. It’s all depending on outside forces, and all you can do is try to work with outside forces.

SANDY BECK, V/O:

We have less control now than when we worked at Electrolux and made what I call very good money...

18:52

*Sandy walks in barn*

SANDY BECK, V/O:

It’s kinda scary when we don’t have the money that we did have when those taxes go up.

*Sandy walking outdoors, Mc Mansion in background*

SANDY BECK, V/O:

Living on the lake with the higher income people isn’t a plus in that situation. If we get really desperate,

*Waterfront real estate sign*

SANDY BECK, V/O:

---

<sup>28</sup> Michael Marmot: “The Status Syndrome”, p. 241; Nancy Cleeland: “Workers put their hearts on the Line”, LA Times, 3/21/05

We might have to take the bitter pill and put some land up for sale ourselves, but

SANDY BECK, O/C:  
...we only want to do that if it's the last resort.

*Bruce in feed lot*

19:21

BRUCE BECK, V/O:  
I guess I've gotten up there where...

BRUCE BECK, O/C:  
... I don't worry like everybody else does. I'm more privileged than some.

*Bruce in feed lot, staring at camera*

SANDY BECK, V/O:  
Some people would say people like him that's got one year to

*Bruce and Sandy on the couch in their living room*

SANDY BECK O/C:  
...social security are the lucky ones.

BRUCE BECK O/C:  
Yeah, government's not guaranteeing that either.

SANDY BECK O/C:  
No.

*Sandy in lot with hay bale and wheelbarrow.*

19:45

**NARRATION:**

**And there are no guarantees for Sandy's marriage, which didn't weather the Electrolux closing well. Feeling pressured and depressed, Sandy's husband left her for almost a year to carry on alone.**

RICK PRICE, V/O:  
We do live in an individualistic society. We believe that people are individually and personally responsible for their own fate...We enact our laws that way. We create our social policy that way.

20:17

*Pan from river to Electrolux plant, workers walk, Greenville Wire exterior, empty storefront in town*

**NARRATION:**

**Wealth inequality is much more extreme here in America than in any other industrialized nation.<sup>29</sup> The top 1% of our population holds 38% of all personal wealth.<sup>30</sup> And nearly one third of all corporate stock. And their tax rates are getting lower and lower.<sup>31</sup>**

---

<sup>29</sup> Edward Wolff, interview, "The Wealth Divide: The Growing Gap in the United States Between the Rich and the Rest", *Multinational Monitor*, may 2003 (volume 24:5); Keith Bradsher, "U.S. Wealth Inequality may Lead Industrialized World", *The Oklahoma City Journal Record* (4/18/95)



**Is this the only way for a modern industrialized economy to operate?**

**There are alternatives.**

*Empty storefront, fade to black.*

20:53

*Fade from black, Peter Stenberg rides his bike.*

**NARRATION:**

**In 2004, Peter Stenberg lost his job when Electrolux moved a vacuum cleaner plant from his hometown of Vastervik, Sweden to Hungary.<sup>32</sup> Peter had worked at the factory for 21 years.<sup>32A</sup>**

**But unlike the workers in Greenville, Peter isn't stressed out, he hasn't turned to drinking and he's not worried about losing his house.**

*Peter rides home.*

**LOWER THIRD:** PETER STENBERG  
21 years at Electrolux

21:32

PETER STENBERG, O/C:  
I've been studying psychology, computers, that sort of thing, but now I'm looking for work.

PETER STENBERG, V/O:  
I think something good can come from this. It will give me a new start.

*Peter playing with Matilda*

**NARRATION:**

**Like most of his coworkers who lost their jobs in Vastervik, Peter has unemployment benefits at 80% of his former salary.<sup>33</sup>**

**This support will continue as long as he goes to school or looks for new work.**

*Empty Electrolux factory*

**In Sweden, the costs of unemployment have been carefully calculated.**

THOMAS ÖSTROS, V/O:  
Unemployment is very bad for individuals. You lose...

---

<sup>30</sup> Edward Wolff, interview, "The Wealth Divide: The Growing Gap in the United States Between the Rich and the Rest", *Multinational Monitor*, May 2003 (volume 24:5);

<sup>31</sup> G. William Domhoff, "Wealth, Income, and Power", University of California at Santa Cruz, September 2005 (Updated December of 2006)

<sup>32</sup> Gunnar Jansson, Electrolux, Västervik (email of 9/14/06); "Electrolux will close vacuum cleaner factory in Västervik, Sweden", UK Whitegoods (5/12/06)

<sup>32A</sup> Phone conversation with FB, 9.20.07

<sup>33</sup> IAF (Inspektionen för arbetslöshetsförsäkringen) <http://www.iaf.se/iaftemplates/Page.aspx?id=191> ; Swedish Institute: "Swedish labor market policy" [www.sweden.se](http://www.sweden.se)

*LOWER THIRD:* THOMAS ÖSTROS  
Minister of Industry  
Sweden

THOMAS ÖSTROS, O/C:  
...your connection in society, you lose your democratic empowerment, but you also suffer when it comes to health. And that creates of course, another discussion because it is a waste of resources to let people be laid off for long periods of time, or unemployed for long periods of time. But it also costs even more if you don't do anything.<sup>34</sup>

*Swedish Parliament, Swedes on streets*

**NARRATION:**

**During the last century, Sweden built a political system that distributes wealth to provide economic security to all its citizens.<sup>35</sup>**

**But it hasn't been at the expense of prosperity.**

*22:41*

*Rich houses*

**Sweden's economy has kept pace with the U.S. for the last ten years.<sup>36</sup>  
And while its economic system rewards entrepreneurs, it also protects workers.<sup>37</sup>**

*Cruise ship passes*

THOMAS ÖSTROS, V/O:  
Sweden is a country very much dependent on free trade. We can't hide our production from international competition.

THOMAS ÖSTROS, O/C:  
But globalization also means greater demand on public policy and public efforts to see to it that it is an environment where it's possible for individuals to live and to have a good life.

*Swedes on streets*

THOMAS ÖSTROS, V/O:  
And thereby globalization also means that you must have

THOMAS ÖSTROS, O/C:  
taxes high enough to have resources to help people to get the skills, the support they need, to be able to come back.

*22:35*

**NARRATION:**

---

<sup>34</sup> David Dooley approved (email of 8/17/06)

<sup>35</sup> Swedish Institute: "Sweden in Brief / The "home of the people"  
[http://www.sweden.se/templates/cs/CommonPage\\_2714.aspx](http://www.sweden.se/templates/cs/CommonPage_2714.aspx) (10/23/02)

<sup>36</sup> John Hernander (email of 9/13/06), based on data from EconStats

<sup>37</sup> David Brook "How Sweden tweaked the Washington Consensus", Dissent Magazine, also on [www.globalenvision.org/library/8/730](http://www.globalenvision.org/library/8/730)

Sweden continues to evaluate how much support to provide its citizens. For now, Swedes are guaranteed a college education, health care,<sup>38</sup> five-weeks paid vacation, 16-months paid leave for new parents, and much more.<sup>39</sup> And these policies seem to make a difference—the average Swede lives nearly three years longer than we do.<sup>40</sup>

For this security, Swedes willingly pay more taxes than Americans do. This helps to ensure that health is not dependent on personal income, wealth or job security.<sup>41</sup>

*Union office exterior*

24:12

LOWER THIRD: METAL UNION OFFICE  
Västervik, Sweden

*Swedes discussing in union office*

MARCUS KVANBERG, O/C (subtitles):

If you look around, you're so glad you live in Sweden. I can't imagine living on 50%. You wouldn't know what's going to happen...to your children, your family, to everything...You'd have to sell the house, the car...no wonder people feel sick.

YVONNE TAMBOUR, O/C (subtitles):

Who will they sell it to? Who? Who will move there if there aren't any jobs?

*Västervik Electrolux factory series*

24:48

**NARRATION:**

Nearly 80% of Swedish workers are protected by unions.<sup>42</sup> When Electrolux decided to move the Västervik factory, the union and the government pressured the company to make restitution to the workers and their community.<sup>43</sup>

The company responded with 3 million dollars to stimulate the creation of start-up businesses in Västervik.<sup>44</sup>

The city of Greenville, Michigan received nothing.<sup>44A</sup>

*Swedes discussing in union office*

25:15

CAMILLE PETERSSSEN, O/C:

---

<sup>38</sup> Ministry of Industry, Employment & Communication (email of 9/14/06); Swedish Taxes, Dec 2003, Ministry of Finance, Sweden; Tommy Ottebjør (email of 9/13/06);

<sup>39</sup> Ministry of Industry, Employment & Communication (email of 9/14/06); Karin Alfredsson: "Children playing...mothers working", Swedish Institute / [www.sweden.se](http://www.sweden.se); "Working in Sweden", Swedish Institute / [www.sweden.se](http://www.sweden.se); "No Vacation Nation," Center for Economic Policy & Research report, May 2007

<sup>40</sup> UNDP Human Development Report, 9/7/05;

<sup>41</sup> Ministry of Industry, Employment & Communication (email of 9/14/06); Swedish Taxes, Dec 2003, Ministry of Finance, Sweden; Tommy Ottebjør (email of 9/13/06);

<sup>42</sup> Neil Brooks & Thaddeus Hwong: "The Social Benefits and Economic Costs of Taxation", Canadian Center for Policy Alternatives, December 2006; The Swedish Trade Union Confederation (LO)

<sup>43</sup> Gunnar Jansson (email of 3/15/07)

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44A</sup> Email & Conversation with Ryan Jeltema, 9.20.07

What's left? Does it become a ghost town? What happens to those people?

*Amazing Grace in Congregational Church.*<sup>45</sup>

**NARRATION:**

**The Swedish union workers raise the real question: What will happen to the unemployed in Greenville and why are the unemployed across America left to fend for themselves?**

*Don Pellow at table*

25:42

*LOWER THIRD:* DON PELLOW  
Machine Operator  
32 years at plant  
Wife also lost job

DON PELLOW, O/C:  
Every one of us here has at least twenty-five years in here over there at the plant;

DON PELLOW, V/O:  
me and Gary thirty, Marcella forty. And you're always working for the future.

DON PELLOW, O/C:  
That's why you worked every day was for the future. And now there is no future.

*Amazing Grace, congregation*

25:55

JERRY JONES, V/O:  
As a Christian I really do understand that we have a responsibility to the whole community. To me, the notion of

JERRY JONES, O/C:  
individualism is right in the face of caring for your brothers and sisters.

RICK PRICE, V/O:  
Well the Scandinavians know something that we don't know and they've known it since the middle of the nineteenth century. And that is...

RICK PRICE, O/C:  
there's a sense of shared social responsibility about the fate of workers.

RICK PRICE, V/O:  
They're not just sort of cannon fodder; they're not just resources to be thrown away. And that really makes an enormous difference.

*Singing ends*

*Fade to black.*

26:36

END

---

<sup>45</sup> Steve Friedman, PBS copyright office affirmed that "Amazing Grace" is a public domain song (email of 8/22/06)