

BREAKING: UAW President Gary Jones, former President Williams are unnamed co-conspirators in latest corruption charges, Detroit News reports

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13 September 2019

United Auto Workers President Gary Jones and former President Dennis Williams are “UAW Official A” and “UAW Official B” in the criminal complaint filed Thursday against UAW Region 5 Director Vance Pearson, the *Detroit News* reported on Friday. The *News* cited three unnamed sources for its report.

The homes of Jones and Williams were raided two weeks ago by FBI investigators in a nationwide sweep that also included Pearson, Jones’ top lieutenant when Jones was Region 5 director, and Williams’ former assistant Amy Loasching.

The criminal complaint describes the results of a raid of UAW Official A’s home, in which investigators seized \$30,000 in cash and a set of golf clubs paid for with union money. This matches the account of the raid given the *Detroit News* by one of Jones’ neighbors, who said investigators were counting out “wads” of cash and “really examining” a set of clubs.

According to the complaint, UAW Officials A and B, now identified as Jones and Williams, spent months at luxury villas in California on union members’ dime. UAW Official A (Jones) spent \$10,000 in union money on a 63-day stay in 2016, while Williams spent \$20,000 on a 121-day stay in 2017.

General Motors released a hypocritical and self-serving statement yesterday declaring that it was “outraged and deeply concerned by the conduct of union officials as uncovered by the government’s investigation and the expanding charges revealed today.” But for decades the auto companies have helped fund the extravagant lifestyles of the UAW officialdom in order to, in the words of convicted Fiat Chrysler (FCA) executive

Alphons Iacobelli, keep them “fat, dumb and happy” while they forced through concessions on the UAW rank-and-file.

GM has been named the target company by the UAW in contract talks with the three US-based automakers, meaning it could face a strike at midnight Saturday.

These developments create an unprecedented situation. Less than 48 hours before the 12:01 a.m. Sunday expiration of auto contracts covering 158,000 workers at GM, Ford and FCA, both the current and former presidents of the UAW have been exposed as crooks and the so-called union as a thoroughly corrupt criminal syndicate.

Having voted by close to 100 percent for strike authorization, autoworkers looking to fight the companies to win back lost wages, benefits and jobs and end the hated-two-tier system are increasingly clear that they face a struggle against not only the auto bosses, but also the pro-company union.

“It increases the likelihood that the government will come after the union with a RICO (Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations) charge” similar to that which was used to place the Teamsters union under federal receivership in the 1980s, Erik Gordon, a professor of business at the University of Michigan, told the *Detroit News*. “The union cannot defend itself on the basis that there were some renegade bad apples. You’ve got a former president. You’ve got a sitting president. You’ve got the union as a whole that has aggressively defended the sitting president.”

Such a maneuver by the Trump administration would not be aimed at “cleaning house” or democratizing the union. As with the federal oversight of the Teamsters, it

would be directed toward preempting a rank-and-file rebellion of autoworkers against the corrupt UAW apparatus.

Fearful of autoworkers escaping the control of the UAW, the Trump administration and the corporate elite are using the expanding prosecution of union officials—six UAW officials so far—to pressure the union not to adapt to the demands of the workers and instead impose in full the sweeping new concessions demanded by the auto companies.

But the federal government is playing with fire. In a pair of comments, the *Detroit News* responded to its own revelations with anxiety that the revelations will provoke an explosion among autoworkers. In an editorial pleading with the UAW not to call a strike, the newspaper's editorial board wrote:

“UAW officials must know that it’s a lot easier to take workers out on strike than it is to bring them back to their jobs... [autoworkers] may not trust any proposal Jones brings them, and thus refuse to ratify it as a form of protest. That could easily turn what should have been a short strike into a much longer one.”

“Ordering 46,000 members at GM to strike their employer would look like a cynical diversion reminiscent of the movie *Wag the Dog*,” *Detroit News* columnist Daniel Howes wrote in a separate comment. “The risks to both sides would expand exponentially because ending a walkout with a consensual deal is more difficult than starting one, especially now.”

The development of a new leadership and new organizations of struggle is the burning task of the hour. Autoworkers must move now to form rank-and-file committees to take the contract fight out of the hands of the bribed company agents in the UAW. Workers should hold meetings in every plant to elect their own leaders from among the most trusted rank-and-file workers, draw up a list of their own demands and prepare a plan of action to mobilize autoworkers across the country and internationally.

The *World Socialist Web Site* stands ready to assist workers in every way possible. Go to wsws.org/auto and begin the fightback by autoworkers today.



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