

Corruption scandal moves in on UAW President Gary Jones

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United Auto Workers President Gary Jones is implicated in new charges filed Thursday by federal prosecutors against another top UAW official. The charges focus on the alleged embezzlement of more than \$1.5 million in workers' dues money to finance the purchase of luxury items and activity.

The latest allegations follow the UAW's shutdown of the GM strike with an agreement, pushed through over widespread opposition, that meets all the company's demands. The contract allows for the unlimited expansion of temporary workers and sanctions the shutdown of three plants, including Lordstown Assembly in Ohio.

On Friday, UAW executives gathered in Detroit rubber-stamped an agreement with Ford that follows the "pattern" at GM. The UAW is now scheming to ram through this contract before moving on to Fiat Chrysler.

The latest indictments further expose the nature of the organization that is supposedly bargaining on behalf of workers. The UAW is a bribed tool of corporate management, run by corrupt criminals whose incomes, official and embezzled, put them in the top one percent of the population.

The new charges filed in the US District Court in Detroit directly indict Edward N. Robinson, who allegedly worked with Vance Pearson and an individual identified as UAW Official A to embezzle more than \$1.5 million between 2010 and September 2019, when Robinson left the UAW. "UAW Official A" has been identified by multiple media publications as Jones, based on sources close to the investigation.

Robinson was the president of the UAW Region 5 Midwest States Community Action Program (CAP) in Missouri, where Jones was the director until 2018. Pearson was Jones' second-in-command at Region 5,

until he took over the position of director after Jones was appointed UAW President.

A report in the *Detroit Free Press* gives a sense of the mafia character of the UAW: "The paperwork paints a dramatic picture of union officials concerned about the federal investigation, with references to a 'burner phone,' and assurances by Jones, as official A, allegedly telling Robinson that one of his relatives would be taken care of if he took responsibility for the embezzlement."

Robinson is expected to cooperate with investigators, meaning that charges against Jones himself are likely forthcoming. Jones' home was raided by the FBI in August, and a neighbor reported that he saw officials exiting the house with large sums of cash.

The complaint states that the UAW executives used the funds to fuel their "lavish lifestyles," including through the use of fraudulent vouchers to finance "cigars, private villas, high-end liquor and meal expenses, golfing apparel, golf clubs and green fees."

One instance of the criminal activity allegedly involved \$700,000 in cash that was split between Robinson and Official A, or Jones.

The UAW issued a statement along the lines of each of its official responses to the expanding corruption probe. "We take any allegation or claim about the misuse of union resources very seriously," it said. "The UAW is grounded in the principle of putting our members first, and that belief has never wavered."

In fact, as the latest round of contracts demonstrates, the UAW exists as a criminal conspiracy against autoworkers.

Robinson is the twelfth person, including many top UAW officials, directly charged in the federal investigation. Former UAW President Dennis Williams, who was replaced by Jones last year, has also

been implicated in various schemes, though he has not been officially charged.

In July of last year, Nancy Johnson, the top assistant to former UAW Vice President Norwood Jewell, told investigators that Williams directed top UAW executives to use funds from the UAW-company joint training centers to spend on personal items and travel.

The investigation into the UAW began with charges that then-Fiat Chrysler (FCA) chief negotiator Alphons Iacobelli made payments to UAW officials, including then-UAW Vice President for FCA General Holiefield, “to obtain benefits, concessions, and advantages for FCA in the negotiation, implementation, and administration” of contracts.

Officials previously implicated in bribery, including Johnson, Williams, Jewell, Holiefield, Virdell King, and Keith Mickens, were involved in agreeing to and forcing through contracts in 2007, 2009 and 2015. From a legal standpoint, these contracts should be considered null and void, as they were negotiated by individuals receiving bribes from the companies.

The same, however, holds for the present contract. As the indictments implicating Jones make clear, the entire officialdom of the UAW has been involved in corrupt practices at the expense of the workers they claim to represent.

It is impossible for workers to defend their interests through this criminal syndicate. Nor can workers rely on federal prosecutors to “reform” the UAW. One of the aims of the corruption investigation has been to create an added incentive for UAW executives to ram through pro-company deals over mass opposition, or, if this fails, to implement some sort of receivership to allow the government to directly intervene on behalf of the companies.

To fight for their interests, workers must establish new, democratic rank-and-file organizations completely independent of the UAW. The *WSWS Autoworker Newsletter* urges workers to elect factory committees to mobilize all autoworkers to oppose the current contracts and overturn the decades of UAW-backed concessions.



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