Fired by the union: Dana worker wrongfully fired in UAW/company conspiracy

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On September 16, Keaira Marsenburg, a Dana worker at Toledo Driveline, was fired from her job at the plant in a company- and union-backed conspiracy to remove the most class-conscious and militant workers from the shop floor amid ongoing negotiations between the UAW, USW and Dana Inc.

Keaira has worked at the plant since 2018. Due to high turnover rates as a result of unbearable working conditions, she is one of just a handful of workers who have been there since the plant opened that year.

Workers at all Dana plants and at workplaces everywhere need to take this firing as a warning and demand the immediate reinstatement of her job with full backpay for time lost.

Send your statement in support of Keaira to the Dana Workers' Rank-and-File Committee (DWRFC) at *danawrfc@gmail.com.*

Starting out at Dana

Keaira described what it was like when she got hired in. "When I first started at Dana, it was pretty rough. I started in 2018. We were working 12 hours, seven days a week. Then we went to three shifts. That made it a little better, but we were still working every day, it just made it less hours a day, so it was eight hours instead of 12.

"At the time we weren't union, so it was everything the company says, goes. The company was writing everyone up over anything. If they didn't like you, they would find ways to write you up. It wasn't legitimate. They worked us a lot, and we didn't do nothing but work. I would come home, take a nap, get back up and do it all over again. I did it for two and a half months."

Declining working conditions

"Working at Dana has not at all been what I would have expected. My grandfather, he retired from Ford. I actually have family members at Chrysler who have been there for 30 years. Compared to me, they actually get treated pretty well. I'm not saying that it hasn't been without issue or difficulty, they've been there years and they've been through some stuff but not like this. I really thought things would be different, especially when you give so much to a company like Dana. I gave so much of my time and my life and my body that I definitely would have expected a little bit better treatment."

Company harassment

In spite of the fact that Keaira worked 12-hour days, seven days a week, Dana Inc. has harassed and written her up for petty and illegitimate infractions since the beginning, including but not limited to bathroom breaks and taking time off work. She has fought back against each write-up and, until this summer, won all of her grievances against the company.

"I am one of the more vocal employees there, so I'm pretty much educated when it comes to the policies in the contract. I read up on a lot of it. I read up on other companies too, so I know how things are supposed to go. I'm an older employee, meaning I've been there since 2018 when it opened. So I'm more informed with how things go. Dana was writing me up all the time, and I would go back and say that I wasn't violating any policy or contract. Dana tries to pull the wool over your eyes, make you feel like you don't know what you're talking about. But I know my rights, and I know how to handle things.

"I got a write-up from a supervisor once which made me feel like I had to know my rights. They wrote me up and said I was in the bathroom too long. I asked them to pull up the cameras to show when I went in the bathroom and when I left, because they had said I was in there for an hour, but they wouldn't do it. They refused to show the footage. I had to basically turn into my own investigator and once I saw that they wouldn't pull up those cameras I started keeping all my own records in line because I know they were waiting for all these write-ups to pile up on me to get me out of there."

Dana Toledo is unionized

She explained how the UAW became involved at the plant. "It was a lot of whispering, we didn't know too much that was going on. It was my first time in a union shop. The UAW wasn't really verbal or communicating. Pretty much everybody just came to the unionization vote to get it out the way and get a raise. A lot of people were fresh and didn't know much about the union.

"And honestly, I didn't know. I just thought we might get a little bit of protection. I was on my last write-up at the time. Dana was trying to pile write-ups on me even before we were union. So I was on my last one. At the beginning it was okay because we had a certain committee who was trying to prove they were trustworthy. But now? They don't care. If you aren't their friend, they'll throw you under the bus. They don't help you, they don't communicate, it's really bad."

Keaira decided to run for vice chair at her plant earlier this year in an attempt to improve the conditions inside the plant for her coworkers and herself but was quickly disillusioned. "It's just how they handled

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everything about the whole vote—it was suspicious. A lot of people talked to me afterward and said they were confused because they voted for me and didn't understand how it turned out that way.

"These people who are on the UAW committee right now are the exact same ones who were on it and have been around since the UAW first came in. This election, they told us at the last minute. We don't have any bylaws so they pretty much did what they wanted to do. They set up an election time and date that was convenient to them. A lot of people were out on COVID leave, and we had people sign up for Dry Ridge, Kentucky to go work down there, so at least 30 people who went down to Dry Ridge couldn't even vote. The union rushed it when they knew people wouldn't be around, so we had to hurry up and vote, and had no time, so we kind of knew it was setup."

The setup

Before the contract negotiations, Keaira won every dispute she had filed over petty write-ups from the company, including against the notoriously faulty call-in system. Her fight against the company took a turn for the worse when the UAW got involved.

"I had just run for vice chair. I had no legitimate write-ups before I ran. Everything was good. For the last two or three months they had been piling up write-ups on me. The first write-up they were trying to suspend me. But they took it away because it got thrown out, and then gave me another one. There's a policy on the call-off line to call off 30 minutes before our shift. It's an ongoing problem I've been having with Dana—they know their call-off line is horrible [with technical issues]. The company admitted to the problems with the call-in line, which is why they were forced to throw that first one out. In order to dispute the write-up, you're supposed to be able to prove that you called, like sending a screenshot of the call attempt or your call log. But they just stopped accepting my proof for call-off, saying they 'can't prove it' any more. It put me at a 'risk' warning."

Keaira explained that many of her coworkers have experienced the same problem with the faulty call-in line, that it is common knowledge in the plant that it is broken, and that call logs are widely accepted as proof. She knew she was being set up for a firing attempt. Since the first write-up from this summer was thrown out due to overwhelming evidence that the call-in line does not work, they had to come up with another way to write her up.

"My second write-up came about a week after that. This time it was *my own union steward* who went to HR, lied and said I walked passed her line and made her feel 'threatened.' So they automatically pulled me in the office. They pulled up two old screenshots from my Facebook page and said my posts and me walking past her line was a threat to Dana. So my union steward had someone go to my personal Facebook page, get screenshots of two posts I made while I was out on quarantine, and then used those posts against me like a month later to help get me fired. These posts had nothing to do at all with Dana. Absolutely nothing. Not only that, it was my union committee person who actually sent the screenshots to HR! I cannot make this up—this is all facts. This is my own UAW committee, the people who are supposed to be protecting my job, they are the ones who are going to HR to help get me fired.

"They suspended me for five days because of this accusation from the union steward. Her *intention* was to get me fired. They suspended me, took my badge, then called me back and said I could come back. I asked what was the conclusion to the investigation, and I never received a clear answer. My next write-up would have been a termination."

Fired by the UAW

Keaira continues: "My union knew I had two write-ups in grievance mode. This whole time I got the union sitting on my grievances, and I'm one away from getting fired. I had a problem with the call-in line again, provided my proof—which they didn't accept—and that put me in termination mode. Basically, all the things in the last three months is them trying to pile these write-ups on me before a contract because I am one of about 60 people who has been there since 2017-18, since the beginning.

"I've been there since 2018, I've been written up probably over 10 times, and I fought every last one—and won. My first time not beating a write-up is with this UAW committee, and I feel like it's only because I'm not their favorite person. I just ran against these people in the election, and not only that, I was speaking my mind and speaking facts when we just had our discussion before this contract was up."

Removed from union page without notice

"They just kicked me out of the UAW Facebook group too. No notice, no nothing. The UAW has no intention on fighting for my job at all. In all of this I'm reaching out to them, they're not reaching out to me. They just kicked me out the group, kicked me out of the building, and told me to figure it out.

"One of my other coworkers also got kicked out of the UAW Dana page, along with a few other people. Anytime you voice your opinion, anytime you say something that goes against what the UAW wants, they do what they can to silence you and they kick you out of the group. This UAW page is supposed to be a page where the committee shares information with its members. So why are they just deciding to pick who gets to be in it or not? Why are they kicking people out for asking questions or disagreeing? If you don't kiss the chairperson's ass, it's like, 'Forget you.' And it isn't just me—it's a lot of workers who have been getting treated nasty by the UAW, people getting kicked out of the UAW group, and getting intimidation or threats.

Dana workers need to defend Keaira's job

"Them firing me, this is the best move that they could have done. They knew that if they fired me, then it meant that everyone in the whole building would have to bow down to them. It's like chess. They think: 'We gotta get rid of the queen so the rest will fold. If we knock the head off this giant, then the rest of the body will fall.' That's basically what their concept or motto is.

"They knew they had to get this girl fired. I do everything I'm supposed to do, and I know my rights. I've been there since the beginning and I speak up, I don't bite my tongue, and I talk to people. So a lot of people will follow what I do, and the last thing they want is 10 of me running around in that building or at other Dana plants.

"If I get my job back, it will be due to you all helping me; it will be due to my efforts and to the efforts of the Dana Workers' Rank-and-File Committee and the *Autoworker Newsletter*. The UAW is not going to put in any effort to get my job back. Getting my story out, this is just the first step. The next one has to be getting out there and talking to people. I feel connected with mostly everyone in the building. And I think we have a lot of good people on our team. "Building this rank-and-file committee

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should be a top priority for everyone right now because the UAW is trying to make it look like you all [at the *Autoworker Newsletter*] are the criminals, like it's the *Newsletter* who doesn't want to help us the workers, when it's really the other way around. The *Newsletter* is the one keeping us informed about everything, and the UAW don't keep us informed about anything.

"A lot of people need to get more involved with the DWRFC. The UAW is misinforming the workers about the *Newsletter*, and it needs to stop. It's very important that people should join this wave because Dana is just going to keep getting more hours worked from us."

Send your statement in support of Keaira to the Dana Workers' Rank-and-File Committee (DWRFC) at *danawrfc@gmail.com* or text 248-602-0936.

To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact

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