

Machine repairman killed in tragic accident at Ford Lima Engine Plant

Kay Emanon
5 November 2021

A Ford Lima Engine Plant worker in Ohio was fatally injured Wednesday in an accident involving mechanical equipment. Patrick Archer, age 50, was a mechanical repairman and reportedly left behind wife Mary Gilroy Archer and five children. The cause of death is being investigated, according to a statement by Major Andre McConnahea of the Allen County Sheriff's Office.

UAW Vice President Chuck Browning, Director of the UAW Ford Department, issued a short statement saying he was “heartbroken and devastated,” but provided no further details of the worker's death. He went on to call for workers to “rededicate themselves to safety and well-being of one another,” implicitly putting the onus for the tragic death on workers.

Kelli Felker, head of Ford global manufacturing and labor communications, issued a perfunctory statement Thursday offering condolences to family and coworkers, while claiming, “The safety and security of everyone in our facility is our highest priority.”

The Ford Lima Engine plant employs approximately 1,530 workers and currently produces the Ti-VCT Duratec V6 and the EcoBoost V6 engines. In 2019, workers at the Lima Engine Plant voted to reject the national contract brought back by the United Auto Workers. The deal pitted them against workers at the Romeo Engine Plant in Michigan, which ended up closing, with the loss of 600 jobs.

One Lima Engine Plant worker, who indicated she was not comfortable speaking about the specifics of the death until the investigation is completed, told the *World Socialist Web Site Autoworker Newsletter*, “Our entire plant is devastated by the tragedy.”

Many tributes to Patrick Archer were posted on Facebook. One coworker wrote, “Pat worked at ATI for many years before he went to Ford and he was quite the character, always the jokester. His sister works at ATI

in one of my departments and she and her family are completely devastated with this loss.”

Kevin, a former automotive worker in Ohio, told the WSWS that the death of Archer resonated with his experiences. Pointing to the pervasive speedup and relentless overtime workers face, he said, “The auto industry is dangerous, the line speed and the massive overtime; add those together and danger is there.

“You can't say no to it [overtime] or they will fire you. When I worked at Bridgestone in Upper Sandusky, we had to work four hours extra a day before the shift, and they rotated two hours overtime every day at the end of the shift, and weekends. Now add in travel time and we're talking 17–18-hour days. That leaves only six to seven hours to unwind, eat and try to catch some Z's, just to get up and do it all again.

“Not only dangerous at work, but people's attitudes change and fights do happen as well. Dozing off at the wheel on the way home is also not fun.

“What's really sad is they will be talking about how much production suffered and money lost. I would say to them ‘No you lost a life for greed.’ It's tragic. I understand production and all, but the auto industry is really bad.”

Workplaces fatalities like this are all too frequent occurrences. Just six months ago, crane operator Terry Garr lost his life in an industrial accident at the Stellantis Sterling Heights Stamping plant in Michigan. Sources from inside the plant reported to the *WSWS Autoworker Newsletter* that a heavy die fell on Garr towards the end of his shift. One week following Garr's death a millwright at the same plant died from COVID-19.

Like other cases before, workers will be kept in the dark about the circumstances of the death of Archer as they are kept on the line during COVID and forced to

continue production by the corporation and the UAW.

No confidence can be placed in the joint UAW-Ford health and safety committee to carry out a thorough and honest investigation. In other similar tragedies, such as the death of Terry Garr, the results have obscured the facts in order to exonerate management for any responsibility. Coworkers and family members deserve a full and honest accounting of the facts so that future such tragedies can be prevented.

An independent investigation is needed to expose the unsafe conditions workers face. Contact the WSWs if you have any further information on the case or would like to help build an independent rank-and-file committee at the Ford Lima Engine Plant.



To contact the WSWs and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact