

On eve of union convention, court-appointed monitor exposes further criminality by UAW bureaucrats

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On Tuesday, the court-appointed monitor overseeing the United Auto Workers submitted a report documenting the fact that UAW International Executive Board members, including UAW President Ray Curry, had obstructed the investigation into corruption and covered up ongoing criminal activity.

The UAW was put under government oversight last year after a years-long Justice Department corruption probe led to the conviction and jailing of a dozen UAW officers, including two of the last national presidents, on federal bribe-taking, embezzlement and anti-racketeering charges. In May 2021, the US Attorney's office selected ex-banking regulator Neil Barofsky to monitor the UAW's compliance with a consent decree it co-signed "to ensure that no further unlawful activity occurs." The government monitorship will remain in effect until January 12, 2027.

In the 35-page report he submitted to the US District Court in Detroit, Barofsky said he had recently taken action against two former UAW officials for embezzling union funds and is currently working on 19 open investigations. This includes a new one into "a senior UAW leader."

Between November 2021 and March 2022, Barofsky reported, UAW President Curry and other IEB executives blatantly violated the consent decree, which prohibits any obstruction or interference with the work of the independent monitor, and delayed his investigation.

The release of the report on the eve of the UAW 38th Constitutional Convention, which begins on July 25, demonstrates that nothing fundamental has changed in the UAW.

Responding to the new revelations, Will Lehman, a Pennsylvania Mack Trucks worker running for UAW president, said, "Curry and the rest of the IEB completely ignored the consent decree because they did not want information about ongoing corruption to become public because it would further discredit their charade about 'reforming' the union.

"I am running for UAW president to develop a rank-and-file rebellion against the entire apparatus. The massive assets controlled by Solidarity House, which were built up from the dues deducted from our dwindling paychecks, must be used for the benefit of workers, not for luxury villas and golf outings in Palm Springs."

While union executives had promised to share the notes of their internal investigations and cooperate with the monitor after the

filing of his initial status report on November 11, 2021, Barofsky wrote, "the Union's cooperativeness veered sharply in the wrong direction. Rather than the UAW providing the promised oral interview summaries to the Monitor, the Union withdrew from its commitment to do so, citing concerns that the Monitor might improperly use that information in a way that could become public. The Union also further slowed its production of other investigative materials to the Monitor and declined to timely share certain information about its efforts to implement compliance reforms."

The report continued:

Making matters worse, as the Monitor tried to carry on with his work, the Monitor uncovered evidence that the Union's leadership and its then-lawyers were concealing from the Monitor an investigation by the Union into the mishandling of a sum of cash by a regional Assistant Director, a senior Union official. The Union withheld information about this misconduct and the related investigation even though, from early in the monitorship, the Monitor has had a standing request to the Union for prompt disclosure of information about all investigations into potential financial misconduct or corruption taking place in the Union. The Monitor had also specifically warned the Union's President in writing about the need to comply with that demand, following a previous failure to do so. The Union compounded that violation of its obligation to cooperate with the Monitor by improperly excluding a representative of the Monitor from an "executive session" of a meeting of the Union's International Executive Board ("IEB") in which factual information about this ongoing investigation was shared. It was only during the course of unrelated investigative work that the Monitor independently learned of the misconduct underlying the undisclosed investigation.

This damning exposure raises the question as to whether Curry or any of the other executive board members running for reelection at next week's 38th UAW Constitutional Convention in Detroit

should be disqualified.

Curry and the other UAW officers only resumed their limited cooperation with the independent monitor after being threatened with legal action. According to Barofsky's report, after the months-long "pattern of uncooperative conduct" he contacted the US Justice Department, which dispatched US Attorney Dawn N. Ison to Detroit.

On March 31, 2022, Ison and her senior staff met with Curry and the UAW General Counsel and told them to cooperate with the monitor or face legal repercussions for violating the consent decree. While Curry reportedly disputed that the charge that union had violated the decree, he "nonetheless committed to 'a total reset' with the Monitor," Barofsky wrote.

After the Justice Department meeting, the UAW appointed a new counsel who provided necessary documents for Barofsky to file disciplinary charges against two UAW officers for the embezzlement of union assets. According to the report:

- On July 6, 2022, the Monitor filed disciplinary charges against Timothy Edmunds, former Financial Secretary-Treasurer of UAW Local 412, after Edmunds pleaded guilty in federal court to embezzling approximately \$2 million from UAW Local 412 between 2011 and 2021 in a scheme involving personal use of the UAW Local 412 debit card and transfer of funds from UAW Local 412 bank accounts to Edmunds' personal account. The Monitor charged that Edmunds' violations of federal law, the UAW Constitution, the Ethical Practices Codes, and the Administrative Letters warranted disciplinary action.

- On July 18, 2022, the Monitor entered into a stipulation with former Region 5 Assistant Director Danny Trull (who held that position from September 2012 to December 2015). Trull agreed not to contest the Monitor's allegations regarding his participation in the embezzlement scheme related to master account arrangements with hotels for which Vance Pearson, Edward "Nick" Robinson, and Gary Jones were convicted. He also agreed to be expelled and debarred for life from the UAW for these actions. The stipulation is currently pending before the Adjudications Officer.

The previously un-charged Trull was a top aide to former Region 5 director and later UAW President Gary Jones. Last year, Jones was sentenced to prison for 28 months for his role in the years-long conspiracy by Region 5 officials to steal more than a million dollars in union assets to buy cigars, custom-made golf clubs and host lavish annual conferences in California and Missouri.

According to a report in the *Detroit News* Wednesday, Jones left prison last month after serving less than nine months of his sentence and traded his minimum security cell for a \$1 million waterfront home southeast of Dallas, which "overlooks a 41,000-acre reservoir stocked with catfish and largemouth bass."

Jones' predecessor, former UAW President Dennis Williams, served nine out of his 21-month sentence and was released on "community confinement" to his \$634,217 home in Corona, California.

In his report, Barofsky cited new instances of gross corruption:

- The UAW paid "an overseas consultant" more than \$850,000 from 2012 through 2021 "despite having no active agreement in place, and when there was an agreement in place," the consultant

wasn't required to provide regular reports of his activities, the report said.

- After a March 2022 tip submitted to the Monitor's hotline, Barofsky's office confirmed that the UAW had branded merchandise with the names of IEB officials running for reelection in violation of labor laws prohibiting the use of union funds for that purpose. This included spending \$95,000 for 1,500 backpacks with the name and title of Secretary-Treasurer Frank Stuglin, which the bureaucracy distributed or planned to distribute at conferences in Spring 2022. After the monitor informed the UAW that he would prohibit such activity in the then-pending election rules, the UAW covered over Stuglin's name on the backpacks that had not yet been distributed and decided not to distribute other branded items, such as mugs and pens, bearing his name.

- The UAW held a Financial Officer's Conference (the "FOC") in New Orleans on March 13-18, which featured a \$300,000 dinner reception for the approximately 1,000 conference attendees, and another \$19,200 dinner party for approximately 80-100 conference attendees. The UAW told the monitor that "these expenses are consistent with past conferences, appropriate and typical for a Union that is as large as the UAW... and that there is no policy that prohibits them." In his report, the monitor simply commented that "some conference expenditures might benefit from enhanced scrutiny."

"Nothing will change unless rank-and-file workers take control for themselves," UAW presidential candidate Will Lehman said. "That is why I encourage delegates at next week's convention to nominate me and for active UAW members and retirees to support the fight to empower the rank and file and wage a real fight to improve the living standards and working conditions of all workers."

To find out more about Lehman's campaign, visit WillforUAWpresident.org.



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