UAW and Dana Inc. conspire to fire dozens of autoworkers from Toledo Driveline plant

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The United Auto Workers and auto parts manufacturer Dana Inc. are carrying out a mass firing at the transnational corporation's Toledo Driveline Plant in northwestern Ohio. In recent months, dozens of workers have been fired in a systematic effort to purge the plant of anyone who has spoken up against corporate abuse in the past. The firings are ongoing, and workers still in the plant report they are "walking on eggshells."

This act of corporate dictatorship takes place as prices for food, gas and other necessities surge and workers and their families cannot afford to lose their jobs. Workers with years at the plant and clean records are being replaced with lower-paid temps in order to increase profits for wealthy shareholders. The *World Socialist Web Site* learned that the labor contractor Manpower is currently hiring temp workers at the plant for $17/hr.

The cause for the firings goes much deeper than the new HR official Dana has brought in to carry them out. It is part of a systematic corporate policy to lower labor costs and terrorize workers into accepting worse exploitation in the coming year.

On February 21, Dana reported "record sales for 2022" of $10.2 billion and operating cash flow of $649 million, though workers have again received no profit sharing. Dana made its wealthy investors even richer by forcing workers to tag through breaks to keep the line running at all times and work 7 days a week for 19 days straight. The company is also not allowing workers to flex out, that is, leave early if the line is full.

Dana Senior Vice President Timothy Kraus told investors: "Looking forward to 2023" the company will ensure "ongoing cost recoveries" to drive up profits. In other words, unless workers take action, they will "look forward" to working even harder under more dangerous conditions for lower pay this year. This is the reality of life under capitalism, where all corporations profit from workers' exploitation and hardship.

The UAW is playing a critical part in helping the company carry out this attack on workers. Workers report that UAW officials are not only allowing this illegal mass firing, they are even telling the company who to fire, using loopholes and tricks to fire workers for "material violations" of the contract, even when workers have far below the threshold of points required to be dismissed.

One inside source told the *World Socialist Web Site* that leading union officials give each other high fives when they have successfully orchestrated another worker's firing on false pretenses. When one worker asked the UAW to defend her from corporate abuse, UAW leader Lakesha Self reportedly said, "I'm not helping that bitch."

This crass statement epitomizes the attitude of the UAW bureaucracy to the rank and file. The UAW has hoarded $1.6 billion in workers' dues money, which it uses to pay 450 bureaucrats over $100,000 in salaries. In recent years, two past UAW presidents and many leading officials were jailed for robbing workers of their dues money and accepting bribes from the corporations in exchange for selling workers out.

So many workers have been fired at Dana Toledo that HR claims they are receiving death threats. As a result, HR has been allowed to work from home, but workers have been forced to keep working despite the alleged danger.

The *World Socialist Web Site* demands the immediate rehiring of all fired workers, with full back pay. From now on, rank-and-file workers must have control of all hiring and firing.

Here are some of the workers who have been fired:

Teaonna Campbell, age 25, was fired in December 2022 after taking two days off to travel out of town to identify the body of her 21-year-old cousin who was murdered. Letter Number 17 of the UAW-Dana contract states that Dana workers get three days for bereavement of deceased relatives, and Campbell only took two. She later called off one day to attend the funeral, and was fired.

Campbell showed the *World Socialist Web Site* a locket she wears around her neck with a picture of her deceased cousin, and became emotional."I was lied to," she said. "I was brought into the union office by [UAW official] Cherita Walker who told me not to worry. As soon as we got into the room with the company they fired me, and the union said nothing. Cherita asked me if I wanted to file a grievance, and I said yes. I haven't heard anything since. I was extremely close to my cousin. They knew what I was going through; they would see me crying."

Campbell provided the UAW and Dana with the phone numbers of police investigators to whom she spoke, as well as the number for the mortuary. She also sent them her cousin's obituary and photos from the crime scene, but the UAW said her grievance was denied because she failed to provide a statement from the owner of the funeral home. Campbell said, "We give so much to Dana, and we pay $800 in union dues every year, but for what?"

Dasmin McClain, age 22, was fired in early November 2022, two weeks after announcing she was pregnant. McClain told the WSWS, "I don't have any write-ups, I was an honor roll student, I was on the principal's list."

But McClain was getting picked on by another worker with a long record of harassment, and this worker assaulted her by pushing a heavy part into McClain's stomach, even though the worker knew she was pregnant. McClain reported this to management and the UAW, but instead of taking action to protect her, McClain was fired for "harassing" the other worker. Many workers report the UAW plays favorites, allowing some to break the rules and get away with it as long as they do not criticize the UAW or Dana.

A few weeks before this, McClain had stood up to a supervisor who was harassing another worker for wearing yoga pants to work. McClain believes she was fired both because she spoke up against the supervisor and because the company did not want to pay her for maternity leave. The UAW did nothing to protect her, she said. "They don't go to bat for us. We pay union dues, and they don't do anything for us."

Maijoy Wooten, age 21, a skilled quality technician, was fired on January 9, 2022, after a male employee harassed her outside the women's bathroom at work. Wooten had previously reported supervisors four times

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for acts of sexual harassment. One supervisor said he was going to “get her ass,” and she reported it. “Every time I reported him, he harassed me more,” she said.

When Wooten stood up for herself after the latest incident, she was fired. She asked her union representative to stand up for her, but the UAW did not submit a grievance until it was contractually too late to get her job back. She explained, “I was told my grievance was submitted on January 18. They waited nine days, but if you don’t submit a grievance seven days after your dismissal, you miss the deadline. I wrote a three-page grievance citing contract language, but they ignored it. The union is the company. We are all getting fired, and the UAW isn’t helping anyone.”

Brandon Hineline, age 23, was fired after Christmas break 2022, when workers had a week off. He took a vacation day for January 3, and when he came back the next day, he was called into a meeting by HR, who told him he was suspended. The next morning, he was told he was fired, after being informed that someone close to the UAW said he had made a racist comment, which was not true.

Multiple African American workers vouch for Hineline, but the UAW ignored his appeals for help and instead allowed the company to slander him as a racist, dividing workers against each other. Hineline said, “I tried texting and calling the UAW but they ignored me. I don’t even know if the grievance ever got filed. Nobody from the union ever even asked me to fill out a grievance form, and that’s in the contract.” Hineline had not even been written up before this incident. He was not allowed back on the premises and was fired over the phone.

Corvon Williams, age 23, worked at Dana Driveline for nearly four years, almost since the plant opened. He rarely had more than two points on his record, far below the threshold for dismissal.

One morning in February 2023, he arrived at the plant at 6:55 for his 7:00 shift, with plenty of time to park and clock in on time. But on this morning, the company had parked a delivery truck in front of the entrance, which caused a long line of traffic and led him to clock-in a minute or two late. “I come to work every single day,” Williams said. “I literally only have a point-and-a-half. I’m never late, I’m always on time.” He marked “6:59” on his time clock.

Later that day he was called into a meeting with HR, who fired him on the spot for “lying on a company document.” Several UAW officials were in the room when this happened, and none stood up to defend him. The UAW called him two days later to say his grievance was denied at the first stage, and he never heard back after emailing them. He told the UAW and Dana to check the cameras outside the plant to show that it was the company’s fault he was late, but they did not review any tapes. Williams said, “The UAW takes my money but they got me fired. I’ve worked jobs that are non-union, and it was the same as Dana except for the dues.”

Other incidents

These stories are just the tip of the iceberg. Workers reported hearing of other incidents of serious abuse:

• One Dana worker said, “I know a woman who gave birth to a baby who tragically died in the hospital. The worker tried to file for a vacation day so she could bury her child. They wouldn’t give it to her. She can’t afford to lose her job so she didn’t take off work.”

• Another reported, “My co-worker had a close family member test positive for COVID-19, and the rule was that if your immediate family tests positive, you can’t get in trouble for taking off work. This worker took a photo of the positive test, and the company fired him because they said he used a photo from the internet. In reality he was at risk of infecting all of us.”

The first major firing at Dana Toledo took place in 2021, when the UAW and Dana conspired to fire a militant worker, Keaira Marsenburg, who had worked at the Dana Driveline plant in Toledo and was an active member of the Dana Workers Rank-and-File Committee, which was set up to oppose the 2021 contract and mobilize the workers against the company and the pro-company union. The *World Socialist Web Site* campaigned against her firing and mobilized support on her behalf among autoworkers across Dana plants and at the Big Three.

There is now further evidence that it was the UAW which fired Keaira. One UAW official who was present when Keaira Marsenburg was fired told the WSWS:

> I was there when Keaira was fired. Keaira posted something on Facebook about the rank-and-file committee. [UAW official] Gayle Jackson said it was about her, but it wasn’t just about her. The union didn’t like that she stood up when something wasn’t right. UAW Chair Lakesha Self put her hand up to me for a high-five and said, “We got that bitch,” referencing Keaira being fired. I went to HR and asked Cory Jones, who was then Dana’s HR person, and he said he got an anonymous call about Keaira. I told him that I know the union did it. And he looked at me and said, “The UAW are dirty motherfuckers.” But Keaira was fired. The union set her up. It was totally bullshit. They told on her.

Enough is enough! All wrongfully fired workers must be rehired *with full back pay*. The only way to prevent this from happening is for Dana workers to have **democratic rank-and-file control over hiring and firing**. Dana workers have the power to change the situation by coming together in a rank-and-file committee, which will share information, give workers the right to democratically discuss their demands for change, and ensure workers are united in common action, free of control from the pro-corporate UAW officials.

To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

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