

Husband and wife report Dana fired them within same month at Dry Ridge, Kentucky plant after filing grievance over lost wages

Eric London
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If you are an autoworker who would like to join the Dana Workers' Rank-and-File Committee, text or call 248-602-0936 today or fill out the form at the bottom of this article.

Shyann and Tyler Turner worked at Dana's Dry Ridge, Kentucky plant for a combined 9 years before the corporation fired both of them in February within the span of two weeks. Although the couple's daughters, aged 3 and 5, cannot remember a time before their parents worked for Dana, the family has been living on canned food and going without necessary medical attention for weeks. Days before Shyann and Tyler were fired, Dana paid out \$14.3 million in quarterly dividends to its wealthy shareholders.

Shyann spoke to the *World Socialist Web Site* after reading about the mass firings at Dana's driveline plant in Toledo, Ohio located 240 miles north. Tucked between the low rolling hills of rural Kentucky's Bluegrass Region, workers at the Dry Ridge plant produce parts for some of the world's most profitable vehicles, including the Ford F-150, F-350 and Bronco, and Stellantis' Ram 1500 TRX.

The Toledo and Dry Ridge plants are each within a stone's throw of I-75, the main artery for the multi-billion dollar auto parts industry, but the workers at both plants are connected by more than just a highway. The Turner family's story will be familiar to Dana workers and autoworkers everywhere:

"The same thing is happening here," Shyann said of the mass firings in Toledo, where over 50 workers have been terminated, often on what workers believe to be false pretenses.

"They are firing people left and right in Dry Ridge,

people who have been there for years. Me and my husband were on the Alternative Work Schedule (AWS) that we were guaranteed in the 2021 contract. AWS gives us days off—it was the only reason why many people voted for the contract. There used to be 120 people on AWS before, now there are 14," she says. "They are pushing us out the door and bringing in temps."

Shyann and Tyler both say they were fired without warning and without a disciplinary hearing. They were each denied the contractual right to come back to work under the "last chance" program. They believe the circumstances of their dismissals show the UAW went along with their terminations.

Tyler was fired first. A week before his termination, he filed a grievance with the UAW to force the company to return \$1,500 in lost wages. He was owed a bonus for perfect attendance and was also paid straight time rather than holiday pay for working during the holidays.

Shyann was fired almost immediately after her husband on the grounds that she "pointed out." However, she says the company wrongfully pointed her out for days she had been approved to take off under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), and also failed to inform her she had accrued other points within 7 days, which means, under the contract, that they cannot count. She was also given whole points on two days she arrived late, which should have been counted as half points.

"I came into work on February 24 and not even an hour into the schedule, they called me into the front office and fired me," Shyann says, explaining that the UAW took no action to help her explain to the

company that she was wrongfully pointed: “My union rep clocked in that day, helped fire me, clocked out and went home. I never got a warning, I never got a disciplinary hearing, I never got 90 day probation, I never got last chance.”

Shyann provided the UAW with a chart from her health care provider showing the days she took off under the FMLA were covered under that act. She also reminded the UAW that she cannot be fired based on points about which she was not notified within a week. Article 18 of the contract states that “All Attendance related discipline will be issued within seven working days or be considered void” and that “all disciplinary actions will be issued in a timely manner.” She was pointed for taking a day off to attend a cousin’s funeral on December 22 but was not informed of this point until she was fired three months later.

Shyann believes the company and UAW are collaborating to fire workers who speak up against corporate abuse and against violations of the contract.

“I tell my union rep when things are going wrong at the plant, and when I see violations of the contract,” she said. “I feel that’s why I got fired. Now the UAW says they filed a grievance, but that didn’t help my husband.”

Shyann showed the *World Socialist Web Site* an email from the chairman of the UAW which read, “Per our discussion on Wednesday March 1st I suggested you file unemployment and if anything changed, we would let you know.” She has not heard anything since. To make matters worse, Shyann says she cannot apply for Medicaid or food stamps, because the company still has not provided her or her husband with their termination letters.

The Dry Ridge plant is notorious for health and safety violations. On the night of June 1-2, 2021, Danny Walters, a 60-year-old Dana worker, suffered a *grand mal* seizure on the line after being forced to work 60 days straight. Neither the company nor the UAW ever called his wife to inform her of what happened, and as a result, he died without proper medical attention later that night. The company cut off the family’s health care the next day.

Yesterday, Walters’ widow, Marcia Walters, issued a statement to Dana workers urging them to unite and fight against the mass firings:

“Dana took my husband’s joy for life and in many

respects, they took his life. I am not shocked one bit that things haven’t changed. They lie each week to their employees about getting a day off. This corporation is unbelievably cruel to their workers. I am super happy to see workers fighting against the wrongful loss of their jobs.”

Shyann was informed that Dana workers in Toledo have organized a rank-and-file committee to oppose the mass firings. “I want my job back too, and I will come up there with a sign to protest with them in Toledo. It’s what we have to do.”

On March 7, the Dana Workers’ Rank-and-File Committee published a statement calling for a united struggle across all plants to rehire all fired workers and to give rank-and-file workers control over hiring and firing at all Dana plants. All Dana workers are encouraged to read the statement and distribute it on social media and to their coworkers.

If you are an autoworker who would like to join the rank-and-file committee, text or call 248-602-0936 today.



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