

# Letter from former Amazon worker Christina Brown to UPS workers: “Help make it so that what happened to my sister should never happen to anyone ever again”

**Christina Brown**  
14 July 2023

*The following letter was written by Christina Brown, the sister of Poushawn Brown, an Amazon worker who died in 2021 during the height of the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. It is being distributed this weekend to UPS workers in the Washington, DC area.*

*The national UPS contract expires on July 31 for 340,000 workers, and workers have voted by 97 percent to authorize strike action to win significant pay increases, better working conditions and an end to the tiered-wage system, among other things. Last Sunday, workers formed the UPS Workers Rank-and-File Committee to fight for workers’ control of their struggle and to combat betrayals by the Teamsters bureaucracy.*

*Send in your statements of support for Christina and her sister by filling out the form below.*

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My name is Tina Brown. My late sister Poushawn and I were warehouse workers at Amazon’s DDC3 location in Springfield, Virginia. I want you UPS workers to understand that I stand in support of your struggle against the company, which has made billions from your blood, sweat and tears.

I’m here to tell you my story and not only my story, my sister’s story. My sister worked at Amazon until the day she died. My sister was an outstanding person, mother and a damn good employee. She knew how to work every shift in that warehouse and she never told the company “no.” No job was too big for her. We both started off as drivers in late 2018 and moved to the warehouse in summer of 2019. I worked the pick shift and my sister worked as a packaging sorter.

In March of 2020 the pandemic hit. Everyone was scared. Like UPS, Amazon kept its doors open. And like UPS, the warehouses were unsafe. Workers were coming in with fevers. There was no personal protective equipment or enforcement of face masks at our site.

At that time, my sister made several complaints to Human Resource headquarters in Seattle and to her supervisors. Her complaints went unaddressed for months. Two months later, after she had complained with no results, Amazon opened a safety COVID department and told us that they were going to be testing to help us stay safe.

At first, we had thought the company would bring nurses and doctors to test us. After all, they said we were “essential” employees. Never in one million years did we think that Amazon employees were going to be testing other employees.

Amazon knew exactly what they were doing: they were trying to save money. Not only were they trying to save money, but it got faster and more dangerous and unsafe at the job.

My sister wrote more letters to management and HR. She wrote more letters and text messages and emails to supervisors stating the warehouse conditions were still unsafe. There was still COVID in the building. People were coming to work. They were coming to work sick and not only that, they were coming to work after testing positive for COVID.

My sister was not a nurse or a doctor. Amazon did not care that my sister was being trained by another employee to stick Q-tip swabs up other employees’

noses and test them for COVID-19. There was no vaccine out at this time, no proper PPE or masks, no plexiglass, nothing. Amazon had my sister testing over 50 employees a day as she worked in the safety COVID department from Sunday through Thursday, from 9 a.m. till 6:30 p.m.

My sister fell ill the first week of January 2021 with the same symptoms that she was testing employees for. On the day she died, my sister asked several times to leave work early because she was feeling ill and she was not well. She was told she could go to the doctor's on her day off because she did not have enough paid time off to leave.

The day she died, she stayed at work until the end of her shift. My sister went home and went to sleep and never woke up again. She left behind a 12-year-old daughter and a bedridden mother.

So when I tell you that I'm reading every day about UPS and you guys striking, I want you to know you have my full support. Not only do you have my full support, you have my family's full support and I know if my sister was here you would have her support, 100 percent.

My sister died working for Amazon. She died working for a company that did not give a damn about her. They used her and mistreated her. They had nothing to offer us but six weeks of grief counseling for the loss of a family member, sibling, daughter and a mother. Not just that. They told us we need to hurry up and use it because it would expire in April.

I want you workers to understand one thing, especially as warehouse workers. I know exactly what you're going through. I've been there. It's the summertime. We had no air conditioner in the warehouse, so if it was 100 degrees outside it was 110 to 120 degrees inside.

Believe me, you are replaceable. Your bosses do not care about you. They care about numbers and you are another number to them. The day my sister died, I called Amazon's warehouse and told them she had passed away. The company called me two days later and asked me why she hadn't shown up at work.

She was such an outstanding employee, she had never missed a day before then. No flowers, no sorries or condolences to my mom or to her daughter. Not anything. My sister's job went up for replacement within three days of her death.

I want you guys to understand nothing is worth your life. Nothing you are put in harm's way every single day for. I 100 percent stand with you. You have to know your worth. I understand you have children, you have bills, but if you all just stand together and come together, you can change this situation. The company is nothing without the employees. Help make it so that what happened to my sister should never happen to anyone ever again. There could never ever be another Poushawn Brown. You have my 100 percent support.

God bless you.



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