

# Fired Stellantis temp: “We need to figure out a way where everyone can come together because no one’s safe”

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*The Autoworkers Rank-and-File Committee Network and the WSWS are hosting an emergency online meeting Saturday, January 20, at 1 p.m. Eastern to discuss how to organize a fight against the mass job cuts in the auto industry. Register here.*

On January 13, hundreds of temporary workers, or “supplemental employees,” at the Warren Truck Assembly Plant (WTAP) received a text message from Stellantis Human Resources informing them of their firing. The message stated, “Your last day work will be noted as January 12, 2024, and your medical benefits will last until the end of January. We do appreciate your contribution to the company and wish you well in your future endeavors.”

Annette (whose name has been changed for privacy), who hired in as a temp in June, had just applied for a mortgage loan. With zero notice about losing her job, she was forced to live out of her vehicle with her children during part of the deadly Arctic blast this week, and is now scrambling to find a suitable arrangement for her family without an income.

She wanted to share her story with the Autoworker Newsletter because she knows she is in the same position as hundreds of other now-fired Stellantis workers who are facing poverty and homelessness.

“Everything just went down the drain. I had just walked into work when I got the text message that I was fired. You’ve got people literally dragging their kids around on a hope and a wish, waiting for these jobs, coming to these orientations, listening to the company talk about ‘family, family, family,’ and how if you take this job ‘you can take care of your family,’” she explained.

“So many people passed up on other opportunities to work here. Before I started at Stellantis, I had picked up a permanent, full-time job. I left everything to take the Stellantis job because of the way it was presented that once you’re in, even if it’s just temporary, you’re good. Because of my schedule being 4:30-4:30 and working so much, I couldn’t register for school. I had to let the other job go

because the hours conflicted with the plant. This was some life-ruining type of stuff that they just did, like dropping a freaking bomb onto people’s lives.”

She did not find out she had been fired on Friday until she showed up to work her shift the following Saturday morning. “I understand that Michigan is an at-will employment state, but they could have given us some notice. I had no idea this was going to happen. It is really hard for me to just have nothing to land on. My mom can take the kids here and there, but it is not ideal for them. I’ve been staying in my car when I can, but it is just so cold.”

## The 2023 UAW-Big Three contract

Annette described the discussions among autoworkers over supporting the 2023 contract and the concerns over the future of their jobs. “I was skeptical, of course! I was not in support of it. I thought it was a really crappy contract and didn’t vote for it. But they put people back on the schedule and had us filling out all the forms to show us that we really would be getting rolled over [from temporary to full-time status],” she said. “So to have the rug ripped out from under me, from under so many people, it just really is not right.”

“At that time I had about six months at the plant. They said once the contract was ratified that I would have to give up my time and start over, which is BS. I knew something was up. So I started thinking, once they give us temps the \$21 an hour raise, they’re just going to take us off the schedule. And sure enough, after that they started taking people off the schedule!” she said.

“The language in this contract was just bad. Too much wording about ‘at our discretion’ and stuff like that. There was nothing that was definite in the contract, no dates confirmed for the rollover, no changes to our health care, no

nothing. This contract wasn't all about TPTs [temporary part-time workers]. It was about the full-timers too, and we helped them, so they should be able to help us.

"Even though I voted no, a lot of TPTs were enthused and they voted yes to get that contract through. They just wanted to be making money like everyone else, and we shouldn't have been misled like that. We have lives, family, and ourselves to live for. We're dragging our kids around with the hope of building our lives around these jobs and it's just not right. No one should be misled like that, especially when you're doing the right thing, coming to work every day, doing the job, doing more than your job, going above and beyond just to be spit in the face like that."

### **"I feel like the UAW must have known this was coming"**

Annette was angered and disappointed when the scheduled UAW meeting was canceled shortly after the firings were announced. "I have so many questions that I was going to bring up, like are we going to get profit sharing still?" she said. "I've been texting and calling my union steward but they do not text me back or contact me at all. No response, nothing."

Annette said that many fired workers felt betrayed and blindsided by the UAW. "I feel like the UAW must have known this was coming. I'm sure they had a little list, they chose their people who they wanted to keep because they were already working like that with favoritism anyway."

"Shawn Fain just said to the news something like, 'None of those people should have lost their jobs.' Okay then, so are you saying that to mean that we should get our jobs back? Are you saying that you're going to fight for us? Because everything that I'm hearing from the stewards and everybody else from the UAW is, 'Have a good day. Thanks for your service.' Fain has not done a damn thing to help."

"There was no forewarning, no preparation for this, no nothing. They lied. They kept saying they would roll us over and then they just fired us. These UAW stewards, especially the ones in the plant, should be ashamed of themselves, because as close as we are every day and how much time we spend together, they should've at least had enough decency to try to warn us or at least answer our questions. The only thing I asked my steward is, 'How do I advocate for myself? If I can't go through you, who can I go to?' and I get no answer. It shouldn't be like that," she said.

### **"We can't be treated like this"**

"I feel like there has to be something that can be done about this and I want answers. That's why I wanted people to hear my story," she said. "I just want everyone who reads this article to know that we can't be treated like this. What they did was absolutely wrong. We should've had way more information. We helped build those profits. We helped push that contract through."

"It's going to require a lot of us workers to actually come together. That's going to be hard because we've been fighting just to live. Now the firings are another thing on people's plates, but we have to know that if we come together it could work. I have never went about any of this before, but I know what's happening is wrong, and I want to do something about it."

"When we ratified this contract, [UAW Vice President for Stellantis] Rich Boyer said that there were 5,000 jobs added. How are there 5,000 jobs there?!" she asked.

"There's still people in the plant who are walking on eggshells right now. No one's safe. Even if you're still in that plant, you are not safe. People who are still in the plant don't know if they're getting rolled over. The people who got fired, we don't know if we can ever get our jobs back. We don't know if they're going to just hire other people. We don't know anything. We need some actual answers to these questions and I think we need to come together."



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