

“May justice be served to the fullest in all manners and aspects of this case”

Video by Will Lehman sparks outpouring of support for investigation into death of Stellantis worker Ronald Adams Sr.

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The WSWs urges all workers to support the investigation into Ronald Adams Sr.’s death. Fill out the form at the end of this article to send us your comments and get involved. Your identity will be kept confidential.

A video posted by socialist autoworker Will Lehman on TikTok calling for an independent investigation into the death of Stellantis worker Ronald Adams Sr. has garnered enormous support, with over 80,000 views, 23,000 likes, and 800 comments within 24 hours of posting. The overwhelming response demonstrates the deep anger among workers over unsafe conditions in factories and the systematic cover-up of workplace fatalities by the corporations and union bureaucracies.

Adams, a 63-year-old machine repairman known as the “protector of the plant” for his advocacy of safety standards, was crushed to death by a gantry crane at Stellantis’ Dundee Engine Complex in Michigan on April 7. Nearly two months later, his family and coworkers have received no information from the company, the United Auto Workers (UAW) union, or the Michigan Occupational Safety and Health Administration (MIOSHA) about the causes of the fatal accident.

Lehman, a Mack Trucks worker from Pennsylvania who ran as a socialist candidate for UAW president in 2022, used his platform to demand answers for Adams’ family and call for workers to come forward with testimony about unsafe conditions. The International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees (IWA-RFC) has launched an independent investigation to prevent yet another official cover-up and to expose the truth about Adams’ death.

The massive response to Lehman’s video reflects the growing recognition among workers that they cannot rely on the pro-capitalist union bureaucracies or government

agencies to protect their safety and lives. Instead, workers are increasingly looking toward rank-and-file organizing and independent action to defend their most basic interests.

The comments on Lehman’s video reveal several critical themes that underscore the broader social crisis facing the working class. First and foremost is the widespread recognition that Adams’ death was entirely preventable and the result of systematic negligence by management prioritizing profits over worker safety.

One of the most-liked comments, from user Sybil.Wuornos with 1,924 likes, stated: “Thank you for using your voice. RIP Ronald. May justice be served to the fullest in all manners and aspects of this case.” This sentiment was echoed by user 24k, whose comment received 1,445 likes: “I hope this gets lots of views and it stimulates action.”

Many commenters emphasized the broader implications of Adams’ death for worker safety across industries. Seri, whose comment garnered 1,050 likes, wrote:

My husband is a longtime crane operator. This could have been him. Safety standards are under fire all over the US because it costs companies money to uphold. Everyone needs to stand up and NOW.

The comments reveal deep frustration with corporate America’s treatment of tradespeople and industrial workers. Sarah Wade, whose comment received 636 likes, observed: “Tradesmen are not respected by corporate America even though it’s tradespeople that absolutely make what corporations sell ?”

A recurring theme was the recognition that safety standards are “written in blood,” as another user commented, receiving 343 likes. They added, “It’s horrible how dangerous these necessary jobs are. I hope this investigation results in proper justice and accountability.”

A number of workers criticized the UAW bureaucracy’s failure to protect Adams or investigate what caused his death, while supporting the IWA-RFC’s fight to expose the truth. Christine G wrote, “When the union stays silent & the company won’t give his family answers, YOU carry on his legacy.” User auritus0 added, “Thank you IWA-RFC for doing what the UAW won’t.”

This reflects growing awareness that genuine worker protection requires rank-and-file organization independent of the bureaucratic union leadership.

Several commenters explicitly connected Adams’ death to the broader pattern of corporate prioritization of profits over human life. Glee75, whose comment received 315 likes, stated: “Profits over people. Share this far and wide. May his family get answers and justice.”

A number of commenters shared their own family tragedies going back decades. Jez commented, “When I was a child my papa had a horrible accident by a crane around 20 years ago. It is so sad this still happens.”

Britt shared:

My grandfather died in a steel mill accident like this in Warren OH in 1979. He was union. The OSHA records no longer exist. I wish there had been folks like you to push for an investigation back then. Thank you for taking care of one another now!

Shay wrote:

I am mid lawsuit cause my dad died in Oct 2023 at the stellantis plant on vandyke in Michigan. He was crushed between two Ram trucks being loaded into a train car for transport.

Workers from a range of industries expressed solidarity, including autoworkers, teachers, shipyard workers and more, highlighting that unsafe conditions are a universal problem affecting all sectors of the working class.

Comments were left by workers from across North America, including in Ohio, Texas, Colorado, California, Pennsylvania, Iowa and Tennessee, demonstrating that Adams’ death resonates with workers far beyond the

immediate Detroit area.

Many commenters specifically praised Lehman’s courage in speaking out, recognizing the risks involved. User “DeltaofD” wrote: “That took a lot of courage to speak out and I commend you!!” Another stated: “Thank you for being his voice. Rest in peace Ronald Adams. And to all the auto workers out there... please stand up!!”

The overwhelming response to Lehman’s video demonstrates the urgent need for workers to take independent action to defend their safety and lives. Workers interested in supporting the investigation into Ronald Adams Sr.’s death and building the fight for workplace safety should visit wsws.org/ronaldadams to submit testimony and get involved. All submissions will be kept confidential.

The most critical step workers can take is forming rank-and-file safety committees at their workplaces, independent of management and the union bureaucracy. These committees should demand full transparency about safety conditions, the right to halt production when conditions are unsafe, and workers’ control over safety standards and enforcement.

These committees, as part of the IWA-RFC, must deepen the independent investigation into Adams’ death and broaden awareness of this critical initiative as widely as possible. The IWA-RFC provides a framework for workers across industries and internationally to coordinate their struggles against unsafe conditions and corporate exploitation.

The fight for the truth behind what caused the death of Ronald Adams Sr. is not just about one workplace or one tragedy—it is about the fundamental right of all workers to their very lives and safety. This can only be achieved through the independent mobilization of the working class, armed with a socialist program that places human need above corporate profit. Workers must seize this moment to build the organizational structures necessary to prevent future tragedies and fight for a society where worker safety is guaranteed, not sacrificed at the altar of private profit.



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