

“The union and the company aren’t saying anything”: Stellantis Dundee Engine worker backs rank-and-file investigation into death of Ronald Adams Sr.

Jerry White
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Monday marked 11 weeks since the fatal accident that took the life of 63-year-old machine repairman Ronald Adams Sr. at the Dundee Engine Complex in Michigan. The highly skilled and respected worker, a husband, father and grandfather, was crushed to death on April 7, 2025, when an overhead gantry that lifts engine blocks suddenly engaged, pinning him to a conveyor.

In the nearly three months since the tragedy, Adams’ family and co-workers have not received any explanation of the causes of his death from the company, the United Auto Workers or the Michigan Occupational Safety and Health Administration (MIOSHA). In an email to this reporter Tuesday morning, MIOSHA Communications Specialist Mike Krafcik wrote, “Our investigation remains open. No updates to share at this time.”

In mid-May, the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees (IWA-RFC) initiated an independent investigation into the fatal accident. Dundee workers continue to come forward to provide testimony to the investigation. Their names have been changed to protect them against retaliation by the company and UAW bureaucracy.

Shawn, a worker with 18 years at the plant, said, “It’s horrible what happened to Ron. I hope we can get to the bottom of what happened, and, at least, get something done for that family.

“There are hundreds of workers in plant and over the years I saw and spoke to him a few times. What everyone says is Ron was a really good guy. My prayers are with the family, that’s for sure,” Shawn

said.

“Nobody knows the full story,” he continued. “We’re only hearing bits and pieces and you don’t know exactly what the situation was. The union and the company aren’t saying anything, nothing at all. They’re firing up production and bringing back the second and third shifts but nobody’s saying anything about Ron being killed.”

Asked what he thought about the independent investigation initiated by the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees, Shawn said, “That is not a bad idea. Workers should look into what happened and find out for ourselves.

“There are lot of things we report to safety and nothing ever gets done. After Ron died, suddenly, safety is on the floor, and they’re making all these changes and saying safety is big thing. But it’s just a big show, that’s all it is.

“Prior to Ron’s death, we use to see people going into the cages and doing their thing without locking out. I’ve told people, ‘Hey lock the freaking machine out, it’s not worth it.’ Union brothers are supposed to look out for each other. I don’t separate myself to be higher or lower, I’m just a worker like everyone else. Management people on the other hand are trained to push you around. They’ll say they know what they’re doing, but really, a lot of them don’t.”

Shawn continued, “I can definitely tell you, they were not on the floor doing their rounds and investigating things and looking for ways to improve things. They don’t do that until something like this happens. Now, they’re like bees in a hive all stirred up. Now they have

a sheet, and they have to call the supervisor before they go into a machine. The supervisor signs off, they lock out, tag out, and then they go on to do their job.”

After Ron was killed, “the union safety guy was immediately on the floor,” Shawn said, adding, “ I hadn’t seen him for a long time.”

Tom Zimmerman, the former UAW Local 723 plant chairman, got a position as the UAW Safety Representative after being voted out by rank-and-file workers in a union election for refusing to file grievances and selling out workers.

“He appointed himself a position on safety, but he’s basically just another one of the salary guys,” Shawn said. “They all work together. He plays his little game, calling out to us, ‘Hey, brother.’ Yeah, right, we’re your brothers,” Shawn said dismissively.

When workers are injured, Shawn said, “they force all employees to report back to work after an injury no matter what the employee’s condition is. Once in the building, they tell them we have work for you at a desk so they can sweep any accidents under the rug. It’s all about money, not people. Once in the plant, they got you. HR, the so-called plant doctor, and nurses as well as safety all play the same game together. One person broke a leg and had to report to work every day for months sitting in a chair.

“They always say somebody was killed or injured off the property to lower their costs. We were told Ron died in the hospital, but it looks like he was killed instantly with that machine crushing him,” the worker said.

“I mean, these doctors and nurses that they get in these plants, they’re all company. If they were good doctors, they wouldn’t be in a plant. They’d be in a hospital helping people instead of trying to screw them. You don’t get any help from the union either.”

“It doesn’t matter whether it’s Trump and the Republicans or the Democrat, it’s all about money. That’s what runs this whole thing, greed. It’s not about the people that they’re supposed to represent,” Shawn concluded.

In the last several days, supporters of the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committee (IWA-RFC) distributed hundreds of flyers about the independent investigation to workers at the Jeep Complex and Dana Driveline plants in Toledo, the Ford Rouge Complex in Dearborn, Michigan and the

Stellantis Warren Truck plant in suburban Detroit.

One Toledo Jeep worker said she knew Antonio Gaston, who was crushed to death at the factory on August 21, 2024, just eight months before Adams lost his life at the Dundee plant. “We still don’t know what happened to Antonio,” she said, telling IWA-RFC supporters that she would spread the word about the rank-and-file investigation to her fellow workers.

To provide information about conditions in Dundee and other plants and join the fight to build rank-and-file committees to take control of safety and production, fill out the form below. Your identities will be protected.



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