

“The smallest thing could be what brings it all out”

Mother of Tyson worker who died in meatpacking plant reveals new information about her son’s death

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Three years after 22-year-old Casen Garcia died in horrific conditions at the Tyson Foods meatpacking plant in Joslin, Illinois, his family continues to fight for answers.

In a new interview with the *World Socialist Web Site*, Casen’s mother Allison reveals new information she has uncovered about her son’s tragic, completely unnecessary and preventable death. In the face of a total coverup by Tyson, complete silence from the United Food and Commercial Workers union, and a wall of state obstruction, Allison has received critical information and support from one crucial source: Casen’s coworkers.

As she continues her fight, she has drawn inspiration from and declared support for the investigation of the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees (IWA-RFC) into the recent death of autoworker Ronald Adams Sr. at the Stellantis Dundee Engine Plant in Michigan. Allison called on workers to come forward with information about Ronald’s death: “If you know anything that could help, even in the smallest way... The smallest thing could be what it is that brings it all out.”

The death of Casen Garcia

Casen Garcia died on July 9, 2022 while working in the rendering basement of the Tyson Joslin plant, a section he had described to his mother as so incredibly dangerous and unsanitary that other workers had refused to work there and were fired.

As Allison explained to the WSWS in 2022, in the badly-ventilated basement, “they have barrels of rotting carcasses that are supposed to be cleaned out every week, that have been sitting there for months, that have methane gas coming off of them.” Other hazards included faulty electrical wiring that caused a metal door handle to badly shock workers who touched it.

Workers who knew Casen reported that the day he died he had been working for over three hours in temperatures that can reach up to 130 degrees.

Before Casen died, “He radioed management, saying his chest hurt and he was having a hard time breathing. And this manager told him, ‘Oh, you’re young, you’re fine, walk it off.’ My son collapsed right after that. The person who saw him hit the ground tried getting off production, and was yelled at by management to get back onto production.”

From the outset, Tyson has actively sought to hide the circumstances of

Casen’s death. Initially, management falsely told Allison that her son was found dead in his truck in the parking lot, not knowing she had dropped him off and his truck was broken down at home, nowhere near the plant.

Three years later, “not once have I heard from the [UFCW] union,” Allison says. All the information she has received has been provided by Casen’s courageous coworkers. As she told the WSWS in 2022, “They all reached out to me. Within two days, I had about 45 phone numbers. These people have hearts! They know Tyson is in the wrong and they know what happened to my son... These people are putting themselves and their lives and their jobs at risk to make it known that Tyson is absolutely at fault for my son’s death.”

New information uncovered, and new obstacles

In her relentless pursuit of the truth, Allison suspects that Casen may have inhaled a deadly combination of chemicals produced by the conditions in the plant.

But proving the presence of these chemicals in Casen’s system has remained out of reach. “If you want to have those tests done, you have to go through a private lab, which is very, very costly,” she explained.

The official OSHA report states simply that the healthy 22-year-old died from a “Cardiac Event.” None of the dangerous and unsanitary conditions are mentioned in the report and cynically, the death case is filed under the “Natural Causes” category.

Allison recalled a conversation with an OSHA investigator who sympathetically told her, “Allison, I know Tyson killed your kid. I just have to figure out how,” but just days later the investigator was removed from the case and the investigation was arbitrarily closed.

In one of the most damning new revelations, Allison learned that the manager on duty the night Casen died had previously had a personal conflict with her son, and Tyson claimed to have implemented an “order of protection” that stipulated the two were not to work together at the plant. Yet this same manager was in charge of Casen’s unit and, according to coworkers, was overriding Casen’s radio calls for help as he suffered from chest pain and difficulty breathing.

“What’s really hard for me to get past, is the fact that my son’s calls for help were being overridden by the manager. And it just so happens that that manager had an order of protection,” she said.

Tyson is also refusing to release Casen’s life insurance benefits, claiming for three years that they cannot find the policy. Allison says that

she personally helped him fill out his policy when he first took the job.

Her attempts to sue corporate behemoth Tyson, America's largest meatpacking company, have likewise been sidelined. After she had done the exhaustive work of gathering evidence and witness contacts, the attorneys she was working with suddenly told her that taking her case "wasn't in their best interest."

"When I tried to file a suit to hold somebody liable for this, all the attorneys had originally stated I basically did their job for them because I had put together everything. Then when I went back after I got the second autopsy report back, they said that it wasn't in their best interest to take the case. And that was that. And anyone I've tried speaking to... unless we have the lab tests done, which I obviously can't afford, nobody wants to take the case."

Allison supports the Ronald Adams investigation

As Allison and the meatpacking workers in Joslin continue to fight to expose the horrific conditions that lead to Casen Garcia's death, rank-and-file workers in Michigan have also launched their own investigation into the death of autoworker Ronald Adams Sr.

Ronald Adams Sr., a 63-year-old machine repairman, was crushed to death by an automated crane at the Stellantis Dundee Engine Plant on April 7, 2025. The plant is now running at full capacity with three shifts, but the Stellantis and the UAW have told workers nothing as they conduct their own coverup "investigation" behind workers backs.

"Everything is very similar," Allison said. The companies "all seem to have the same escape path when something happens. And they always somehow put it back on the workers. They just throw them aside like they're cattle, one goes down, the next one's coming up," she said. "And the workers, if it wasn't for them, I would have been in a dead stop from the beginning. Like, I would never have even known to continue to ask questions."

Allison issued a powerful appeal to workers at Stellantis who may have information about the death of Ronald Adams: "If you know anything that could help, even in the smallest way. The smallest thing could be what it is that brings it all out. Even if you only heard a friend tell you a story about what happened, you need to put it out there. Because the families like mine, we won't have answers. I don't think any family should have to go the rest of their life wondering what happened. When on this earth did it become wrong to tell the truth?"

"We need to link up": Open letter to family of 19 year-old killed in meat grinder

Shortly after the interview with Allison was held the WSWs became aware that another young meatpacking worker was killed on the job while cleaning a meat grinder that was suddenly turned on. The 19-year-old California worker is yet another worker death that was entirely preventable.

After Allison was informed of the death in California she submitted the following statement to the WSWs addressed to the family of the young worker and his co-workers:

To the family of the 19-year-old taken too soon in California,
and to the brave workers at that plant,

My heart aches for you. What you are going through, the pain you must feel, is a grief I know all too well. My son, Casen Garcia, was just 22 years old when he was killed at the Tyson Foods plant in Joslin, Illinois. He went to work, like your loved one did, and never came home.

They will call it an "accident." They will try to tell you it was unavoidable. But from one grieving parent to another, and from one family suffering to another, I tell you with absolute certainty: these are not accidents. These are preventable tragedies that happen because companies prioritize their profits over our children's lives, over our safety, over our very existence.

To the workers in California, You are now living with a loss that could have been prevented. You are working in conditions where another young life was stolen. Do not let them silence you or make you believe this is just how it is. You have the right to a safe workplace. You have the right to demand that no one else suffers this fate.

What happened to your co-worker, and what happened to my Casen, are part of the same fight. The same corporate greed, the same disregard for human life, spans across plants, across states, and across industries. That's why we, the workers and the families affected, must stand together.

We are here in Illinois, still fighting for justice for Casen. Workers in Detroit and across the country are facing similar battles. You can learn more about the situation in Detroit and the critical issues facing autoworkers by watching this video below.

We need to link up. We need to share our stories, our strength, and our determination. They want us divided, but our power lies in our unity. There is an important meeting where you can learn more and join the fight for workers' rights and safety: Click here for information on the **Rank-and-File Investigation into the death of Autoworker Ronald Adams**.

Let us turn our grief into a relentless demand for change. Let us make sure that no other family has to endure this heartbreak. We owe it to Casen, to the young man in California, and to every worker whose life is put at risk for corporate profit. We are with you.

The World Socialist Web Site and the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees urge all workers to contact us with information about the deaths of Ronald Adams Sr., Casen Garcia, or unsafe conditions at another workplace.



To contact the WSWs and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact