

Postal workers demand investigation into Demarcus Little's death, fourth in two years at Palmetto facility

Jane Wise
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USPS workers: provide anonymous testimony to the USPS Workers Rank-and-File Safety Inquiry by filling out the form below. For more information about the inquiry, click here.

On Sunday, June 14, the USPS Workers Rank-and-File Committee is holding an online public meeting: "Four workers dead at Palmetto—the consequence of decades of cuts and the drive to privatize USPS." Register for the event here.

New details have emerged about the death of 45-year-old Demarcus Little Sr., who collapsed and died at the Palmetto Regional Processing and Distribution Center (RPDC) on June 3. He is the fourth worker to die at the facility since it opened just over two years ago.

Before he collapsed, Little told a supervisor he was not feeling well and was dizzy but was refused permission to go home.

His fiancée, Laura Wheaton, has been fighting to make the truth public. In an interview with Atlanta News First, Wheaton said Little was foaming at the mouth when he collapsed. She said the two had spoken by phone shortly before his death and that he seemed fine, and that he had no health problems and no history of drug use. Wheaton has ordered an autopsy.

But it is what Wheaton has said on Facebook that gives the sharpest picture of the atmosphere surrounding Little's death. She wrote that she was being blocked from getting her story on the news, that her posts were being deleted, and that she feared retaliation for speaking out. "I'm gonna prolly go down bad for this," she wrote.

According to Wheaton, Little spoke with her on the phone during his break while eating lunch he had kept in the refrigerator. She was later told that he asked a

supervisor if he could go home because he felt sick. The supervisor said no. Moments later, she wrote, "he's Foaming out the mouth and drop to the floor DEAD."

Wheaton wrote that the day after Little's death, workers began calling and telling her what happened. "Even said the job left him on the floor for an hour with no CPR because the jobs policy is 'NEVER TOUCH A BODY,'" she wrote. Workers told her they have been threatened with firing if they talk.

This is consistent with what the WSWS has documented only seven months ago at the same facility. After Russell Scruggs Jr. collapsed at Palmetto in November 2025, coworkers told the WSWS that supervisors stood around him without administering CPR, that no defibrillator was available, and that it took over an hour for an ambulance to arrive after initially going to the wrong entrance.

That fear has been confirmed by local reporting. WSB-TV in Atlanta reported that three of Little's coworkers witnessed his death but believe the Postal Service will fire them if they speak publicly. Dozens of workers told the station they want to speak out but are afraid. Many said they feel trapped—afraid to work inside the facility but unable to quickly find another job.

This atmosphere of intimidation is not limited to this facility. In an interview with the WSWS, an Illinois postal worker described what happens to workers who report problems. "What I learned is that what the post office does is make you feel crazy for speaking out about something you know is true," she said. "If you make too much noise, or your case is too big and they don't want to deal with it, they shut you out. They turn

people against you. They make you out to be unstable.”

But workers are not staying silent. Their responses to Little’s death on social media reveal a growing demand for an investigation.

“Who’s going to investigate this?” one worker asked.

“Sounds like an investigation is needed,” another wrote.

A third commented: “Too many deaths in a short period of time.”

Another worker asked, “I want to know what the Safety Department is doing to address these situations. Too many incidents.”

Workers pointed directly to management as the underlying problem. “Management will ignore your physical and mental health to meet numbers,” one wrote.

Another commented, “I don’t think most of our safety issues have to do with equipment. It mostly has to do with management.”

One worker summed up the contempt with which management treats injuries and illness: “They will just say he had pre-existing conditions and it was his fault. At the post office it’s always your fault. If you park and a tree falls on your truck. Your fault. You get bit by a dog. Your fault. You get rear ended. Your fault. You get on the job injury. Your fault.”

This is not simply the negligence of this or that manager. It is a system of management by which workers’ lives are left at the mercy of corporate-style cost-cutting. For a half century since being demoted from a cabinet-level department to an independent, self-funded agency, the Post Office has been subjected to continuous rounds of cuts.

Now, the deepest cuts in its history are being floated. Postmaster General David Steiner using a cash crisis as a pretext to propose things like eliminating 6 days a week delivery, closing “unprofitable” post offices and gutting the agency’s Universal Service Obligation to provide equal service to all Americans.

Other countries show the potential future for USPS. Canada Post is ending door-to-door mail delivery and planning to cut more than half of its national workforce, while Britain’s Royal Mail was privatized years ago and is now owned by billionaire Daniel Kretinsky.

USPS has made clear it has no intention of taking accountability for the deaths at Palmetto. A

spokesperson told WSB-TV the agency would not answer questions about cell signals, the number of deaths or what management is doing to make workers feel safer.

The silence of the postal unions is no less damning. Four workers have died at Palmetto in just over two years. Witnesses are afraid to speak. Workers are calling for an investigation. Yet the postal unions have issued no public statement addressing the circumstances surrounding Little’s death, the pattern of fatalities at Palmetto or the broader health and safety conditions confronting workers at the facility.

Workers themselves must take up the fight to uncover the truth and enforce safe conditions. Last November, the USPS Workers Rank-and-File Committee has launched an independent inquiry into conditions at postal facilities. The committee was formed by workers across the country, independent of management and union officials, to give workers a platform to speak out, expose the truth and organize without fear of retaliation.

At Palmetto, it already documented the absence of written safety protocols, the lack of defibrillators and medical personnel, blocked cell phone signals and dangerous emergency-response failures.

In the January initial report of the inquiry, the committee advanced immediate demands for defibrillators and fully stocked first-aid equipment in every building, nurses in every USPS facility, an end to the blocking of cell phone signals, written emergency plans and designated safety personnel subject to workers’ oversight, and strict enforcement of safety procedures.

Postal workers must build rank-and-file committees in every facility to fight intimidation and place safety under workers’ control. Workers at Palmetto and throughout USPS should contact the USPS Workers Rank-and-File Committee to report conditions and prepare a fight for safe conditions across the country.



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[wsws.org/contact](https://www.wsws.org/contact)