

Official who threatened rank-and-file candidate Will Lehman suspended from UAW membership, but might remain on union payroll

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The court-appointed monitor overseeing the United Auto Workers has suspended Raymond Jensen Jr. from union membership for posting a death threat against Will Lehman, the Mack Trucks worker and socialist candidate for UAW president—but may leave it to the union apparatus to decide whether Jensen continues to collect his \$202,000 annual salary from the UAW International.

According to Lehman, when his legal team asked the Monitor's office to verify that Jensen had been removed from his position as a UAW International organizer, "we were told that while Jensen is suspended from the UAW, it would be up to the union apparatus to determine whether or not he will still be paid by the UAW." Lehman's attorneys immediately challenged this position, and the Monitor's office said it would look into the matter. That was last week. It has yet to provide an answer.

The sanctions, announced August 4 by Monitor Neil Barofsky, came in response to an AI-generated image Jensen posted on July 16 on Lehman's campaign Facebook page, showing the candidate bound and gagged, blood dripping from his mouth, with a masked gunman pointing a rifle at his back. Jensen, whose Facebook profile bears an "I Support Shawn Fain" badge, posted the image beneath a statement Lehman had issued on the federal criminal investigation of Fain.

Barofsky found that the post violated Rule 4-4 of the 2026 election rules, which prohibits threats, intimidation and reprisals, as well as provisions of federal labor law that guarantee union members the right to speak on union affairs and make it a federal crime to use or threaten violence against a member for exercising those rights. Under a stipulation signed August 4, Jensen was suspended from UAW membership for two years, permanently barred from running for any elected union position and prohibited from campaigning for any candidate in this election.

UAW members welcomed these measures and widely assumed that Jensen would be fired. On Facebook pages used

by rank-and-file workers—from Nexteer workers in Saginaw, Michigan, to GM retirees in Arlington, Texas—the suspension was discussed as though Jensen's removal from the payroll were a foregone conclusion.

Instead, Jensen—who admitted to the Monitor's investigators that the account and post were his—could continue to collect his salary throughout his two-year suspension. Since he has been stripped of UAW membership, he might not even have dues deducted from his paycheck, Lehman noted—amounting to a pay increase, paid for by workers' own dues money.

"From the beginning, I said this thuggish behavior was not aimed at me alone," Lehman stated. "It was aimed at every UAW member who speaks out against the backroom deals and treachery of the apparatus. The image was meant as a warning: this is what happens to you if you vote down a contract, if you speak up at a meeting, if you challenge the bureaucracy in your own local."

The image was the product of a bureaucracy that has, for decades, employed intimidation, retaliation and physical threats to suppress opposition from the workers it claims to represent. The UAW apparatus sits atop \$1.25 billion in net assets and spent \$118 million on its own officers and staff last year—14 times what it paid out in strike benefits. It functions as an arm of management, and it responds to any challenge from below with the methods of management's enforcers.

Jensen, a former assistant director of UAW Region 9, Lehman's home region, is listed as an "organizer" in the UAW's Department of Organizing and Bargaining Strategies. The department, which works under Fain's direction, has played a central role in trying to beat back the rising rebellion of autoworkers, particularly parts workers who have rejected a series of UAW-backed contracts at Nexteer, Dana, Bridgewater and other suppliers.

For two weeks after the threat was posted, Fain and the entire International Executive Board remained silent. Only during the July 30 UAW presidential debate, when Lehman confronted

Fain directly from the floor, did the UAW president address the matter. “I don’t condone that stuff,” Fain said, before immediately adding: “If you’re running for president, get ready, brother, because you’ll be getting them every day.”

Fain subsequently issued an internal memo to the International Executive Board and other staff members stating that “comments and social media posts of a threatening nature have no place in our union.” But as Lehman noted, “According to Fain, however, the gangsters who issue such threats have a home—and a big salary—at Solidarity House.”

The Monitor acted only because rank-and-file workers forced his hand. Lehman’s campaign rallied support from UAW members in Detroit and around the country, from workers in other industries, and from workers and young people in Canada, Mexico, the United Kingdom, Türkiye, Australia and New Zealand. Autoworkers gave video interviews at Stellantis Warren Truck and Sterling Stamping and at Bridgewater Interiors. A young worker at Bridgewater told Lehman’s campaign team, “They’re trying to shut you up. And they usually only do that when somebody’s telling the truth.”

The Monitor has every authority to take action preventing Jensen from continuing receive a paycheck from the UAW. In December 2025, the Monitor forced out Fain’s top administrative assistant, Chris Brooks, after finding that Fain, Brooks and UAW Communications Director Jonah Furman concocted fabricated charges to strip UAW Secretary Margaret Mock of her oversight of eleven Union departments in “retaliation for, among other things, Mock’s refusal or reluctance to authorize improper expenditures of funds at the request of and/or for the benefit of those in the President’s Office.” Barofsky also found that Brooks and Fain made false or misleading statements to the Monitor to conceal this conspiracy.

After “constructive engagement between the Union and the Monitor,” Barofsky wrote in December 2025, “the Union notified the Monitor that it would be taking decisive and important steps to remediate the retaliatory actions of the President’s Office.” This included: “Brooks will no longer be employed at the Union in any capacity as of December 31, 2025,” meaning he was removed his \$238,294 a year post as Fain’s chief of staff.

The Monitor has not indicated that it is demanding similar actions by the UAW against highly paid staff member and Fain supporter who threatened the life of a rank-and-file candidate.

The oversight by the court-appointed monitor has not prevented further corruption, it has not stopped the victimization of workers who speak out. Antwiane Sanders, a Nexteer worker with more than 10 years on the job, was fired last month for speaking out against UAW officials at a contract roll-out meeting inside the plant. Workers are victimized, isolated and driven out of their jobs for opposing this apparatus in plants across the country, week after week, and almost none of it is ever investigated or penalized.

“I call on workers to demand that the Monitor remove Jensen from his post and cut off his salary,” Lehman stated. “Otherwise, the UAW bureaucracy will see this as a green light to attack not only opposing candidates but the rank and file. But workers cannot rely on the Monitor to protect our rights. We must achieve this ourselves.”

The death threat against Lehman expresses the fear and hatred of a bureaucracy confronted by a rising revolt of rank-and-file workers. This revolt has found its sharpest expression in the widespread rejection of UAW-backed sellout contracts, above all at Nexteer Automotive in Saginaw, where workers voted down three tentative agreements and formed a rank-and-file committee, independent of the apparatus.

The July 30 presidential debate made it clear that Lehman is the only candidate who speaks for the rank and file. Every other candidate represents a section of the apparatus. Fain is under federal criminal investigation. Boyer negotiated the 2023 Stellantis contract that opened the door to mass firings. Brian Keller endorsed Fain in the 2022 runoff. Greg Mooney is a supporter of Autoworkers for Trump. And Tricia Geiger, a highly paid UAW International servicing representative, has just received the endorsement of Ray Curry, Rory Gamble and Ron Gettelfinger—three former UAW presidents who presided over decades of concessions, plant closures and the systematic betrayal of the membership.

In his remarks, Lehman said the rank-and-file committees he is fighting for will be based on “class struggle, not class collaboration. Internationalism not nationalism.”

In an earlier statement, Lehman put his campaign in a broader context, saying, “There is a rebellion already underway in this union, in the contract rejections and the strikes and the anger on every shift. Deepen it. Organize it. Make it something the apparatus cannot threaten its way out of.”



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