ANOTHER WORKER KILLED AT STELLANTIS: RANK-AND-FILE WORKERS MUST INVESTIGATE



BY WILL LEHMAN
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On Saturday, August 1, James Brasher, a Stellantis worker, was killed at the company's Mopar Division, Center Line National Parts Distribution Center just north of Detroit. Brasher, a laborer and a member of United Auto Workers Local 1248, was working on renovations at the facility at the time of his death, according to the UAW.

I want to express my deepest condolences to the family, friends and co-workers of James Brasher. He is the latest victim of a system that sacrifices workers' lives to corporate profit. In the last two years, we have lost at least five other brothers in the UAW: Daulton Simmers at Caterpillar, Frank Logsdon at Metalsa, Antonio Gaston at Toledo Jeep, Ronald Adams Sr. at Dundee Engine and Gregory Knopf at Ford Sharonville. Far from protecting our lives, the joint UAW-management safety committees protect the corporations.

It isn't a matter of correcting issues after the fact, but of preventing them before workers are injured or killed. That will only happen when workers take health and safety into our own hands. That means establishing rank-and-file committees in every plant with the power to shut down production until we decide conditions are safe enough to work.

Two weeks ago, workers at Stellantis plants across Metro Detroit were forced to breathe some of the most toxic air ever recorded in a major American city. Workers collapsed. Workers were carried out on stretchers. While UAW President Shawn Fain waited more than 24 hours before posting a Facebook message "urging" employers to do the right thing, Vice President Rich Boyer sent a letter to Stellantis locals on July 17 claiming that UAW Industrial Hygienists had verified air quality "remains within acceptable limits." That letter tells every autoworker in this country what the joint safety apparatus exists to do. It does not protect workers. It certifies that poisoned air is contractually acceptable, so the line never stops.

Any "investigation" carried out by the UAW, management and government safety agencies will only result in another cover-up. If James Brasher's family and co-workers are to get the truth they deserve and if those responsible are to be held accountable, rank-and-file workers will have to conduct an investigation ourselves.

The International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees (IWA-RFC) demonstrated in the investigation of the death of Ronald Adams Sr. that workers, acting collectively and independently, can uncover what the company and the bureaucracy have a legal and financial interest in burying.

If you work at the Center Line facility or anywhere in the Stellantis network, and you know what led to James Brasher's death—if you have witnessed safety corners being cut, if you know about the conditions on that renovation project, if you have seen things that supervisors and union reps told you to forget—I am urging you to come forward. Your identity will be protected. You will not fight alone.

James Brasher deserved to come home. His family deserves the truth. And every autoworker in this country deserves a union that actually fights for their lives. That is not the UAW under Fain and Boyer. Such a union will only be won through the

independent organization of the rank and file to abolish the bureaucracy and transfer power to workers on the shop floor.

JOIN THE FIGHT FOR WORKERS' POWER!

Get involved with the rank-and-file campaign in the UAW elections.

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