

Department of Justice

U.S. Attorney's Office

Eastern District of Michigan

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, May 11, 2021

**Former International UAW President Dennis Williams
Sentenced to Prison for Embezzling Union Funds**

Dennis Williams, the former President of the international United Auto Workers union, was sentenced to twenty-one months in prison today for conspiring with other UAW officials to embezzle UAW funds announced Acting U.S. Attorney Saima S. Mohsin.

Joining in the announcement were Irene Lindow, Special Agent in Charge of the U.S. Department of Labor – Office of Inspector General, Timothy Waters, Special Agent in Charge of the Detroit, Michigan office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Kelly Lewis, Acting Special Agent in Charge of the Detroit, Michigan office of the Internal Revenue Service – Criminal Investigations, and Thomas Murray, District Director, U.S. Department of Labor – Office of Labor-Management Standards.

Dennis Williams, 67, of Corona, California, was sentenced to twenty-one months in prison, \$132,000 in restitution, one year of supervised release, and a \$10,000 fine by United States District Judge Paul Borman based on his conviction for conspiring with former UAW President Gary Jones and other senior UAW officials to embezzle UAW dues money between 2010 and September 2019.

Between June 2014 and June 2018, Williams served as the President of the International Union, United Automobile, Aerospace, and Agricultural Implement Workers of America (“UAW”). The UAW represents over 400,000 active members and over 580,000 retired members in more than 600 local unions across the United States. Prior to serving as UAW President, Williams was the Secretary-Treasurer of the UAW from June 2010 through June 2014.

Williams was convicted of conspiring with at least six other senior UAW officials in a multi-year conspiracy to embezzle money from the UAW for the personal benefit of himself and other senior UAW officials. UAW officials concealed hundreds of thousands of dollars in personal expenditures in the cost of UAW conferences held in Palm Springs, California, Coronado, California, and Missouri. Between 2010 and 2018, former UAW President and co-defendant Gary Jones and other UAW officials submitted fraudulent expense forms seeking reimbursement from the UAW’s Detroit headquarters for expenditures supposedly incurred in connection with UAW leadership and training conferences. In truth, however, Williams and his co-conspirators used the conferences to conceal the hundreds of thousands of dollars in UAW funds spent on lavish entertainment and personal spending for the conspirators.

As part of his conviction, Williams admitted the he and other senior UAW officials used UAW money to pay for personal expenses, including multi-month long stays at private villas in Palm Springs, cigars, golfing apparel, green fees at golf courses, and high-end liquor and meals. During the course of the conspiracy, while Williams was UAW President, co-conspirators Gary Jones, Vance Pearson, and others provided themselves and Williams with thousands of dollars in such personal items.

As part of the court’s sentence, Williams was ordered to forfeit a custom-made set of Titleist golf clubs and various golf clothing and equipment seized from Williams during an August 2019 search of his residence. In addition, Williams has been ordered to pay \$15,459 in restitution to the Internal

Revenue Service on embezzled items that he personally received. Finally, the Court ordered Williams to pay \$132,517 in restitution to the UAW.

Williams is the sixteenth defendant convicted in connection with the ongoing criminal investigation into corruption within the UAW or relating to illegal payoffs to UAW officials by FCA executives. The following other individuals have already pleaded guilty to their participation in the scheme and have been sentenced: former FCA Vice President for Employee Relations Alphons Iacobelli (66 months in prison), former FCA Financial Analyst Jerome Durden (15 months in prison), former Director of FCA's Employee Relations Department Michael Brown (12 months in prison), former senior UAW officials Virdell King (60 days in prison), Keith Mickens (12 months in prison), Nancy A. Johnson (12 months in prison), Monica Morgan, the widow of UAW Vice President General Holiefield (18 months in prison), former UAW Vice President Norwood Jewell (15 months in prison), former senior UAW official Michael Grimes (28 months), former UAW Midwest CAP President Edward "Nick" Robinson (12 months in prison), and former UAW Vice President Joseph Ashton (30 months). In addition, the following UAW officials have pleaded guilty and are awaiting sentencing: former UAW President Gary Jones and former UAW Region 5 Director UAW Board member Vance Pearson. FCA US LLC pleaded guilty in January 2021 to conspiring to violate the Taft-Hartley Act, and the company will be sentenced in June 2021. Former senior UAW official Jeffrey "Paycheck" Pietrzyk passed away before being sentenced.

In December 2020, the United States filed a civil lawsuit against the UAW under the Anti-Fraud Injunction Act based on the criminal investigation of the UAW, FCA US LLC, and FCA's executives. Subsequently, the United States and the UAW entered into a Consent Decree to settle the lawsuit that was approved by the U.S. District Court. The United States has proposed a candidate to the Court to serve as the Independent Monitor of the UAW for the next six years. The Monitor is tasked with providing federal oversight of the UAW concerning fraud, corruption, and misconduct within the UAW. In addition, the Monitor will conduct and oversee a referendum of all UAW members to determine if the membership wants to adopt a direct election, also known as "one member, one vote," method of electing the members of the UAW's International Executive Board.

Acting U.S. Attorney Mohsin commended the outstanding work of the Internal Revenue Service – Criminal Investigations, the U.S. Department of Labor – Office of Labor-Management Standards and Office of Inspector General, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation in conducting a comprehensive criminal investigation into labor corruption activities involving a vital sector of the local and national economy.

"The Court's sentence for former UAW President Williams demonstrates that the very highest level of leadership of the UAW has been held accountable for betraying the trust of the UAW's membership," said Acting United States Attorney Saima S. Mohsin. "Today's sentence sends a strong message that union leaders must strictly adhere to the highest ethical standards in running their unions."

"Instead of serving the interests of the hard-working men and women of the UAW, Dennis Williams conspired with senior UAW officials to embezzle over \$1 million in union funds. Williams spent the embezzled funds on extravagant meals, liquor, golf, and travel for personal enrichment. We will continue to work with our law enforcement partners to investigate corrupt union officials who betray the union members they are entrusted to represent," stated Irene Lindow, Special Agent-in-Charge, Chicago Region, U.S. Department of Labor Office of Inspector General.

"Today's sentencing is one more step in a long campaign of restoring the UAW to working for the rights of its members," said Timothy Waters, Special Agent in Charge of FBI Detroit. "Williams' sentencing is another chapter closed in a culture of corruption that permeated the UAW to the very

top. We will continue to work alongside our partners in law enforcement to root out wrongdoing and end pervasive greed among those who abuse their positions of power for their own enrichment."

"Today's sentencing is another step towards the honest leadership UAW members deserve," stated Kelly Lewis, Acting Special Agent in Charge of the Detroit, Michigan office of the Internal Revenue Service – Criminal Investigation. IRS Criminal Investigation is fully committed to investigating anyone who intentionally conceals income from the IRS."

"Safeguarding financial integrity in labor unions and combating financial malfeasance is a very high priority for the U.S. Department of Labor. While the vast majority of union officials do their work diligently and without incident, Dennis Williams betrayed the trust the UAW membership placed in him and embezzled hundreds of thousands of dollars from the UAW, so he could live a lavish lifestyle at the expense of the UAW and its members," said Thomas Murray, District Director, U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Labor-Management Standards. "OLMS will continue to work with its law enforcement partners to hold accountable anyone that unlawfully exploits their union position to enrich themselves without regard to the best interests of union members."

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys David A. Gardey, Steven Cares, and Adriana Dydell.

Topic(s):
Public Corruption

Component(s):
USAO - Michigan, Eastern