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Fisticuffs: Union Boss Sentenced To Prison For Assault On Non-Union Workers

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When union officials go to prison, it's most often for financial crimes like [stealing union dues for personal use](#) – but they also have a long [history of violence](#). While not seen as much in recent years, these egregious acts still, unfortunately, do take place. Now, a former Iron Workers Local president is [headed to jail](#) for his participation in an assault.

Jeffrey R. Veach was the local president of Iron Workers Local 395 in Northwest Indiana. He has pleaded guilty to conspiring in an assault on some non-union workers who refused to join his union, while they were doing a job at a church.

According to a news report by [The Northwest Indiana Times](#):

“Veach pleaded guilty to conspiring with Thomas R. Williamson, a former business agent for Local 395, to threaten and used violence to obtain union contracts from D5 Iron Works of Union, Illinois.”

“A D5 Iron Works work crew was installing steel framing for a school to be built for the Dyer Baptist Church the first week of January, 2016. The government alleges Local 395 had ‘territorial jurisdiction’ over areas of Northwest Indiana, including Dyer, and routinely monitored job sites for employers not using Local 395 ironworkers. D5's owner refused Williamson's attempt to have union members work the Dyer job. Williamson allegedly returned to the construction site the next day, Jan. 7, 2016, with Veach, who

recruited about a dozen rank-and-file members of Local 395 to surround the work site that afternoon. Gottfried states the D5 was packing up for the day when a caravan of vehicles pulled into the site's parking lot. Local 395 members got out and began attacking D5 worker with fists, loose pieces of wood and steel-toe work boots, kicking some who had fallen to the ground, including one whose jaw was broken multiple times. Although local law enforcement never charged Veach, a federal grand jury indicted him and Williamson more two years later, Aug. 15, 2018, with conspiracy to commit extortion under the federal Hobbs Act, which protects interstate commerce. Veach admitted in his plea agreement he and Williamson initiated the attack to intimidate the employer to withdraw the non-union workers and win a contract for Local 395 workers."

In short, they initiated an attack on a group of workers who were just trying to finish a project. In the words of a lawyer for the Department of Justice on the case: "Under the pretext of serving their union, (Veach) victimized the very type of people (he was) supposed to be fighting for; innocent, hard-working iron workers, who were just trying to do their jobs."

Of course, [improper acts by unions](#) are not limited to the Iron Workers. While violence incited by unions has been on the decline, it does still rear its head. This behavior is not lawful and should not be tolerated by employers.