

Union Corruption Double Take: The UAW, FCA, Shoes, Shotguns And A Deepening Federal Probe

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As we reported on Aug. 11, the Department of Justice (DOJ) is investigating United Auto Workers (UAW) officials and a former Fiat Chrysler official in a massive \$4.5 million corruption probe. On Aug. 18, the stakes were raised for the UAW. The [DOJ officially charged former UAW official Virdell King](#) on Aug. 18 with violations of the Labor Management Relations Act (LMRA). King was a senior UAW official responsible for administering national collective bargaining agreements with Fiat Chrysler covering thousands of UAW members and was on the UAW's National Negotiating Committee in 2011 and 2015. According to the DOJ statement, she was charged with accepting thousands of dollars in designer shoes, clothing, jewelry, luggage, and other personal items during that timeframe. It is alleged the items were purchased with credit cards issued through the UAW-Chrysler National Training Center. The Detroit Free Press reported that King was a "[one-time rising star at the UAW](#)." It is also alleged that King made other purchases, totaling more than \$40,000, at the direction of and for the benefit of other UAW officials. According to the indictment, training center funds were used to keep senior UAW officials "fat, dumb and happy." One of the items allegedly purchased was a \$2,180 shotgun given to Norwood Jewell, who was elected UAW vice president in 2014, as a birthday present. He oversees the Fiat Chrysler department and is the current co-chairman of the UAW-Chrysler National Training Center. [According to the Detroit News](#), the UAW did its own investigation and concluded Jewell did nothing illegal. The UAW issued a statement that it is cooperating with the widening investigation. [In a follow up article](#) published on Aug. 19, the Detroit Free Press reported that according to the indictment, access to training center funds was, in part, for the purpose of having UAW officials take "company-friendly positions." Ian Burg, director of the federal government's Office of Labor-Management Standards (OLMS), said the following in the DOJ statement: "This alleged conspiracy among several union and corporate officials to abuse their positions for personal gain at the expense of hard-working Chrysler employees is highly alarming."

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