

FBI Autocompany/Union Training Center Corruption Investigation Widens

Article By:

Keith J. Brodie

The Detroit News is reporting that the corruption investigation into the United Auto Workers (UAW) training centers for workers is expanding to training centers funded by all three Detroit automakers. The article also indicates the automakers themselves are not a target.

The [initial FBI investigation](#) focused solely on Fiat Chrysler (FC) and the UAW. Indictments of a FC executive and UAW staff followed. However, the Detroit News is now reporting investigators are possibly interested in Joe Ashton, a retired UAW vice president, and Cindy Estrada, a current UAW vice president.

The Detroit News reports the focus of the criminal investigation is on whether money and illegal benefits, which were earmarked as training funds, were involved in corrupting the bargaining process. The reporting, however, does not provide any direct evidence this has occurred. The article quotes Peter Honning, a Wayne State University law professor and former federal prosecutor, observing “If the companies are buying labor peace by corrupting Union leadership that has to be a significant concern... This sends a message that union leaders are just in it for themselves. This can rile up members and lead to an insurgency.”

While there is no evidence this has occurred, the expanded FBI probe indicates the evidence that has been uncovered is now leading in different directions.

© 2025 BARNES & THORNBURG LLP

National Law Review, Volume VII, Number 307

Source URL: <https://natlawreview.com/article/fbi-autocompanyunion-training-center-corruption-investigation-widens>