

Statement of Tim Cochrane
Plaintiff in *Adcock et al. v. UAW and Freightliner LLC*
Tuesday, January 24, 2006 – Detroit, Michigan
Gastonia Parts Manufacturing Plant
Gastonia, North Carolina

I am here today because the rights of my co-workers have been violated, and I believe most of my co-workers still don't know the full story of the secret deal between UAW officials and Freightliner.

In March 2002, we had a secret ballot election at my workplace in Gastonia, North Carolina, and the workers chose not to be represented by the UAW. But instead of respecting our wishes, UAW officials cut a secret deal with Freightliner to force us to become a unionized plant. Company management and union organizers worked together to pressure us to sign cards saying we wanted to join the union that we had just voted against.

To get us to sign the cards, we were forced to attend meetings and we were harassed by union organizers at work and at home. One time, I even had to threaten to call the police on a union organizer for trespassing when he showed up at my house. While I refused to sign the cards, many of my coworkers understandably gave in to the constant pressure put on us by management and the union.

Eventually, the company and union announced that the very union we had voted against in an election less than a year ago would now represent us.

But since company management had helped the UAW get into power, the union then had to return the favor by sacrificing our interests at the collective bargaining table. Many of our benefits were cut as a result of the UAW's secret deal. One co-worker I know lost thousands of dollars of disability benefits because the union had agreed to cut long-term disability payments as part of its agreement.

There is something very wrong about a union that betrays the workers it is supposed to represent. UAW officials made a secret deal with our employer to get the power to represent us after we already said no to the UAW. They then used that power to give away our wage increases and benefits.

The UAW kept the agreement secret from us because they know that if we heard the truth we would never allow them to violate our rights like this. That is why I am here today and why I am part of this lawsuit.