

Amazon fires 2 union organizers tied to first U.S. labor win

May 10 2022, by Haleluya Hadero



An Amazon logo appears on a delivery van, Oct. 1, 2020, in Boston. Amazon has fired two employees with ties to the grassroots union that led the first successful U.S. organizing effort in the retail giant's history. The company confirmed Tuesday, May 10, 2022, it fired Michal, or 'Mat,' Cusick and Tristan Dutchin of the Amazon Labor Union in New York. It claims the cases are unrelated to each other and unrelated to any cause or group the two support. Credit: AP Photo/Steven Senne, File

Amazon has fired two employees with ties to the grassroots union that led the first successful U.S. organizing effort in the retail giant's history.

The company confirmed Tuesday that it fired Michal, or 'Mat,' Cusick and Tristan Dutchin of the Amazon Labor Union on Staten Island, New York. But it claims the "cases are unrelated to each other and unrelated to whether these individuals support any particular cause or group."

Cusick, who worked at a nearby Amazon warehouse from the one that [voted to unionize last month](#), said he was fired due to COVID-related leave. He said he was informed by an agent from the company's employee resource center that he was allowed to go on leave until April 29 but was later fired because leave period extended only until April 26.

"They now say after the fact, after they terminated me, that the COVID-leave actually only extended to the 26th," said Cusick, an organizer who works as the union's communications lead. "That discrepancy is how they fired me."

Cusick said he was locked out of Amazon's internal employee system on May 2 without any notice. The following day, he said he called the [employee](#) resource center and was told about his termination.



Amazon Labor Union (ALU) lead organizer Mat Cusick, second from right standing, watches a zoom-cast of vote counting to unionize Amazon warehouse on Staten Island, N.Y., Thursday, March 31, 2022, in New York. Amazon has fired two employees with ties to the grassroots union that led the first successful U.S. organizing effort in the retail giant's history. The company confirmed Tuesday, May 10, it fired Michal, or 'Mat,' Cusick and Tristan Dutchin of the Amazon Labor Union in New York. It claims the cases are unrelated to each other and unrelated to any cause or group the two support. AP Photo/Bebeto Matthews, File)

In a letter sent on May 4, the [company](#) told Cusick he was fired for "voluntary resignation due to job abandonment." Amazon spokesperson Kelly Nantel said in a statement Tuesday that Cusick had "failed to show up for work since an approved leave ended in late April, despite our

team reaching out to him and even extending his leave."

"While we normally wouldn't discuss personnel issues, we think it's important to clear up some misinformation here," Nantel said.

On Monday, Cusick had told the AP his firing may have been an arbitrary decision by Amazon's automated human resources system, which has been a subject of scrutiny in the past. "If they do not reverse what is a fairly obvious miscarriage of justice here, my presumption is that they are not doing it because they know that I am an Amazon organizer," he said.

Nantel said Dutchin, another organizer who worked at the facility that voted to unionize, was fired because he failed to meet productivity goals. She said Dutchin "had been given five warnings since last summer for performance issues and was consistently performing in the bottom 3% compared to his peers, despite being offered additional training."



Amazon Labor Union (ALU) member Tristan Lion Dutchin, 27, gestures as he waits the voting results, Friday, April 1, 2022, in the borough of New York. Amazon has fired two employees with ties to the grassroots union that led the first successful U.S. organizing effort in the retail giant's history. The company confirmed Tuesday, May 10, it fired Michal, or 'Mat,' Cusick and Tristan Dutchin of the Amazon Labor Union in New York. It claims the cases are unrelated to each other and unrelated to any cause or group the two support. Credit: AP Photo/Eduardo Munoz Alvarez, File

"We work hard to accommodate our team's needs, but like any employer, we ask our [employees](#) to meet certain minimum expectations and take appropriate action when they're unable to do that," Nantel said.

Dutchin did not respond to a request for comment.

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Citation: Amazon fires 2 union organizers tied to first U.S. labor win (2022, May 10) retrieved 5 May 2024 from <https://techxplore.com/news/2022-05-amazon-union-tied-labor.html>

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