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Another Foxconn Employee Died of Fatigue

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At 2AM on May 27th 2010, Foxconn worker Yan Li died suddenly at his home. Before his death, he had been working the night shift for more than a month straight, sometimes working 24 hours non-stop. His family and colleagues suspect he died from exhaustion due to overwork.

An engineer at the CNC producing office in the Hongzhun iPEG producing department, Yan Li was 27 years old when he died. He lived in Dashuikeng, Third Village in Guanlan. His ID number at Foxconn is F3839667.

According to his sister, Yan Li had no history of any medical ailments. He worked every night for the month prior to his death, well beyond the maximum overtime hours allowed by law.

At 2: 40 AM on May 27, Yan Li suddenly experienced shortness of breath. He was given artificial respiration and chest compression, to no avail. The paramedics who reached him later confirmed his death. A police who investigated and concluded on May 30 ruled out homicide or suicide, and concluded that that Yan Li's death was not a criminal case.

According to Yan Li's family and Foxconn colleagues, because of the rapid turnaround time for many production orders, Yan Li often worked throughout the night. At one point, according to his family, Yan Li worked for almost 35 hours non-stop, from 7AM on May 24, to 5:47 PM on May 25. Even after leaving work on May 25, he still received calls from his superiors, making it impossible for him to rest.

Foxconn now is negotiating with the family in order to suppress the incident, and sources suggest that Foxconn has advised family members not to conduct media interviews in order to avoid jeopardizing any compensation.

China Labor Watch considers Yan Li's death yet another illustration of the extreme overtime work and overwhelming pressures forced upon Foxconn employees. Foxconn neglects workers' basic needs and rights in blind pursuit of profit.

Li Qiang, the Executive Director of China Labor Watch, believes that despite of some efforts to improve workers' conditions (for example, increasing workers' wages as mentioned later), Foxconn has also focused on public and media relations, working to prevent the media from fully reporting on the company's labor conditions.

Despite, as Apple CEO Steve Jobs noted, Foxconn has many "restaurants, movie theaters, hospitals and swimming pools," the company remains a typical sweatshop, as are all factories that overlook the basic needs of their workers for the sake of profit. Working at least 10 hours per day, allowed only 1 day off every two weeks, forced to work under enormous pressures; these are the norm for the life of a typical Foxconn worker. How could one possible enjoy Foxconn's many "restaurants, movie theatres and swimming pools," after being forced to work 35 straight hours?

A reply by Foxconn stated that Yan Li's death was caused by asthma, and that it was inevitable for workers to discuss their work with colleagues after going back home. Foxconn also claims it has given Yan Li's family generous

financial support.

China Labor Watch urges Foxconn to eliminate illegal overtime, and reduce the pressures and strains afflicting workers on its production lines. It also calls for the election of a trade union that will represent the interests of Foxconn workers. China Labor Watch welcomes Foxconn's decision to increase workers' wages by 30%. Yet this wage increase still fails to provide a living wage. In addition, Foxconn has made no progress in regards to other suggestions provided by China Labor Watch such as to allow workers to sit to work, to reduce overtime working hours, to reduce intensity of labor and so on.

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