

## After years of racism on the job, seven LA engineers sue



By Mark Gruenberg

**Y**ears of racial epithets. Bags of feces left in lockers. The “n” word. Being called slaves and labeled with racist stereotypes. Whites were promoted; Blacks were not. Drawings of KKK images, complete with hoods and nooses. Complaints to bosses producing retaliation against the complainers. And on and on and on.

Welcome to Pacific Harbor Lines, a shortline railroad transporting freight within the nation’s busiest port, Los Angeles-Long Beach, and nearby areas and freight terminals.

It’s so bad there that “this pattern of conduct became a regular part of the workplace that such harassment is a term and condition of employment,” says railroad engineer Lonnie Pate, now suing the firm in federal court in Los Angeles. Six of his colleagues filed a similar suit in L. A. Superior Court. All but one are Black. The other is Latino.

The rail line is “among the most difficult and racist work environments for black industrial workers in the country,” both cases say.

Engineers Pate, Monte Chandler, Ricky Hawkins, Jessie Luvert, Rodney Williams, Manuel Alvarez, and Joshua Jones sued Pacific and its parent firm, a nationwide shortline rail freight company, Anacostia Rail Holdings, in August. They add the toxic work environment extends to another of Chicago-based Anacostia’s rail firms, serving the Port of New York.

The suits are important, showing the often-hidden racism that still exists at many U.S. job sites, with pervasive epithets, racial discrimination in hiring and promotions, constant denigration and harassment, and management failure to respond, or worse, blame the victims.

For example, the federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, which enforces civil rights and anti-discrimination laws—and which by law, had to give the go-head for Pate to sue in federal court—

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won its only 2020 case for discrimination against Porous Materials, Inc., an Ithaca, N.Y., tester of the porousness of face masks and respirators.

The workers got \$93,000 and the firm is under a four-year consent decree to report to the feds on its policies and diversity training. Conditions at Porous

**KKK images, retaliation, lack of promotions were used to target Black workers at Pacific Harbor Lines.**

sound similar to those the rail engineers faced.

That was EEOC's only actual court settlement in 2020. The former GOP Trump government otherwise muzzled the agency, even weakening its rules about what employers had to report about discrimination on the job.

These engineers have worked, and some still work, at PHL between 7 and 18 years, but their suit says the situation really got bad after Anacostia took over in 2009.

One engineer had to take family and medical leave to deal with the pressure and racism. When he got back, he was written up. Another was promoted to a supervisory job, but the racism was so bad that he returned to being an engineer. The court papers don't state whether the return was voluntary or not.

Chandler, a 16-year engineer, told Stormer he sued "because I do not want the next generation of Black workers to have to go through what I went through. My co-workers hung nooses where I could see them and pelted me with bottles. They terrorized

and humiliated me, and when I spoke up it only got worse."

"The racial discrimination at PHL and Anacostia has been going on since the early 2000s," Pate said. The 14-year veteran said he feared for his life while working at night after a manager in a white truck drove by, shining a flashlight at him and calling, sing-song, "Here," followed by the n-word three times. The next time Pate saw the truck, he hid.

He later was wrongfully fired, losing his job and his career, the suits add.

The court papers show Black workers were disciplined and fired at higher rates and hired and promoted at lower rates, than non-Black workers. The number of Blacks among the firm's 169 workers has been declining for years, and the number of Black supervisors can be counted on one hand.

No date has been set for the court hearings on the two suits. Anacostia has not mentioned them on its website.

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## IATSE is gearing up for a possible strike

By David Trujillo

**T**he International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees (IATSE) and the Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers (AMPTP) fear that a possible strike against the film and TV industry could take place within a couple of months depending on how future negotiations develop. Can progress be made or will a strike authorization be necessary to force management to make concessions?

The current contract deal expired on September 10, but both sides have returned to the bargaining table. According to recent IATSE communications "the two sides are far apart" on reaching any new deal. In an attempt to keep its members informed, the union recently released a statement indicating that a strike could be forthcoming.

IATSE represents more than 150,000 workers in live theatre, motion picture, and TV production. Management (AMPTP) represents the major studios and network conglomerates. If this strike were to take place it would be the first industry-wide strike in the union's history.

The union's major priorities include living wages, reasonable rest (turnaround between shoot days), better meal breaks, and sustainable ben-

efits (e.g., pensions that reflect cost of living increases). Management so far refuses to make concessions on wages and work rules.

The new streaming (New Media) have become an economically viable medium. The union wants to negotiate terms based on this fact. Management does not want to make any concessions regarding these new streaming projects. This has become one of the major sticking points in the latest round of negotiations. The union wants to negotiate over rates and/or benefits for streaming projects.

According to the union, these projects are currently slated at a lower rate under the "New Media" classification. IATSE argues that after 13 years, streaming can no longer be considered "New Media." An example of the union's concerns is the fact that crews working on Netflix series and movies are paid at union rates, but benefits paid via residuals are a point of contention.

Any strike in this industry will have a major impact on the economy locally in California and nationwide. It remains to be seen how this industry will react to the unions' willingness to stand together. Negotiations are continuing. But the union members have been placed on notice.

**Any such strike will have a major impact on the economy in CA and nationwide. It remains to be seen how this industry will react to the unions' willingness to stand together.**

# Abortion ban must go further to get the job done



By Roberta Wood

Isn't it time we recognized men as the real progenitors of life? The recently passed Texas abortion restrictions do not go nearly far enough. The Texas Legislature and the U.S. Supreme Court have left trillions of potential human lives unprotected. After all, it's in a father's body that human life gets its start, and the Texas law truly undervalues man's role in reproduction.

When God created man, His intelligent and loving design nestled between every man's legs a cozy sac—the scrotum—which contains the complex mechanism to create and store eight billion sperm, bathed in a protective liquid, maintained at the perfect temperature.

It is the motion of the racing sperm—and the electrical currents that guide them—that is the very first sign of life. Yes, life is motion, movement, and each tiny sperm, full of genetic promise, makes its once-in-a-lifetime journey from a man's body, already containing elements of its unique identity, including the critical blueprint that will define its gender.

## Who speaks for the innocent sperm?

It's a holocaust of unimaginable proportions any time these little racers are not assigned the mission of attempting reproduction! Millions of human lives stand to be instantly terminated if a man—either through ignorance or malfeasance—casts them out from their safe paternal harbor. Abandoned by the one entrusted with their care, they often suffer a cold and lonely death within minutes—on a sheet,

on a towel, in a tissue—literally at the hand of their very father.

Does the defenseless innocent sperm feel pain in the moments elapsing till its certain death? No one knows, nor speaks for them. Shouldn't the Texas Legislature, or the U.S. Supreme Court?

No wonder Genesis 38:9 tells us that when Onan spilled his semen on the ground, "What he did was wicked in the sight of the Lord and he put him to death..." And Luke 8:11 affirms: "The seed is the word of God."

The paltry number of potential humans saved by the inadequate action of the Texas Legislature and its handmaiden the Supreme Court pales in comparison to those lives secretly short-circuited in shady backrooms, bathrooms, and bedrooms in every state in the union.

So, you pro-life Texas legislators—step up to the plate and really get the job done!

How about a \$10,000 reward for laundry workers and hotel room cleaners everywhere for submitting the sheets, towels, and tissues of the high and mighty for genetic testing. Let's once and for all prosecute those baby killers. And perhaps there is no better place to start than with Texas Gov. Greg Abbott and Supreme Court Justices Kavanaugh, Thomas, Alito, and Gorsuch.

**To really save potential lives, we've got to go straight to the source.**

## The U.S. Constitution, R.I.P.—almost

By Mark Gruenberg

**T**he U.S. Constitution almost didn't reach its 234th birthday, which will occur on September 17.

That was the day in 1787 when the Founders completed and signed the basic text of U.S. government. Amendments, additions, and court rulings have added—and sometimes subtracted—from its basic tenets. But there have been a few times in U.S. history when the Constitution was in danger of dying.

The latest, and the worst since the Civil War, was January 6.

Need we remind you what the invaders of the Capitol intended to do that winter day? They wanted to overthrow the government and install their dictator, Donald Trump.

Their method: Invasion, violent assault, injuring and killing defenders, threats to hang Vice President Mike Pence, and maim or kill House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, who were second and third in line for the presidency. And, most importantly, stop the counting of the electoral votes which would certify Democratic nominee Joe Biden beat Trump in the 2020 election.

They failed, narrowly. It wasn't for lack of organization or trying, and certainly Trump urged them on. That Oval Office occupant, like all other federal workers—from Army privates on up—swore to “preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States.” He didn't. And the Constitution almost died at the hands of his rebels.

So celebrate the Constitution's birthday this year, but please, for all our sakes, remember how close it came to death.

## Rechazamos la destitución de Gavin Newsom

By LaOpinion.com

**E**ste es un llamado urgente de La Opinión a la comunidad latina para que defiendan sus derechos rechazando la destitución de Newsom. El aliado de los promotores de la revocatoria es la apatía y la baja participación. Ellos desean fervorosamente que no votemos.

La campaña de destitución del gobernador de California Gavin Newsom parecería una farsa si no fuese un serio intento antidemocrático para subvertir nuestro gobierno e instalar en el poder a un representante de una minoría cada vez más pequeña.

Las boletas para la elección especial revocatoria del 14 de septiembre ya están llegando a más de 22 millones de californianos.

Este es entonces un llamado urgente de La Opinión a la comunidad latina para que defiendan sus derechos rechazando la destitución de Newsom.

La votación consiste de dos etapas. Primero, se pregunta al votante si aprueba la revocatoria, a lo que pedimos que la respuesta sea un tajante no.

Luego se despliega una lista larguísima de 47 candidatos, casi todos ellos republicanos, que son o desconocidos o peligrosos o las dos cosas.

Si ganase el sí con más del 50% de los votos, uno de ellos se convertiría en el gobernador de California, sin necesidad de mayoría o segunda ronda.

Sería alguien que no refleja los valores de la mayoría de los californianos; sino que representa a una minoría altisonante y cada vez más extremista.

La idea del “recall” o voto de destitución existe desde el comienzo de

su periplo. Sus gestores esperaban la mejor oportunidad para lanzarlo. El COVID-19 les cayó como maná del cielo.

Esta es una elección convocada exclusivamente para la revocatoria. En la boleta electoral no hay ningún otro tema de votación, nada que pudiese atraer más votantes. El aliado de los promotores de la revocatoria es entonces la apatía y la baja participación. Ellos desean fervorosamente que no votemos.

Las encuestas les dan ánimos; porque están muy cerca del 50% de votantes probables, lo que echaría a Newsom del poder.

Es por eso que tu participación electoral es crucial, para neutralizar, con la fuerza de los números, el ímpetu de quienes votarían por el sí.

Gavin Newsom llegó al puesto con apoyo del 62% del electorado. En sus dos años y medio de gobierno, ha estado atento a la estabilidad económica del estado, sensible a los vaivenes que dio el coronavirus, y flexible en el debate entre reabrir la economía o volver a cerrar ciertos negocios. Es cuidadoso con los fondos del estado. Con el abultado superávit presupuestario promueve viviendas de bajo costo y una solución para los desempleados. Está detrás de un gigantesco esfuerzo por vacunar a la mayor parte de la población lo antes posible.

A nivel nacional, nuestra democracia sigue estando bajo grave amenaza. La violencia política está latente. La polarización abarca familias y vecinos al punto del ataque físico. Pero podría ser peor, no solo en California, si la treta de la destitución de Gavin Newsom avanza.

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