

Wonder Bread worker accuses company of bias

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — George Lassiter worked at the Wonder Bread plant for 28 years, and says he did such a good job he could run the bakery by himself. He was never promoted beyond foreman.

Lassiter says it's because he's black. He is one of 21 workers from a San Francisco plant who have joined in a multimillion-dollar lawsuit against a subsidiary of the nation's largest wholesale baker, claiming they were denied promotions, subjected to racist comments and given the worst shifts.

"People less qualified than me got promoted. People I trained got promoted," said Lassiter, who retired early due to what he termed as workplace stress. "If I would have been white, I would have been promoted long ago."

Aurora LaGroan, a bread wrapper at the plant who has filed a separate lawsuit against Interstate Brands Corp., said she was repeat-

edly called stupid and a racial slur, and at one point a group of white workers threw bread at her. Theodis Carroll, the lead plaintiff in the case, says he was repeatedly called "boy" by one of his co-workers.

Other employees said they were told not to congregate during breaks at the plant in the city's South of Market district, apparently because managers feared they would look like a street gang.

IBC denies all the charges. The company is a wholly owned subsidiary of Interstate Bakeries Corp., based in Kansas City, Mo., which has 63 regional bakeries and is known for such brands as Wonder Bread and Hostess Cupcakes. The Fortune 500 company made \$126 million last year on sales of \$3.5 billion.

Angela Alioto, who represents 18 of the employees, said the suit does not specify a specific amount for compensatory and punitive damages. One number Alioto has men-

tioned is \$260 million.

The trial opened last week in San Francisco Superior Court. Attorneys said it could last six weeks.

Alioto said the discrimination affected every black worker at the plant as well as other IBC locations. IBC employs 1,100 people in Northern California, and there is "not one African American employee in management," she claimed in opening arguments.

Patrick Mullin, attorney for IBC, said none of the workers had ever complained of discrimination, and if they had, the issue would have been dealt with swiftly.

"We found out about it in the (San Francisco) Examiner the day after they filed it," Mullin said.

But LaGroan, whom Alioto is representing in a separate lawsuit, said she went to her supervisor, the union and human resources complaining of the abuse, to no avail.

Her supervisor, she maintained, was a big part of the problem.

"He told me he was investigating it but I was probably the problem," she testified through tears. "He told me he was tired of me coming to his office and complaining about it."

LaGroan was fired from her job after going on disability for a year, and under cross-examination, said she had had a nervous breakdown and was under a psychiatrist's care for work-related stress.

IBC executives would not comment on the suit's specifics, but the company issued a statement saying it "does not tolerate discrimination in any form."

"We have a strong policy against discriminatory behavior. And we have a track record of taking strong and immediate action whenever a question of discrimination arises," the statement said.

Simpson denies taking lie test in ex-wife's murder

LOS ANGELES (AP) — O.J. Simpson said he never took a polygraph test about his ex-wife's murder, but is willing to take one now even though "no lie detector test is going to change anyone's mind."

Responding Monday to statements by attorney F. Lee Bailey during a Florida court hearing, Simpson told The Associated Press in a telephone interview that he and Bailey are on the best of terms and Bailey has been trying to arrange for a lie detector test to be done now, perhaps in a pay-per-view TV format.

"Lee and I talk all the time," Simpson said. "He's one of my biggest supporters."

But Simpson said he's convinced that if he passed a lie detector test no one would pay any attention to it.

"No lie detector test is going to change anyone's mind," he said.

"When I pass it, they'll say what they said about the Ramseys and the nanny. Do you notice anyone saying they're innocent?"

The Ramseys and English au pair Louise Woodward supposedly passed lie detec-

tor tests.

The Ramseys are still said to be suspects in the 1996 killing of their 6-year-old daughter.

And Woodward was convicted in 1997 of murdering an 8-month-old by violently shaking him and slamming his head into a hard object.

Her conviction was eventually reduced to a misdemeanor.

"When you pass it nobody pays any attention," he said.

Simpson said the current flap appears to be part of a feud between Bailey and attorney Robert Shapiro.

Both men were part of Simpson's defense team in his 1994 criminal trial which resulted in his acquittal for the murders of Nicole Brown Simpson and Ronald Goldman.

In a subsequent civil trial he was held liable for the murders.

In Naples, Fla., where Bailey is embroiled in a battle to keep his law license, he told of a dispute with Shapiro who took Simpson to see a lie detector expert two days after the killings of Nicole Brown Simpson and Ronald Goldman in June 1994.

Clarifying his earlier remarks, Bailey said Monday: "Shapiro called me in the middle of a polygraph test where all the responses were wild. I read those charts, they are not a polygraph test. Shapiro took the charts, so no one else has ever been able to review them, but I stopped the test for the simple reason that you never, never test anyone for killing a spouse or a child within two or three days of the event."

Bailey, who is reputed to be an expert in the polygraph, said he stopped the test because of Simpson's emotional state, not because of the answers he was giving.

"He has never to this date been tested by anyone, although he has a standing offer to do so under certain conditions," Bailey said.

Simpson said he sat down with a lie detector expert, was hooked up to a machine and was asked inconsequential questions "to show me how it worked."

"He asked me if Nicole and I were married," he said.

"He never asked me if I murdered Nicole. Nobody could say this was a legitimate test."

Missouri governor OKs racial profiling bill

ST. LOUIS (AP) — Calling the practice abhorrent, Missouri Gov. Mel Carnahan signed a bill Monday outlawing racial profiling by police.

The legislation requires local and state police agencies to track whether officers are deliberately targeting members of certain racial groups.

"The statistical evidence that will be created will be objective evidence to the public as to the prevalence of the problem," Carnahan said.

Missouri is the fifth state to pass racial profiling legislation. About 15 other states have considered it. In November, the Inter-

national Association of Chiefs of Police condemned the practice.

"Driving while black is not illegal, driving as a minority is not a crime," Attorney General Jay Nixon said.

The bill requires police agencies to record the age, gender and minority group of motorists stopped, then to review the statistics to determine if officers are making a disproportionate number of stops against minority groups. The law, which had overwhelming support in both the House and Senate, empowers the governor to withhold funding from agencies that fail to comply with its provisions.

College wants prospective students for conference

The Las Vegas Chapter of the Southern University Alumni Federation is looking for current and former students to participate in Conference 2000 during the university's National Alumni Convention July 12-16 at the MGM Grand Hotel, 3799 S. Las Vegas Blvd.

The conference's theme is "Understanding Our History, To Preserve Our Legacy and Envision Our Destiny."

Early registration, which ends Friday, costs \$225.

Regular registration is \$245. Both fees

include access to all events.

The federation is also looking for high school sophomores, juniors and seniors and high school graduates interested in attending college. From 2 to 5 p.m., July 13, the federation will host a college fair coordinated by the Office of Admissions, with activities from the academic colleges and departments, residential housing, financial aid and more.

Those interested can call Greg Turner at 895-4465, Charles Stull at 254-8426 or Damon Hodge at 477-3861.

SMALLER CLASS SIZE*

* LESS CROWDING ALLOWS MORE PERSONAL INTERACTION WITH INSTRUCTORS.

AFFORDABLE SUMMER CLASSES THAT CAN ADVANCE YOUR EDUCATION AND CAREER. SUMMER SCHOOL REGISTRATION NOW THROUGH JUNE 9. FALL REGISTRATION STARTS MAY 20. ENROLL ON THE WEB NOW AT www.ccsn.nevada.edu OR BY CALLING (702) 650-CCSN.

COMMUNITY COLLEGE OF SOUTHERN NEVADA

CHARLESTON CAMPUS
6375 W. CHARLESTON BLVD.
LAS VEGAS, NV 89146

CHEYENNE CAMPUS
3200 E. CHEYENNE AVE.
NORTH LAS VEGAS, NV 89030

HENDERSON CAMPUS
700 COLLEGE DR.
HENDERSON, NV 89015