

# Lawsuit alleges Former Pick-N Pull Auto Dismantlers, Pasadena Inc employee was racially discriminated, forced to resign

NEWARK, CALIFORNIA, UNITED STATES, January 6, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Lawsuit alleges former Pick-N-Pull Auto Dismantlers, Pasadena, Inc. employee was discriminated against due to her race, forced to resign after suffering severe racial harassment over several months.

Sophia Simon, a former Retail Associate, has filed suit against her former employer, Pick-N-Pull Auto Dismantlers, Pasadena, Inc., a division of Schnitzer Steel Industries, Inc., as well as her former supervisor, Erica Mondragon, for fostering what she alleges is a culture of racial harassment and discrimination in the workplace. In her complaint filed on September 22, 2021, case numbered RG2111357 in Alameda County Superior Court, Simon alleges that Ms. Mondragon purposely engaged in a pattern of unlawful discrimination and harassment based on Simon's race and ethnicity, and creating an inhospitable environment that she dreaded working in. Simon claims this environment ultimately forced her resignation in March of 2021.

Simon, a woman of half African-American and half Hispanic descent, primarily identifies as African-American. She alleges that hostile treatment began early into her employment at Pick-N-Pull Store No. 43 in Newark, California. She claims that on the second day of her employment there, Mondragon inquired with Simon whether she spoke Spanish. Simon alleges that when she informed Mondragon that she could understand, but not speak, basic Spanish, Mondragon began openly discriminating and harassing her in the workplace.

Though Simon worked diligently to follow the instructions of her trainer, she claims that Mondragon was routinely hostile towards her when she had questions, with responses that included rolling her eyes, audibly huffing and puffing, and approaching Simon with a negative attitude. Simon alleges that this intimidated her to the point where Simon felt discouraged from approaching Mondragon for further training.

Simon claims that she brought this biased and hostile treatment by Mondragon to the attention of her manager, David Keen, in or around the beginning of January 2021. Simon alleges that while Keen assured her that he would talk to Mondragon, the discriminatory and retaliatory campaign against Simon filled with hostile, oppressive, and bullying conduct continued, unabated.

Simon alleges that in February of 2021, someone in her office said the words "pinche mayate," (a

Spanish-language equivalent of the word, ni\*\*er). She claims that immediately thereafter, team lead David Cruz and Mondragon began laughing in unison. Based on their other conduct, Simon believes that both Cruz and Mondragon were referring to her. Simon also alleges that one week prior to this incident, she overheard Cruz whisper, “mayate” after apprehending an African-American customer whom he believed had been stealing. No evidence of theft was found during that incident, the lawsuit alleges.

Simon also claims to have also witnessed discriminatory hiring practices from Cruz and Mondragon, including regularly turning down African-American applicants for positions that had been offered to Hispanic candidates. She alleges that Keen defended these practices by telling her that, “Black people just don’t apply here.” Simon also claims that Keen inquired into her racial and ethnic background in unapplicable situations, such as when asking for assistance with customers.

Simon claims that when she tearfully brought her mistreatment to David Keen’s attention, he continued to justify Mondragon’s behavior. This treatment ultimately forced Simon to file a complaint against Mondragon with Human Resources in March 2021. Simon claims that while HR personnel assured her actions would be taken to address Mondragon’s treatment of Simon, no specifics were ever provided to her as to how Pick-N-Pull would remedy the situation.

Simon returned to work, dreading having to face her aggressors, she alleges. Simon claims that the following week, when Keen was out of the office, and Mondragon continued with her discriminatory and harassing behavior towards her. Simon alleges that after seeing that Pick-N-Pull’s failure to act only ratified Mondragon’s unlawful conduct, Simon was forced to resign.

Simon is represented by attorney Kyle Todd, Esq. and Alfredo Nava, Esq. of Kyle Todd, P.C. Requests for comment can be directed to Mr. Todd, at (323) 208-9171 or [kyle@kyletodd.com](mailto:kyle@kyletodd.com).

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