

RAP News

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YELLOW RAT BASTARD OWNER Arrested

SoHo Retailer Charged with Payroll Record Violations

October 26, 2006 -- Henry Ishay, the owner of this SoHo-based retail chain, was arrested yesterday and charged with failure to maintain minimum payroll records as required by New York State Labor Law. The case is being prosecuted by the NYS Attorney General's Office, which is also investigating the Yellow Rat Bastard retail chain for serious wage and hour violations.

"For the last 10 years, Henry Ishay has run a successful business empire of retail stores in New York City. Mr. Ishay's failure to comply with the minimum record keeping requirements of the law is inexcusable and punishable under the law", said Eliot Spitzer.

The Retail Action Project (RAP), an initiative of GOLES, applauded the Attorney General's Office for its thorough investigation and active pursuit of YRB's illegal and abusive treatment of workers. RAP has working with current and former YRB workers to address the poverty wages, unhealthy working conditions and abusive management at the retail chain and its eight affiliated stores throughout the New York metropolitan area. **RAP estimates that this retailer owes these workers at least \$1.5 million in back wages.**

YRB workers work as much as 75 hours a week and, until recently, were paid as little as \$5.25 per hour, well below the NYS mandated minimum wage of \$6.75. YRB employees report such horrific workplace violations as sexual harassment, indecent working conditions including excessive vermin and health violations, public humiliation, lack of vacation or healthcare benefits, and being denied legally mandated breaks.



Rat droppings on T-shirts at YRB SoHo. Workers shake rat droppings off T-shirts before folding them.

"We worked so hard, yet almost everybody there was being paid under minimum wage. The guy's a millionaire. He should give more money than he did. I don't want other people to be treated the way that we were", said Danielle Ly, who worked for Yellow Rat Bastard for nearly 10 years.

Workers and Community Activists Learn about Workplace Rights

October 18, 2006 -- Workers from Broadway stores and community residents from the Lower East Side gathered on October 18th for a Workers Rights Training given by Amy Carroll, an attorney at MFY Legal Services. A variety of topics were covered including: illegal pay deductions, job protection, commission laws and discrimination on the job. It was a very lively and interactive evening. Knowing your legal rights is the first step towards making positive changes at the job. RAP is planning more trainings on workplace rights, employment skills and mobilizing your coworkers to action. We hope to see you at the next training!