

UNDO THE COUP AT WBAI!

Pacifica National Fires General Manager and Bans Program Director Gag Rule Imposed on Programmers Who Dissent from National Takeover

WBAI is under attack from Pacifica's Interim Executive Director, Grace Aaron of Los Angeles, as well as from the Pacifica National Board majority and the WBAI Local Station Board majority. Exploiting a very real financial crisis at the station, they want to impose their own brand of programming – removing what some label “racial divisiveness and balkanization,” meaning community self-determination programs, particularly those by and for the Black community.

On May 6, Aaron fired WBAI's progressive Black General Manager, Tony Riddle, and replaced him with LaVarn Williams, Pacifica's Interim Chief Financial Officer, from Berkeley. Two days later, another progressive Black manager, Program Director Bernard White, was “suspended” and excluded from the building AND from the WBAI airwaves, following years of harsh attacks on him by majority board members locally and nationally. At an April 20 secret session of the Local Station Board, the majority had reportedly done a snap “evaluation” of these two managers (over strong objections by the board's minority Justice & Unity group), initiating the firing process. No data was collected and no chance given them to respond. Riddle had been manager for 13 months. White, a 30-year station veteran, had recently resumed work after major surgery.

These actions follow Riddle's and White's vocal and written protests about **the recently revealed attempt by Aaron to hijack the station by changing the locks on the station's broadcast transmitter room and installing equipment for remote control of programming** – all without notifying manager Riddle.

Meanwhile, Aaron has imposed a gag rule threatening any programmer who discusses matters on air that she deems a “risk” to Pacifica will be removed from the air. Already, Wakeup Call programmers Don DeBar and Errol Maitland, who have dissented on the air, have been disciplined. **Longtime producer Ayo Harrington of “On the Count” (criminal justice program) was banned without any grounds given.**

All these steps are reminiscent of the **Christmas Coup of December 2000**, when Pacifica changed locks, fired local managers, and purged dissenting programmers & other staff, with the goal of mainstreaming BAI – until a mass movement of listeners and staff fought back and won back control of the station and network.

- **Attend CEMOTAP's Great Debate on Bloomberg's Policies - Sun., May 17, 6 - 9 PM - Bernard White speaks re WBAI, 7:30 - Salem Church, 129th & AC Powell Blvd., Harlem**
- **Speak out at the WBAI Local Station Board mtg., Wed., May 20, 7 PM – place TBA**

***Fight Back!* VOICE YOUR PROTEST * BECOME A WBAI VOTING MEMBER!**

* **Send an email to the Pacifica National Board at pnb@pacifica.org** – which reaches each board member individually, including Grace Aaron. Please send a cc to info@justiceunity.org.

Demand: Reinstate removed WBAI Management and staff! Maintain local control of programming!

* **Also call Grace Aaron (Interim Exec. Dir.) at (310) 286-1011 or (310) 402-4087 and LaVarn Williams (Acting General Mgr.) at (212) 209-2800 or (212) 209-2820 with the same message.**

* **Sign a petition to RECALL Local Station Board members Steve Brown, Mitch Cohen, James Ross, and Carolyn Birden, leaders of the attack on WBAI management.**

* **IT IS URGENT THAT YOU JOIN THE STATION** (by donating \$25 or more or 3 hours of volunteer work) so that you have the right to vote for Justice & Unity board candidates and to recall destructive board members. Call the station's pledge line at (212) 209-2950 – ask them to **note on the card that you demand reinstatement of local management.** Or pledge at www.wbai.org.

Stay updated with: THE WBAI JUSTICE & UNITY CAMPAIGN

(212) 591-2111 * www.justiceunity.org (join our email list there) * info@justiceunity.org
Also tune into Don DeBar's audio & video reports on the WBAI crisis at www.wbixradio.org