

## FDNY Captain Who Testified on Racial Harassment in the Workplace, Supported by New York Civil Rights Violation Lawyer David Perecman

**A New York City fire captain has testified that minorities at the New York Fire Department have often been subjected to racial harassment.**

NEW YORK – Minority members of the New York Fire Department are routinely subjected to [racial harassment](#), Captain Paul Washington, a black FDNY veteran and former president of the Vulcan Society, testified in Brooklyn federal court.

According to the *New York Daily News*, Washington detailed several incidents of [racism in the workplace](#) as he testified in the third week of a federal discrimination trial against the department.

“The FDNY needs to look at what is truly important; Public safety should be prioritized over race,” said [New York civil rights violation lawyer](#) David Perecman. “People who need help do not care what race fire fighters are. They don’t care what race policemen are. What matters is those rescuers provide help.”

Washington recalled that just weeks after Sept. 11, 2001, racist remarks were found scrawled on a placard announcing a memorial service for black firefighters who died at the World Trade Center.

The antagonist wrote, "What about the white guys?" and added a list of black entertainers, including The Jackson 5, Gary Coleman, Fat Albert, Buckwheat, Tupac Shakur and P Diddy.

The word "black" was written over the request that event guests wear a dress uniform "with white gloves."

A white firefighter came forward to take responsibility for the [racial harassment](#) at the Brooklyn firehouse. [New York civil rights violation lawyers](#) understand he was punished with an “unofficial” minor reprimand, as the *New York Daily News* reported.

According to the *New York Post*, Washington also testified that in the mid-1990s he had overheard white firefighters in an all-white firehouse use the "N-word" as a derogatory term to describe whoever was assigned to the menial chores for the day.

Washington also heard of a [workplace racial harassment](#) incident in which a white firefighter wore a Ku Klux Klan hood while in the presence of a black colleague. He also noted that a Confederate flag had been displayed in a firehouse.

Complaining of the racist incidents would make a firefighter "effectively ostracized," and “shunned” by colleagues, according to Washington.

Earlier this year a black FDNY electrician found a 3-foot noose in his locker after filing a complaint with the New York State Division of Human Rights, charging the Fire Department excludes minority electricians for overtime opportunities and promotions.

“The right to work without being [harassed because of race](#) belongs to all people. Standing up for your rights is a sign that you are not willing to be a [victim of discrimination in the workplace](#),” said Perecman, a New York civil rights lawyer with over 30 years of experience defending [employee rights in workplace discrimination cases](#).

The allegations come amid a special bench trial before Brooklyn federal Judge Nicholas Garaufis, who is deciding what steps the city should take to recruit more minority firefighters.

The Vulcan Society, a fraternal organization for black firefighters who have historically fought intradepartmental prejudice, is asking Garaufis to monitor the FDNY as it reforms its practices. It also seeks damages for those harmed by an alleged [hiring racial bias](#).

The U.S. Department of Justice, along with the New York Vulcan Society, won a suit against the city last year in federal court, which commanded the city to change its fire department entrance exam and hiring practices.

“People should receive equal treatment, without regard to color, race, gender, national origin, or religion, which is in alignment with the New York City’s Equal Employment Opportunity Policy,” said New York civil rights lawyer Perecman, founder of The Perecman Firm, one of [New York’s civil rights violation law firms](#).

New York’s civil rights violation lawyers understand that the FDNY is only 3% black, while blacks represent a quarter of New York City’s population.

[Race discrimination cases](#) throughout New York require legal representation from experienced [New York civil rights violation lawyers](#). The lawyers at The Perecman Firm are committed to protecting the civil rights of employees and have years of experience handling race discrimination claims.

About David Perecman and The Perecman Firm, PLLC:

For the past 30 years, the New York civil rights violation, medical malpractice, auto accident, and construction accident lawyers at The Perecman Firm, PLLC have handled all types of cases including age and disability discrimination. David Perecman, founder of the Firm, is a Board Director and the past Secretary and Treasurer of the New York State Trial Lawyers Association (NYSTLA) and a chair of its Labor Law Committee. Mr. Perecman's achievements have brought him recognition as an Honoree in the National Law Journal's Hall of Fame, in New York Magazine's "The Best Lawyers in America" and The New York Times Magazine "New York Super Lawyers, Metro Edition" for the years 2007-2010.

The Firm has recovered millions of dollars for its clients. Among the more recent victories, Mr. Perelman won a \$15 million verdict\*\* for a construction accident, a \$5.35 million dollar verdict\*\*\* for an automobile accident, and a \$40 million dollar structured settlement for medical malpractice\*\*\*\*.

\*\*later settled while on appeal for \$7.940 million

\*\*\* later settled for \$3.5 million

\*\*\*\* total potential payout

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