



For Lula Ingram, the R.J. Reynolds firings of temporary employees was fair and should have been expected (photo by James Parker).

Up Front

Ingram harbors no grudges against RJR

By ROBIN ADAMS
Staff Writer

When 422 R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Co. employees were fired several weeks ago, Lula Ingram was one of them. Like most, Ingram is upset that she is out of a job. Unlike most, she is not blaming the company and is grateful for the 31 months she did work there.

The Chronicle recently talked with Ingram about the firings.

Chronicle: Why do you feel differently about being fired than most others?

Ingram: So many people have the wrong outlook about our situation. We were temporary employees. They have to realize that we were temporary employees and think about what the word temporary means. I, like them, grew accustomed to some things during the 31 months I was there. But in addition to the money I was paid, I was taught a lot of new skills that I can use in getting another job. I have accepted the fact that I was hired temporarily. I was hoping I would be hired permanently, but I wasn't.

People should have known that this could happen and prepare for it. We were laid off for a couple of weeks in April 1982. And I prepared myself then for the possibility that I would be without a job. I knew one day it would happen.

Chronicle: Some people are upset because they were not given more notice about being

fired and felt they had been used. Exactly how were you told about the lay-off?

Ingram: I work third shift, from midnight to 8 a.m., so when I got to work that night, we had a meeting and were told that that was our last night. The plant manager gave us thanks for the job we did while employed there. He told us that one day maybe we would have a chance for a permanent position and asked us to reapply for jobs.

I think that maybe they could have at least given us two weeks notice. The way it was, it

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-- Lula Ingram

caught a lot of people off guard. But they are a manufacturing plant and they can tell you, you are gone whenever.

Chronicle: How are you coping without a job?

Ingram: I have lived in a city for 14 years and I have prepared myself for emergencies. I prepared a budget because of the job market and I am going to the unemployment office looking for a job.

There are also some things I want to do that I have put off, but maybe now I will be able to do

them, like going back to school.

Chronicle: Do you think you will be able to get another job because of your experiences and work record at Reynolds?

Ingram: I hope so. I hope that maybe I will be called back to Reynolds because it is a good company. Before, I was working two jobs and when I got on at Reynolds, I cut back to one job and was able to make it and live comfortably. And I'm thankful for that and thankful that I have been able to work for the past 31 months and make good money.

I don't know why so many black people are complaining. We have always had it hard. We can't go down to the loan company and tell them we need \$5,000. We have to have two co-signers. But we have survived. I might get mad sometimes because the things I want to do, like send my daughter to college, I might not be able to do. But I have to realize that it takes time to do things.

Chronicle: What's ahead for Lula Ingram?

Ingram: While I was at Reynolds, I had several good work commendations and I had a perfect attendance. I have always had a job and I will find another one. Unlike some people, I won't be downing the company. How can I down a company that helped me for 31 months. People have to realize that we were blessed while we were there, and I have been able to get some of the things I wanted. Before, I couldn't provide for my child, but now I can.

Carlton trial

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Attorney Bob Brown.

Though Harrill did not find probable cause to send the case to District Court, Brown said, Carlton still could be indicted by a grand jury if enough evidence is found to continue the case.

Brown said he doesn't know if District Attorney Donald K. Tisdale will ask the grand jury to render a decision on the case or if the charges will simply be dropped.

David Crawford, Carlton's attorney, said he doesn't think Tisdale will pursue the case.

"Her (the girl's) version of the story was that he (the man who attempted to kidnap her) offered her candy and she did not reply. (According to the girl) he then said he would drag her in the car," Crawford said. "The girl said she ran after that. That's the evidence. There was no physical contact made. Attempted kidnapping with the intentions of committing rape on the basis of that statement is tenuous."

The arresting officer, J.L. Boyd of the Winston-Salem Police Department's Patrol Division, could not be reached for comment.

Residents in the 15th Street and Jackson Avenue areas

have alleged that Carlton has harassed their teen-aged daughters en route to and from their schools during the last two months. And last year, residents in the Morningside neighborhood said a man they believe was Carlton posed as an exterminator and tried to enter their homes to proposition their daughters.

Police have identified three white suspects, including Carlton, in recent incidents involving men who have approached elementary school girls. According to police reports, the men have made lewd gestures, used obscene language and tried to lure youngsters into their cars.

Carlton is described as a handsome, clean-shaven white man who drives a black Monte Carlo.

The second male is between the ages of 16 and 19, has a slender build, dark hair, a mustache and a goatee and drives a small white car with a dark stripe on the side.

The third is between the ages of 16 and 18, and has shoulder-length blond hair and no facial hair. He has been seen driving an older-model green Chevrolet.

Growing complaints from parents have prompted the police department to increase its patrols around the city's elementary and junior high schools during the mornings before school and the afternoons when school dismisses in an effort to prevent the incidents.

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