

LI MAN: I FELT 'FEAR AND DISGUST' OVER NOOSE

Police investigating rope found at work site in Farmingdale

BY JOHN ASBURY

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Suffolk County police are investigating a noose that was found in an office of a Farmingdale electrical contractor this week.

Kyrin Taylor, 23, who said he was the only African American working at Cooper Power and Lighting Corp., said he walked into the tool room at 7:30 a.m. Tuesday and found a rope tied into a noose hanging from a ceiling hook.

Taylor, of Middle Island, said he took a video of the noose and contacted his union representative with IBEW Local 25, as well as the Suffolk County police.

"Seeing this took my breath away and I really didn't know what to do or what to think," Taylor said Friday during a news conference with his attorney, Frederick K. Brewington, in Hempstead at which the

video was shown. "The first thing I experienced was fear and disgust. It was clear to me that this was placed in a position so that I could see it."

During the news conference, Brewington played another video, which Taylor also had recorded, of what the lawyer said was a conversation between a union representative and the company president in which the men discussed the incident and the union representative demanded the names of those involved in hanging the noose. Later, in another conversation on the video, the man Brewington identified as the company president scolded Taylor for not notifying him before calling police.

Suffolk County police said they were conducting a bias investigation. No arrests had been made.

The president of Cooper Power and Lighting could not be reached for comment Friday and Saturday, and the door to the electrical contractor's office was locked Friday. Representatives from IBEW Local 25 could not be reached for comment.

Brewington said he had sent the company president a letter asking him to preserve all

records and documentation in the case in anticipation of future litigation.

"This is a sad day," Brewington said. "Mr. Taylor walked into his workplace hoping to do a full day's work with pay, but was rather greeted with a sign of hate, of race hatred intended to invoke fear and terror in the hearts of African Americans in this country."

Taylor said he had complained to management in recent weeks about harassment at the Farmingdale company. But he said the concerns weren't addressed.

On the video, the man identified as a union representative said that other workers at the company had asserted the rope was used for rigging equipment, and he said he had never heard of a noose being used in that way.

Taylor said several employees had walked through the tool room before he arrived to start work and passed the noose without commenting.

"I have been targeted by this act of pure hate and I just don't know what to think. When will people stop thinking it's all right to terrorize Black people?" Taylor said. "Plain and



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Kyrin Taylor, of Middle Island, said the noose was a "threat of lynching aimed at me" for speaking up. ■ Video: newsday.com/li

simple, this noose was a threat of lynching aimed at me for daring to speak up and refusing to be disrespected. I should not have to worry about my safety, but now I do."

When Taylor returned to work on Wednesday, he said, he worked silently beside others and asked his union representative to be assigned to a new job at a different company, which he

starts Monday.

Taylor was joined Friday with his grandparents and the Rev. Saba Mchunguzi, president of the Central Long Island branch of the NAACP.

"The noose to some people may be nothing, but to African Americans a noose represents thousands lynched throughout this country and gets to the depth of our soul," Mchunguzi said.