

*The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission*

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## EEOC RACIAL HARASSMENT SUIT AGAINST TEXAS DRILLING COMPANY SETTLES FOR \$859,000

*Employees Allegedly Subjected to Hangman's Nooses and Nazi Symbols at Drilling Site*

EL PASO, Texas - The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) today announced a \$859,000 settlement of a racial harassment lawsuit under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 against TMBR/Sharp Drilling, Inc. (TMBR), a Midland, Texas-based oil drilling corporation, on behalf of one African-American former employee and four of his former co-workers.

The EEOC's suit charged TMBR with creating a racially hostile work environment for the African-American employee and four of his White co-workers because of their association with him.

The harassment included derogatory remarks, slurs, ridicule and intimidation on a daily basis. According to the suit, the five former TMBR employees were subjected to the displaying of Nazi "SS" symbols and hangman's nooses around the drilling site.

Under the terms of the settlement, the five former employees will evenly split the \$859,000 in total monetary benefits, receiving nearly \$172,000 each. The EEOC filed suit after exhausting its conciliation efforts to reach a voluntary pre-litigation settlement. The litigation, Civil Action No. MO-02-CA-065, was filed on August 15, 2001, in the United States District Court for the Western District of Texas, El Paso Division, and then transferred to the Midland-Odessa Division.

"We are pleased with the terms of this agreement," said Leticia Dominguez, EEOC Trial Attorney in the agency's El Paso Area Office. "The settlement provides significant monetary relief to the victims of this egregious discrimination and shows what can happen when employees come together to take a stand against unlawful workplace conduct. No individual should ever have to endure such harassment in order to earn a living."

In addition to enforcing Title VII, which prohibits employment discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex (including sexual harassment or pregnancy) or national origin and protects employees who complain about such offenses from retaliation, the EEOC enforces the Age Discrimination in

Employment Act, which protects workers age 40 and older from discrimination based on age; the Equal Pay Act of 1963, which prohibits gender-based wage discrimination; the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which prohibits employment discrimination against people with disabilities in the federal sector; Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act, which prohibits employment discrimination against people with disabilities in the private sector and state and local governments; and sections of the Civil Rights Act of 1991. Further information about the Commission is available on the agency's web site at [www.eeoc.gov](http://www.eeoc.gov).

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