

STRIKE STORIES



By Elijah Johnson

Bus Operator
Division 15

It was still dark outside when I arrived at the OCI parking lot in El Monte. As I pulled in, I noticed lights and people marching at the intersection of Santa Anita and Ramona.

As I stepped out of the car, I heard a voice saying, "What do we want?" A response from the crowd and another question: "When do we want it?"

The replies and chants were repeated over and over as two groups of bus operators marched from one side of the intersection to the other, passing one another in the middle. Then I realized the grim reality of it all – the strike really had hit the MTA.

I had just completed three weeks of training with my mentor at Division 15. I'm a part-time operator and I never experienced a strike before.

I walked up to a group of operators and listened spellbound as they spoke about strikes they had experienced in the past. When strikers on the line got tired, others would replace them. Channel 2 news was there and did a live report. Everyone on the line tried to get in the picture.

I stood there totally immersed in the sounds, observing the activities of individuals in small and large groups discussing a common theme. What impressed me most was seeing the camaraderie between different races of people.

MTA lives up to its code of diversity in its workforce and I believe the strike made that bond even tighter.

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