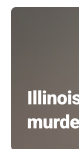
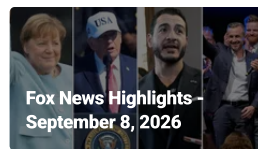
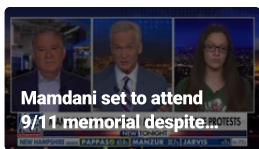


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CRIME

BART officials withholding crime surveillance tapes for 'fear of racial stereotyping'

By William Lajeunesse · Fox News

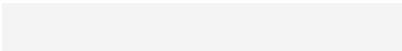
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Video of violence on Bay Area trains withheld from public

William La Jeunesse reports from Los Angeles

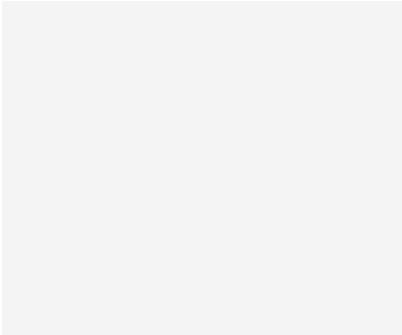
The transit system that serves San Francisco is under fire for refusing to release video from surveillance cameras that captured several recent train attacks by gangs of young black riders.



Assault, robbery and rape are up 41 percent over last year on the vast train system known as BART, or Bay Area Rapid Transit. But several recent attacks by gangs of young men has the agency under public scrutiny. One victim is suing to warn riders of the risk they face when riding BART.

BART OFFICIALS UNDER FIRE FOR WITHHOLDING CRIME SURVEILLANCE VIDEOS TO AVOID RACIAL STEREOTYPES

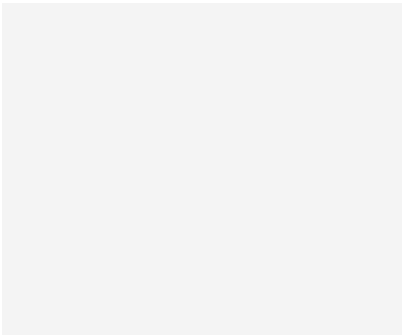
"Approximately 30 of them invaded our car. They beat and robbed a number of individuals," said Rusty Stapp, who was returning home with his wife and 19-year-old daughter. "They jumped on me, and began kicking me in the ribs. The individuals (police) saw on video were repeat offenders. They knew who they were. They had them in the system."



Yet BART refused to release the video, claiming several of the alleged gang members might be under 18.

"Especially when (a crime) is involving juveniles as these last two incidents have, the police department makes the determination that there is not a public interest in sending all that information out," said BART spokesman Taylor Huckaby.

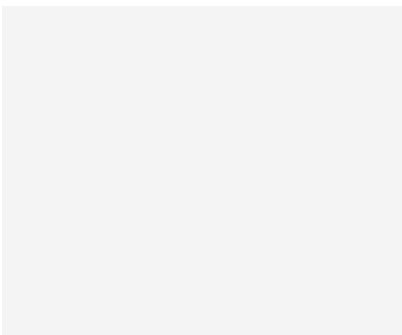
But Debora Allen, one of nine BART directors, said the agency is concealing the real reason – putting political correctness over public safety.



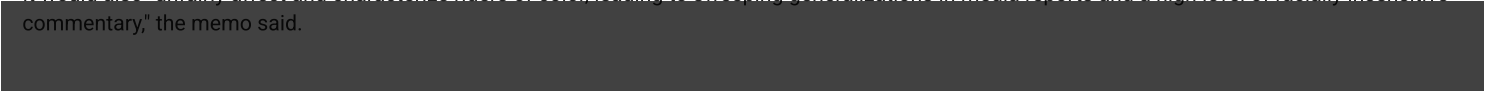
"They want to withhold the video release for fear of creating racial stereotyping," Allen told us last week.

BAY AREA RAPID TRANSIT: DOZENS OF OAKLAND TEENS REPORTEDLY STORM TRAIN, ROB RIDERS

She cited a July 7, 2017, internal memo to BART directors. The agency said it would not issue a press release on a similar mob attack in June because it would "paint an inaccurate picture of the BART system as crime ridden."

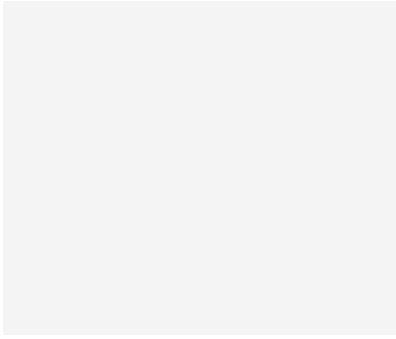


It would also "unfairly affect and characterize riders of color, leading to sweeping generalizations in media reports and a high level of racially insensitive commentary," the memo said.



Allen questioned BART Assistant General Manager Kerry Hamill about that explanation, saying "I don't understand what role the color of one's skin plays in this issue. Can you explain?"

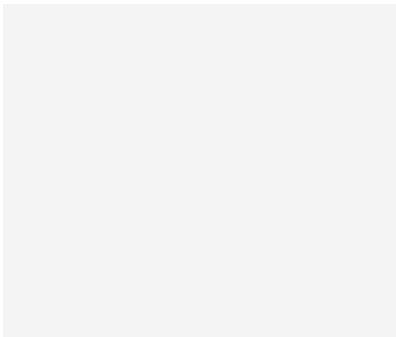
Hamill responded that members of the media only wanted to sensationalize the story and were only interested in "ratings" and "clicks."



"If we were to regularly feed the news media video of crimes on our system that involve minority suspects, particularly when they are minors, we would certainly face questions as to why we were sensationalizing relatively minor crimes and perpetuating false stereotypes in the process," said.

Allen told Fox News she was disappointed to read the memo.

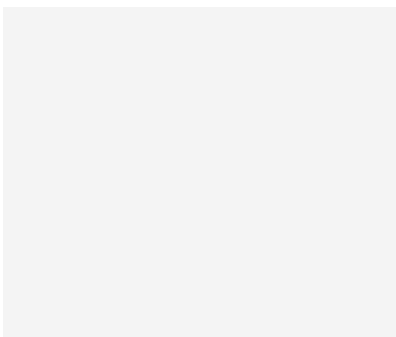
"Race should play no role," she said. "With respect to the video, I think it is important for the riding public to see some of the ways people steal and assault people on the trains."



Stapp appeared last week before the BART board to complain.

"I think if you were truly committed to (public safety) there would be a lot more interaction with the public, like making the video available of these incidents," Stapp said.

Stapp is seeking to sue BART for \$3 million for gross negligence.

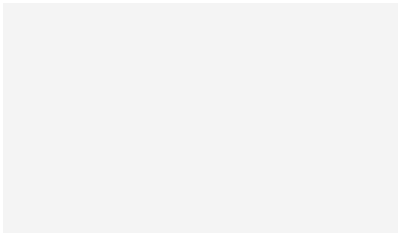


"It's the closest I've ever been to feeling like I might die," he told Fox News.

Paul Justi, Stapp's attorney, said BART should release the surveillance videos.

Others said there is a fine line between privacy and protecting the public.





"We have a lot of videos in this district" admitted Board Director Joel Keller. "There is this balance between privacy and openness."

A decision on releasing crime video is expected next month.

