

"It's a Lie! It's a Lie!"

Like notable famous experiments in history, including some fictional ones such as Dr. Frankenstein and his infamous monster; some have tragic consequences.

I recall his famous line when he thought he had created a perfect creature.

*"It's alive! It's alive!"*

And like Dr. Frankenstein, a recent experiment went south as well, leaving Labor Contractor Julian Gonzalez declaring, "None of this is true." My mind conjures up a vision of the man railing:

*"It's a lie! It's a lie!"*

It all began in Colima, Mexico, where Mr. Gonzalez traveled in July, picking up about 180 workers and promising government officials there that he would find steady work for them for 6 months at promised wages of \$100 a day for eight to ten hours per day, six days a week.

Instead, in their collective suit, the workers allege that the contractor brought them to California and gave them little money as they suffered in squalor and filthy living conditions.

That is not a great thing to do in the heart of UFW (United Farm Worker) country. The UFW referred the workers to lawyers, who filed the lawsuit on Wednesday night, August 20, 2008.

And although the union has reportedly changed its stance on guest workers programs and is coming more accepting of a model that is presently bringing in 30,000 workers to this country, they could not help themselves in this case. (Just for the record, it is said they are presently working on their own version of a visiting worker program to submit.)

Here is the bottom line, found in paragraph five of an article, titled, "Lawsuit highlights conflicted views on "guest workers," in the *Contra Costa Times*, by reporter Matt O'Brien:

"The incident marred Gonzalez's first experiment with the nation's guest worker program and was added to the United Farm Workers of America's litany of concerns about the seasonal work sponsorships that President Bush has sought to expand."

A double tragedy: First, an experiment with H-2A with an amateur that went awry. I am thinking right now about the notion of my plumber performing brain surgery. There is just something intrinsically wrong about experimenting with important issues.

Secondly, it gave the UFW an excuse to rail—and in this case, justifiably so—about an attempt at using H2A that went badly wrong. But it wasn't the program—the program is just a tool. Unfortunately, in this case it was in the hands of an amateur.