

Ground Game LA is killing local journalism. Stand with Knock LA.

In 2017, members of Ground Game LA created a Medium blog called Knock LA. In 2021, Knock LA leadership re-launched the blog as an independent newsroom with the publication of Cerise Castle's groundbreaking series on deputy gangs, 'A Tradition of Violence.'

Knock LA has provided crucial reporting on issues facing the Greater LA region such as police corruption, investigations into abuses of power at city hall, and the ongoing homelessness crisis for the past 3 years.

Ground Game LA & People Organized for Westside Renewal have operated as fiscal sponsors of the newsroom, allowing Knock LA to run as a non-profit. Simultaneously, Knock LA explored options for creating its own stand alone non-profit.

Following several violations from Ground Game LA in February 2024, Knock LA began to take steps to become independent. That included requesting Knock LA's tech specialist take over ownership of Knock LA's digital assets from Ground Game LA, as well as Ground Game LA beginning a transfer of Knock LA's journalism grants to Knock LA accounts.

At 8:30PM on 4/10/2024, Ground Game LA removed Cerise Castle, Ben Camacho, and Katja Schatte from Slack. They also deleted any accounts they individually had on the Knock LA workspace.

Ground Game LA also has removed our access to our social media accounts and administrative emails.

Ground Game LA is refusing to give Knock LA its property.

Knock LA has exhausted all means of amicable separation, despite consistent gaslighting, harm and stifling of our work. We, the contributors, freelancers and leadership of Knock LA, are now going public as a last resort to have full control of our newsroom. Please stand with us and demand that Ground Game LA return what is ours. You can post about it on social media using [this toolkit](#), and [send a letter](#) to Ground Game LA and POWER leadership [here](#).

Ground Game LA: hands off our work! Apologize to Knock LA, complete the asset transfers, cease the stifling of LA journalism!

Below is a non-exhaustive list of reasons for separation:

Lockout of Knock LA Accounts

- + Ground Game LA removed three members of Knock LA administration from Slack and deleted their Knock LA accounts. At least one of these accounts was being used for business outside of Knock LA and has put that employment at risk.
 - + Due to the lockout, Knock LA has no way to contact organizations who have scheduled training and workshops to develop the newsroom's journalism skills.
 - + Ground Game LA also has removed our access to our social media accounts and administrative emails.

Editorial Overreach

- + Members of GGLA have demanded articles be published by Knock LA despite the editorial firewall between the organizations.

Demands for free labor

- + GGLA members have repeatedly demanded free labor from our reporters, editors, and photographers.
- + Journalism is real work and deserves real pay.
- + When free labor is demanded, the only people able to do it are the ones with privilege. As an outlet that prioritizes uplifting marginalized voices, that runs counter to our goals.

Not paying for work

- + GGLA has issued checks to Knock LA freelancers that have bounced.
- + GGLA has not paid several Knock LA freelancers for months, even years.

No Support of Ben Camacho or Lisa Kwon

- + For the past year, Ben Camacho has been the subject of an unjust lawsuit at the hands of city attorney Hydee Feldstein-Soto around public records disclosure. This has the potential to change the free flow of information within the United States. Feldstein-Soto recently filed a second lawsuit against Ben that would make him one of two parties responsible for indemnification of the city should the city lose its case against LAPD officers.
- + GGLA has offered little to no public support of Ben throughout this ordeal.
 - + In the timeline of the second lawsuit, zero support has been offered by GGLA to Ben.
 - + As a political organizing group, now would be the time for GGLA to organize effectively around freedom of the press. GGLA has remained silent, and even endorsed a candidate for state senate that has sought to cripple press freedoms.
- + Lisa Kwon and Knock LA were first served a cease and desist for Lisa's unflinching and rigorous reporting on an illegal Airbnb in 2021. Knock LA and Lisa met with

attorney Matthew Strugar to discuss her case. Lisa later retained Strugar to represent her. Strugar informed Knock LA administration in a February 2024 meeting that he did not represent Lisa pro bono, and expected her to pay his fees of over \$10,000.

- + Knock LA's financial resources are also extremely limited. Our monthly income is about \$4,000 from small, individual monthly donations. Our monthly costs to operate are about \$12,000 - leaving us consistently in the red, month to month and year to year. During this ordeal, Knock LA's then-parent organization, Ground Game LA, had a much larger cash reserve than our newsroom. At no point did they offer to assist with Lisa's attorney fees.

GGLA has repeatedly treated Knock LA members in racist ways

- + Ground Game LA members have repeatedly disregarded and disrespected labor done by Knock LA members of color.

Ground Game LA stifles Knock LA's growth

- + Knock LA's main aim has always been to focus on local stories and elevate voices that often go unheard in mainstream media. Due to Knock LA's connection with Ground Game LA, a political organizing group, Knock LA cannot apply for important newsroom funding.

We demand that Ground Game LA return what is Knock LA's to Knock LA.

Apologize to Knock LA and cease the stifling of LA journalism!

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