

FORMER MALE EMPLOYEES ALLEGE SEXUAL HARASSMENT AT CAR DEALERSHIP



Employers will try various ways to engage their workers, be it office parties or a weekend activity away from the workplace. Asking an employee to attend such an outing is one thing, but demanding that they attend strip clubs or brothels is something entirely different. And also illegal, if allegations prove true. Two former employees of AutoNation, a car dealership which professes on its website to be "America's largest automotive retailer," have filed a complaint against the business. They had worked at one of the company's locations in California. They allege improper conduct from employers directed at the both of them as well as other workers, stating that the behavior stemmed from the employees' sex, sexual orientation, disability, weight, taking or being entitled to a CFRA (California Family Rights Act) leave, and supporting personal rights or the rights of fellow workers. They claim that it was a requirement to join others at a strip club or a brothel. They further allege that employers attempted to coerce at least one employee into participating in sexual endeavors with a prostitute and that workers had no choice but to work in a "sexually charged environment." According to the complaint, AutoNation has already been sued for prejudice against homosexuals and likewise "does not recognize the partnership status of gays in California for purposes of employee benefits as provided by law and does not list sexual orientation in its handbooks as one of the protected categories from harassment, discrimination and retaliation." One of the employees is homosexual and was allegedly subjected to homophobic slurs. The other employee is not gay but also complained of derogatory comments due to the fact that he vocalized his support of his fellow worker. One of the men was reportedly sent a text intended for a supervisor which referenced "getting that [homosexual] out of the store." A few weeks later, the workers' employment was terminated. The employees additionally claim that employers would take drugs, including cocaine, and consume alcohol at company events or events sponsored by the company. The men state that they would not partake in such activities and as such were allegedly mistreated at work. The employers' reported derogatory remarks and slurs would also be aimed at customers, though not in their presence. The employees further claim fraudulent accounting at the company. One of the men stated that his pay was being shorted, and he was told that deductions were being made based on a pay plan. When he viewed copies of pay plans that he had signed, he alleges that his name had been forged on a recent pay plan that employers had said was the reason for deductions. The men claim that other employees also lost their jobs by complaining of questionable conduct and illegal activities. The two former employees' complaint, filed in a California Superior Court, cited a violation of the California Fair Employment and Housing Act, wage and hour violations, unfair business practices, and wrongful harassment, discrimination, retaliation and termination in violation of public policy.

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