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SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND RETALIATION LAWSUIT FILED AGAINST THE MAKERS OF THE BACHELOR BY A FORMER SEGMENT PRODUCER

On October 30, 2017, Plaintiff Becky Steenhoek, a former Production Assistant, Cast Handler, and Segment Producer on the popular “The Bachelor” and “The Bachelorette” television series, filed a lawsuit against Warner Bros. Entertainment, Inc., NZK Productions, Inc., as well as Executive and Cast Producers Elan Gale, Peter Scalettar, Bennett Graebner, Jacqueline Naz Perez, and Caitlin Stapleton. Ms. Steenhoek alleges that Defendants subjected her to unwelcome sexual harassment and then retaliated against her when she complained about it. Specifically, Ms. Steenhoek alleges the following:

Gale, Scalettar, Graebner, Perez, and Stapleton would ask Ms. Steenhoek on a near daily basis highly intrusive and graphic questions about her personal sex life such as:

- Do you masturbate? How often, and how?
- Do you own sex toys or dildos?
- Have you ever sat under a shower faucet or touched yourself to masturbate?
- What was your worst/best sexual experience?
- Have you performed or experienced oral or anal sex? Do you prefer oral or anal sex? Would you ever have anal sex?
- How do you prefer to give or receive hand jobs?
- Have you ever given someone a blow job?
- How do you shave your vagina? Do you have a landing strip? Is it completely bare?
- Where is the craziest place you had sex?
- Do you like your man to “manscape”?
- Have you ever fondled balls before?
- Do any of the contestants get your “taco talking”? (a reference to Ms. Steenhoek’s vagina and whether the contestants got her sexually excited).

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Gale, Scalettar, Graebner, Perez, and Stapleton persisted with these sexual inquiries even though Ms. Steenhoek made clear that she was offended and not interested in discussing her sex life. In addition, the Executive and Cast Producers discussed their own personal, sexual encounters in graphic detail. None of these sexual questions or comments by the Executive and Cast Producers were show-related or somehow part of the “creative” process. When Ms. Steenhoek complained about the sexual harassment and hostile work environment, she was immediately retaliated against, culminating in her termination as a Segment Producer. The Defendants further retaliated against Ms. Steenhoek by renegeing on a promise to hire her back on future Bachelor productions in her old positions as Cast Handler or Production Assistant.

During a time when sexual harassment in the entertainment industry is under a microscope, this lawsuit shines a light on the sexual harassment experienced by women who work behind the scenes on television and films. We believe that this lawsuit will uncover other victims of Defendants’ sexual harassment, sex discrimination, and retaliation. Other victims are encouraged to come forward and make their voices heard NOW in order to support Ms. Steenhoek’s claims. This kind of behavior can no longer be tolerated or condoned in the entertainment industry. Becky Steenhoek said, “These producers took a lot from me. They mocked me for my morals and attacked my character for asserting my rights. We live in a society where powerful people get a ‘free pass.’ All I want is for people to be held accountable for their actions, regardless of their wealth, status, or gender. My hope is that my story will encourage other victims of sexual harassment to come forward without fear of retaliation and demand that all employees -- no matter the industry -- deserve the right to work in an environment where they are free from harassment and intimidation.”

Contact

For more information about this lawsuit or copy of the complaint, please contact Ms. Steenhoek’s attorneys: Michael S. Morrison and Jessica S. Choi, at Alexander Krakow + Glick LLP at 310-394-0888 or mmorrison@akgllp.com.

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