

Virginia: Circuit Court of Prince William County

Paul Okanes

Plaintiff

v.

SWIFT


Defendant

Defendant's address:

9615 Center Point Lane

Manassas, VA 20110

CL 20-2544

FILED
2020 MAR -6 PM 1:27
CIRCUIT COURT OF PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY, VA
BY  DEPUTY

The defendant discriminated against me based on my sex, when I was employed by the defendant.

1. I requested to transfer to the team managed by Archana Deshpande. Ms. Deshpande required that in order to transfer to her team, and to remain on her team, I had to satisfy a quid pro quo involving sexual games. This included:
 - a. On two occasions, I had to spend hours looking up Ms. Deshpande's skirt while she posed her legs ten feet from where I was sitting.
 - b. I had to watch while Ms. Deshpande posed her buttocks for me, once in extremely sexual poses, and on another occasion, other very provocative poses.
 - c. One of the other men on Ms. Deshpande's team, Gaurav Maheshwari, observed my interactions of a sexual nature with Ms. Deshpande, and was very angry about it. This made my position on her team untenable. This problem was exacerbated because most of the other men on her team were Indian, Ms. Deshpande is Indian, and I'm white.
 - d. Ms. Deshpande forced me to rebuke a young woman who was giving a presentation, Preeti Parmar, as the two of them were competing for my attention. So, I ostentatiously walked out of Ms. Parmar's talk, which angered and alienated people in my new organization, including Sohan Sharma, the organizer of the presentations, who subsequently ignored my email.

- e. I was subjected to Ms. Deshpande's disapproval when I spoke to female co-workers.
 - f. I was subjected to Ms. Deshpande's disapproval when I didn't choose to sit at a workstation a few feet from her.
2. Grace Hoang discriminated against me, and caused others to discriminate against me, as follows:
- a. Ms. Hoang pursued me for several weeks in the office, by trying to entice me with provocative looks and poses, and other signals. This was observed by others, which caused other problems for me.
 - b. Ryleigh Lee observed the provocative flirtation by Ms. Hoang, and initially reacted with anger towards me, then Ms. Lee began her own competitive sexual flaunting. Ms. Lee's behavior was eventually observed by the senior manager Dhiru Thaker. Mr. Thaker blamed me for Ms. Lee's inappropriate flaunting of her buttocks for my benefit; he didn't blame Ms. Lee.
 - c. Ms. Hoang portrayed that she was terrified of me as if I were a rapist. She did that because she had been embarrassed by earlier incidents in which her attraction to me had caused her to behave awkwardly.
 - d. Ms. Hoang had posted comments on an electronic message board that was widely visible within the company. I was sure that some of her comments were posted for the sole purpose of forcing me to see her photo and name on a daily basis. After her portrayal that she was terrified of me as a rapist, I posted replies to her last comment, as a coded message that I wouldn't tolerate her abuse of that message board.
 - e. Ms. Hoang reacted to my replies on the message board as follows:
 - i. She tried to reverse her portrayal that she was terrified of me, by reenacting her earlier manipulation, but acting out a different ending in which she didn't fear me.
 - ii. She displayed her buttocks to me in a very blatant way, that implied it was the opposite of portraying fear of me as a rapist. This was observed by others.
 - iii. She walked toward me with a look of hostility, so that I had to veer off into the restroom to avoid her.
3. My replies to Ms. Hoang on the message board turned the company into a hostile environment for me. I was targeted for harassment, hostility, veiled threats of physical violence, and many co-workers refused to work with me properly. This caused enormous stress, and in September of 2018, I had to begin receiving acupuncture treatments to alleviate the effects of stress. This problem was caused by men; women had no negative reactions to my replies on the message board, with one exception.
4. Following are examples of the company's reaction to my replies on the message board.
- a. A project manager, Prashanthi Devarapalli, was coordinating a project I was working on. Ms. Devarapalli maliciously lied to senior management about my

work, disrespected me in meetings, and in email threads. This went on for an extended period of time.

- b. My manager, Shirish Lawate, subjected me to humiliation and degradation in a team meeting, when I answered a question that was asked by the only woman in the room. This was intolerable, and I had to transfer to another team.
- c. A male co-worker made a veiled threat of physical violence. I went into a conference room prior to a meeting I had organized, to prepare for the meeting. This man was sitting nearby. I left the conference room briefly, and as I was returning, he got up and stood in front of the door, blocking it, while looking at the console with the meeting information. Then, just as I reached him, he sat back down, without turning or looking at me.
- d. Gilbert Brown was a system administrator who punished me for my replies to Ms. Hoang in at least two ways. First, he was hostile and overbearing when he came to my workstation and stood right over me to tell me to mute my laptop, in front of other people, despite the fact that we were not in one of the office areas that were designated quiet zones. Second, when I was working with him by email, he sent a response which was inappropriate, unnecessary, and probably factually incorrect, to embarrass me.
- e. I worked with Jeff Brenwald and Paul Manning on one project late in 2018. I was new to the project, so they used their position to oppose me, punish me, infuriate me, to the detriment of the project.
- f. In the past I had worked well with Casey Arbaugh, but after my replies to Ms. Hoang on the message board, he pretended I wasn't in the room when we were supposed to be working together, which was humiliating.
- g. When I was sitting on a bench in a crowded break room, the manager Paul Hayden walked right up to me and gave me a look of severe contempt and hatred.
- h. One of the people who had "liked" Ms. Hoang's comment on the message board, Volodymyr Kleban, didn't respond to an email I sent him requesting information, although it would have only taken him seconds to either answer the question or refer me to the person who could. I later sent him another email asking why he didn't respond, which he also ignored.
- i. In the past I had worked well with Swamiappian Subramanian, but after my replies to Ms. Hoang on the message board, he ignored my replies on an email thread, forcing me to resort to copying a manager, and becoming contentious in tone. If I hadn't done that, the correct outcome wouldn't have been achieved.
- j. In the past I had worked well with Frank Peltier, but after my replies to Ms. Hoang on the message board, the following occurred. He was working as a system administrator, and he was supporting me on an issue. He tried to justify that he had stopped working on the issue, without notifying me, and with no intent to return to it, in the following way. He became contentious, and copied

- and pasted a prior message from our conversation, after modifying it to prove something that wasn't true, hoping I wouldn't notice his fraudulent edit. This was completely out of character for him in my years of experience.
- k. I created a service request for a system that was owned by Ms. Hoang's team. The technician who responded to it, Marc Pletinckx, responded to it in a way that was obviously meant to punish me for my replies to Ms. Hoang on the message board. He not only mocked me and belittled me, but he did it by pretending that I had said something that I hadn't said.
 - l. When I was in my car in the parking lot, the project manager Andy Giller was walking past my car, and he looked directly at me through my windshield in a threatening, disturbing way.
 - m. Very often I would find myself sitting and working near someone who I wasn't familiar with, and I would hear him having hostile reactions to me. For example, making angry sounds when he heard me speaking. This occurred on a regular basis, and frayed my nerves.
5. Elizabeth Cho discriminated against me, and caused others to discriminate against me. When she was angry that I had ignored her repeated signals that she wanted me to approach her for courtship purposes, she reacted with anger toward me, in a way that gave several people the impression that I had done something horrible to her, a young woman. As a result, her colleague Apoorva Neti gave me a hostile and disrespectful gesture a day or two later, and others had the same impression as Ms. Neti due to Ms. Cho's behavior.
6. Tia Neal was angry that I didn't try to date her, and for that reason she spoke about me maliciously to the manager Jeff White.
7. Tia Neal angered the executive for IT, Craig Young, by blatantly showing off her figure to me in Mr. Young's presence.
8. Yin Xu discriminated against me as follows:
- a. Ms. Xu went out of her way to look closely at my face, which was inappropriate, and then shortly after that she positioned herself in a sexual pose in her cubicle, for my benefit. Seeing her in that pose frightened me, and caused me to quickly leave the area.
 - b. A few months later, Ms. Xu gave me a vicious, angry head gesture, as she stood in her cubicle, because the day before she had looked at me invitingly, and I hadn't responded to it.
 - c. There was an extended period of unwanted flirting from Ms. Xu. At one point, I looked for a different cubicle to move to, to get away from her, but didn't find a suitable one.
 - d. There was another occasion where Ms. Xu inappropriately studied my face, which angered me.
9. At a company event known as "Tech Day 2017", I was surrounded by sexually harassing women on all sides of me, and a threat of physical violence from a

- male co-worker, who must have witnessed some of the sexual harassment. As a result, I refused to attend the Tech Day event in 2018.
10. My replies to Grace Hoang on the message board, and the sexual harassment of me by Archana Deshpande, motivated Shirish Lawate to lower my annual raise and bonus payment for 2019. He did that by maliciously and dishonestly manipulating my performance appraisal document, to grossly misrepresent my work for the year, and justify a lower performance rating.
 11. HR's investigation into Mr. Lawate's sabotage of my performance appraisal resulted in a weak, dishonest cover-up. The HR manager Susan Ahalt denied that there was any issue at all, and didn't leave any written record of her conclusions, or of the fact that the investigation was ever concluded. Part of the motive for the cover-up was an issue I brought out at HR's request, that in the past Mr. Lawate had dishonestly manipulated a document to hide the fact that he had failed to implement software properly. I received a clear non-verbal warning and threat from the senior manager Arnaud Boulnois, when I brought out that issue. However, management could have addressed what was done to me by Mr. Lawate, without admitting anything that was embarrassing to them. The reason they chose not to do that, is that I was viewed with hatred in the company after my replies to Ms. Hoang on the message board, and also because the executive for IT Craig Young had been obviously angered when Tia Neal had blatantly shown off her figure to me.
 12. I complained about the cover-up to the executives for HR, Legal, and CEO. A follow-up investigation was done by the Internal Audit department, which was a similar dishonest cover-up.
 13. I knew before I reported Mr. Lawate's sabotage of my performance appraisal to HR, that HR would deny there was any issue, because HR and IT management had repeatedly subjected me to unfair treatment in the past. I had also witnessed the dishonesty of SWIFT management in other matters. I knew that if I reported sexual harassment by prominent women in the company to HR, that remaining in the company would have been impossible for me.

A small number of the allegations above are not mentioned in the charge of discrimination, but were submitted to the EEOC as part of my request for reconsideration, i.e. my request to have my charge queued for investigation by the EEOC.

I'm exercising my right specified in the notice of right to sue that I received from the EEOC. I claim damages in the amount of \$5,000,000 from the defendant.

Filing on my own behalf:

Paul Okanes

Paul Okanes

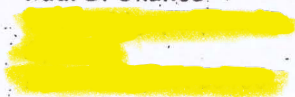
March 6, 2020

[REDACTED]
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(703) [REDACTED]

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U.S. EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY COMMISSION

DISMISSAL AND NOTICE OF RIGHTS

To: Paul D. Okanes
From: Washington Field Office
131 M Street, N.E.
Suite 4NW02F
Washington, DC 20507☐On behalf of person(s) aggrieved whose identity is
CONFIDENTIAL (29 CFR §1601.7(a))

EEOC Charge No.

EEOC Representative

Telephone No.

570-2020-00578

Mark Young,
Intake Supervisor

(202) 419-0719

THE EEOC IS CLOSING ITS FILE ON THIS CHARGE FOR THE FOLLOWING REASON:

☐

The facts alleged in the charge fail to state a claim under any of the statutes enforced by the EEOC.

☐

Your allegations did not involve a disability as defined by the Americans With Disabilities Act.

☐

The Respondent employs less than the required number of employees or is not otherwise covered by the statutes.

☐

Your charge was not timely filed with EEOC; in other words, you waited too long after the date(s) of the alleged discrimination to file your charge.

☒

The EEOC issues the following determination: Based upon its investigation, the EEOC is unable to conclude that the information obtained establishes violations of the statutes. This does not certify that the respondent is in compliance with the statutes. No finding is made as to any other issues that might be construed as having been raised by this charge.

☐

The EEOC has adopted the findings of the state or local fair employment practices agency that investigated this charge.

☐

Other (briefly state)

- NOTICE OF SUIT RIGHTS -

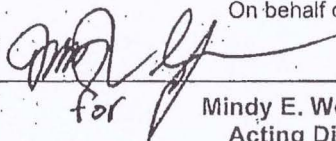
(See the additional information attached to this form.)

Title VII, the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act, or the Age

Discrimination in Employment Act: This will be the only notice of dismissal and of your right to sue that we will send you. You may file a lawsuit against the respondent(s) under federal law based on this charge in federal or state court. Your lawsuit **must be filed WITHIN 90 DAYS** of your receipt of this notice; or your right to sue based on this charge will be lost. (The time limit for filing suit based on a claim under state law may be different.)

Equal Pay Act (EPA): EPA suits must be filed in federal or state court within 2 years (3 years for willful violations) of the alleged EPA underpayment. This means that **backpay due for any violations that occurred more than 2 years (3 years) before you file suit may not be collectible.**

On behalf of the Commission


forMindy E. Weinstein,
Acting Director

DEC 11 2019

Enclosures(s)

(Date Mailed)

cc:

Susan Ahalt
Human Resources
SWIFT
9615 Center Street
Manassas, VA 20110