

Pregnant Cruz Bay Landing Employee Says She Was Fired After Reporting Workplace Incident, Lawsuit Alleges

The lawsuit alleges Todd Beaty suspended Lynch after she reported a harassment and safety incident, then confirmed her firing in a letter citing “strategic company restructuring” while she was six months pregnant and preparing for maternity leave.

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Cruz Bay Landing Restuarant on St. John.

ST. JOHN — A woman who worked at Cruz Bay Landing for nearly a decade is suing the popular St. John restaurant and bar, alleging that she was abruptly suspended and fired after reporting a workplace incident and while she was six months pregnant, with the company later citing a

restructuring explanation that she claims was pretextual.

Mary Lynch filed a civil complaint in Superior Court on Monday against Cruz Bay Landing, LLC, alleging wrongful termination by company owner Todd Beaty. According to the lawsuit, Ms. Lynch worked at the restaurant for approximately nine years and was never the subject of disciplinary action during her employment.

Instead, the complaint says, she was entrusted with significant responsibilities. In addition to working as a server and bartender, Ms. Lynch said she handled “scheduling, ordering, website work, menu work, point-of-sale issues, online ordering and oversight of some staff.”

The lawsuit says the events leading to her termination began on April 23, when Ms. Lynch was off from work and an employee reported being harassed and physically confronted by a coworker. According to the complaint, Ms. Lynch “recognized the report raised serious concerns regarding workplace harassment, workplace safety, threats, and possible physical violence.”

Rather than waiting until she returned to work, Ms. Lynch reportedly “located the relevant surveillance camera footage,” escalated the matter to Mr. Beaty, and “provided specific information regarding the incident and the surveillance footage timestamps.”

The lawsuit says those actions “were consistent with her duties and with [the company’s] normal practice for reporting and deescalating workplace incidents.”

According to the complaint, Mr. Beaty responded by directing Ms. Lynch to come to the restaurant so they could review the footage together. When she arrived, she was reportedly suspended immediately. The lawsuit alleges that Mr. Beaty “stated in substance that he was doing so while he looked for replacements and while he spoke with his lawyer” to find a pretext to terminate her.

The complaint alleges that no reason was given for the suspension.

Days later, Ms. Lynch reportedly received an email from Mr. Beaty informing her that she had been fired. Again, the lawsuit claims, no basis for the termination was provided.

A letter confirming her termination followed on May 1, according to the complaint. This time, the lawsuit says, Cruz Bay Landing cited “strategic company restructuring” as the reason for Ms. Lynch’s dismissal and stated that her position was being eliminated. The letter reportedly said the termination was not tied to Ms. Lynch’s performance or the value of her contributions to the team.

At the time, Ms. Lynch was six months pregnant.

Her lawsuit argues that the restructuring explanation was “pretextual,” because she had already been suspended and terminated, allegedly for reporting the workplace harassment incident. The complaint also notes that the restaurant still requires “front-of-house management and operational work,” which Ms. Lynch had been performing.

Ms. Lynch alleges that she was terminated “because she reported the workplace incident and because she was pregnant and would require maternity leave.”

The complaint says the termination caused significant disruption in Ms. Lynch’s life, including lost wages, lost employment benefits and the loss of employer-provided insurance. The lawsuit also alleges that the firing has placed her effort to secure home financing in jeopardy.

The complaint describes serious anxiety as Ms. Lynch prepares for the expected August arrival of her baby while facing sudden financial uncertainty.

Cruz Bay Landing is accused of wrongful termination, pregnancy discrimination and negligent infliction of emotional distress. Ms. Lynch is asking the court to award lost wages and employment benefits, along with compensatory, punitive and non-economic damages.

As of press time, Cruz Bay Landing had not filed a legal response.

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