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Sexual Harassment

Retaliation

VERDICT: \$628,000

CASE/NUMBER: Standmore v. Sonora Manufacturing / BC236105.

COURT/DATE: Los Angeles Superior Central / Aug. 7, '02

JUDGE: Hon. Emilie H. Elias.

ATTORNEYS: Plaintiff - Mark Weidmann (Law Offices of Mark Weidmann, Los Angeles).

Defendant - John R. Marshall (Law Offices of John R. Marshall, III, Santa Ana).

FACTS: The plaintiff was terminated by the defendant on Oct. 21, 1999, after working there for three months as an administrative assistant, Eleven days before she was terminated she received a raise.

PLAINTIFF CONTENTIONS: The plaintiff contended that while she was working for the defendant she was sexually harassed by owner and operator Clyde Collins. The plaintiff contended that Collins sexually harassed her by (a) telling her sexual stories such as his participating in orgies at the White House and about having sex Elizabeth Taylor and with his maids; (b) repeatedly asking her to have sex with him and (c) grabbing her breasts and buttocks.

The plaintiff contended that she submitted a complaint letter 10 days before she was terminated in which she asked the defended to stop sexually harassing her. The plaintiff argued that she was terminated 10 days later in retaliation for her letter of complaint.

DEFENDANT CONTENTIONS: The defendant denied that he sexually harassed the plaintiff and also denied that she was terminated in retaliation for her complaints.

DAMAGES: Loss of wages and emotional distress.

TRIAL JURY: Length, two days; deliberation, one day.

SETTLEMENT DISCUSSIONS: The plaintiff submitted a CCP Section 998 demand for \$150,000. The defendant submitted a Section 998 offer for \$10,000.

THE RESULT: The plaintiff was awarded \$8,000 in loss of wages; \$60,000 for emotional distress for the wrongful termination; \$180,000 emotional distress for the hostile work environment; \$180,000 emotional distress for the quid pro quo sexual harassment; and \$200,000 in punitive damages.