

Harassment Trial Against Playboy Underway

[CHIE AKIBA](#) / August 3, 2010

LOS ANGELES (CN) - Lawyers for a female TV broadcasting technician suing Playboy..... obtained testimony during an ongoing trial that a male co-worker would sit on her lap, ask for back rubs and used words such as "slut" and "prostitute." But the technician's supervisor denied any attempt to delay medical treatment for the technician.

Plaintiff Julia Crouch is suing Playboy, alleging that she worked in a sexually discriminatory environment.

Crouch's lawyer Mark Joseph Valencia called Crouch's former supervisor Chere Johnson to the witness chair and asked if she saw Crouch's co-worker Charle Dorn sit on Crouch's lap or give her a back rub.

Johnson agreed that Dorn did both of those things.

Valencia asked Johnson if his client told Johnson that she wanted to tape record Dorn because he would constantly make lewd and inappropriate comments to her.

"I told her she can if it makes her feel safer," Johnson said.

"To feel safer from whom or what?" Valencia asked.

"I don't remember," Johnson replied.

Johnson acknowledged that she heard the word "slut" and "prostitute" from Dorn couple times and that he has a foul mouth.

"He could've to one of the video that was playing," Johnson said. "He has a coarse mouth."

However, she denied that Dorn called Crouch "fat" or "stupid."

Because of her back and breast implant problems, Crouch had to take several medical leaves. When Valencia asked Johnson about how many times Crouch took medical leave, she agreed with Valencia that Crouch took more than five leaves but less than 10.

"Are you aware," Valencia asked. "That she (Crouch) believes you purposely delayed the back surgery?"

Johnson replied that she was not aware of it until her deposition.

Moreover, during the cross-examination, when the defendant lawyer Barbara Fitzgerald from Morgan, Lewis & Bockius asked Johnson if she delayed Crouch's surgery, Johnson disagreed.

"No ... I told her that she should get it done right away," Johnson said. "She was the one who told me she worked it out with her doctor."

Fitzgerald also asked Johnson what she did when she received a letter from Crouch on September 4, 2004, regarding Dorn's harassments. Johnson said that she sat down and talked about it with Crouch. She said he was shocked by the complaint.

Crouch's former co-worker Danielle O'Connell followed supervisor Johnson to the witness chair. She said she had seen Dorn yell at Crouch "within an inch from her face."

"They were really close arguing face to face," O'Connell said.

Though she claimed that she doesn't remember what Dorn exactly said to Crouch, O'Connell said, "He would say inappropriate things to her."

However, O'Connell also said that comments such as "dumbass" were made back and forth. She claimed that Dorn called Crouch a "pig" and throw things at her.

"He would antagonize her and say rude things," O'Connell said. "He would pick up a pen and throw it at her - kind of like darts."

Moreover, O'Connell testified that Dorn would get angry all of the sudden and slam the doors or hit the desk with a clipboard.

All the sudden he would blow-up and say I'm gonna blow the effin' place up and stuff, O'Connell said. "I don't know why he was mad."

One time, she said that she walked off the job because she was scared of Dorn.

Moreover, O'Connell said that when Dorn harassed Crouch, Crouch handled it very well.

"She handled it pretty well ... She wasn't as rude to him as he was to her," she said.

Although when Valencia asked O'Connell if she remembered Dorn touch Crouch's chest area, she said that she did not remember him touching her chest area but she did remember him touching her thighs.

O'Connell also said that she talked with the female Human Resources representative.

"She just asked me what was going on," O'Connell said to Valencia. "I said something about Chuck should be done ... I thought something would've been done when she called me ... Those things don't happen in a normal work environment."

She alleges that Dorn's violent behavior was one of the reasons why she voluntarily resigned from Playboy in May 2005.

Tony Nguyen was the next witness.

He worked as Playboy's Vice President of Broadcast Operations since September 2000 until August 2006. He oversaw the broadcast and managed certain numbers of networks which were shown all over the country through a satellite system.

When Valencia asked him if he knew about Playboy's anti-harassment policy, Nguyen answered that he did know about them but did not know that he also had the duty to report it immediately.

"I didn't know the policy about duty to report ... I didn't know the timeframe of this," Nguyen said.

But after he received a sexual harassment training, he said that he would report any harassment immediately. Immediate as in I would pick up the phone and report it the minute I heard it or walk over to the Human Resources office, Nguyen said.

"Did you ever physically witness Mr. Doran act disrespectfully to Julie Crouch?" Valencia asked.

"Not that I can recall," Nguyen replied.

Valencia also asked Nguyen about the letter that Crouch wrote to Johnson.

After I read it, I said how is it possible that such a big allegation like this can not be known and that nothing has been done about it, Nguyen said.

Nguyen said that he met with Dorn on September 14, 2004. When he met with Dorn, Nguyen testified that Dorn made an apology.

"Yes, he said that he was sorry and he apologized. He said that whatever happened between him and Ms. Crouch, he apologizes," he said. "He thought it was kidding between him and Julie at that time."

Valencia further asked if Nguyen immediately gave the Crouch's letter to the Human Resources.

"I don't recall ... but if there was a delay, it was because of Ms. Crouch's request," Nguyen answered.

Valencia also testified that Nguyen wrote a letter regarding Doran's promotion to supervisor as "scary."

"To me, both Ms. Crouch and Mr. Dorn are good employees," Nguyen said.

"However, I never considered Mr. Dorn as a supervisor ... To me, he doesn't have people managing skill set ... That's why I made the reference scary."

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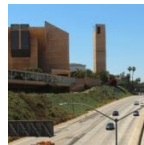
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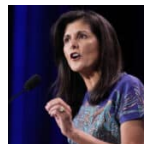
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