

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF KANSAS**

JUSTIN LEE WILLIAMS,)	
Plaintiff,)	Case No. _____
)	
v.)	DEMAND FOR JURY TRIAL
)	
ESTES EXPRESS LINES,)	
Defendant.)	

COMPLAINT

COMES NOW, the Plaintiff, Justin Lee Williams (hereinafter “Plaintiff”), by and through his undersigned counsel, Bruce Alan Brumley and Chloe Elizabeth Davis, and for his causes of action against Defendant, Estes Express Lines (hereinafter “Defendant”), and states the following:

PARTIES, JURISDICTION, AND VENUE

1. Plaintiff Justin Lee Williams (hereinafter “Plaintiff”) is an individual residing in Shawnee County, Kansas.
2. Defendant Estes Express Lines is a Virginia For-Profit Corporation doing business in Kansas within the boundaries of Shawnee County, Kansas and Defendant may be served with process via its Registered Agent in Shawnee County, Kansas.
3. This action arises under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 related to related to various sections including employment, race/color discrimination, sexual harassment, discharge, retaliation, attorney’s fees, and compensatory and punitive damages.
4. This action also arises under the Kansas Act Against Discrimination, Chapter 44, Article 10, Section 1001, *et. seq.*, of the Kansas Statutes Annotated (hereinafter “KAAD”), related to various sections including employment, race/color discrimination, sexual harassment, discharge, retaliation, attorney’s fees, and compensatory and punitive damages.

5. As to the claims enumerated herein that arise under federal law, this Court has jurisdiction pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1331.

6. As to the claims enumerated herein that arise under state law, this Court has supplemental jurisdiction pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1367.

7. Venue is proper in this District pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1391(b), as Defendant is subject to the Court's personal jurisdiction within this District.

EXHAUSTION OF ADMINISTRATIVE REMEDIES

8. Plaintiff incorporates by reference all aforementioned paragraphs 1 through 7 as if fully set forth herein.

9. Plaintiff dually filed separate Charges of Discrimination with the Kansas Human Rights Commission (hereinafter "KHRC") and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (hereinafter "EEOC") against the Defendant on or about November 2, 2023 and Plaintiff dually filed Amended Charges of Retaliation with the KHRC and the EEOC against the Defendant on or about July 26, 2024 and a Second Charge of Retaliation with the KHRC and EEOC against the Defendant on or about September 19, 2024.

10. Plaintiff's claims herein were subject to an investigation by the Kansas Human Rights Commission and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

11. Plaintiff was issued his Notice of Right to Sue letter on all of the agency complaints dated February 25, 2025, by the United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and received on or about March 3, 2025.

12. Plaintiff's claims herein were subject to the KHRC/EEOC investigation referenced above.

13. Plaintiff has exhausted his administrative remedies pursuant to 29 C.F.R. § 1601, *et. seq.* and K.S.A. § 44-1115, *et. seq.*, or any other rule, law, statute, or regulation.

14. Plaintiff has fully complied with any and all administrative and jurisdictional prerequisites to the institution of this action in this Court.

FACTUAL ALLEGATIONS

15. Plaintiff incorporates by reference all aforementioned paragraphs 1 through 14 as if fully set forth herein.

16. Defendant is a qualified covered entity under Title VII and KAAD, as Defendant engages in commerce and has 15 or more employees for each working day in each of the 20 or more calendar weeks in the current or preceding calendar year.

17. Plaintiff is an African American “black” male and member of a protected class.

18. Plaintiff was first hired by Defendant as a truck driver on or about June 26, 2023.

19. Plaintiff was subordinate to and was trained by Defendant employee, Mike Rumbley (hereinafter “Rumbley”), to be certified in linehaul double and triple load trailers to work for Defendant.

20. Rumbley is a Caucasian “white” male.

21. Beginning in October 2023, Rumbley made racial and vulgar sexual statements to Plaintiff, creating a hostile work environment.

22. Rumbley told the Plaintiff that he “owned” the Plaintiff, which was meant in reference to the Plaintiff’s color or race of African American.

23. Plaintiff was approached by Rumbley related to a training issue and Rumbley stated to Plaintiff, “I don’t give a f--k” in an openly hostile tone, conduct, or manner that was discriminatory and sexually harassing.

24. Rumbley told Plaintiff that he (Rumbley) was untouchable, could get Plaintiff fired and/or suspended, could call Plaintiff racial names, and could get away with any type of racial words of discrimination or conduct, sexual harassment, and/or conduct.

25. Rumbley repeated that he owned the Plaintiff and could get away with anything several times.

26. Rumbley also stated to Plaintiff that people need to “shut their d--k sucker.” When making this statement, Rumbley also made vulgar body motions simulating with said motion the act of performing fellatio or oral sex.

27. Rumbley made comments to Plaintiff referring to other employees as being “cu-ts” regarding multiple different employees including the plaintiff.

28. Rumbley, in a direct and clear display of discrimination based on color and race, told Plaintiff, “tomorrow you will be driving Miss Daisy. I have a hat that I will make you wear.”

29. Within days of the discrimination and harassment referenced in paragraphs #26-#27, Plaintiff complained about the sexual harassment, vulgar words, and racial comments to his supervisor Brett Woods.

30. Brett Woods initially told Plaintiff that he would fix the situation with different training and that the abuse would end.

31. Instead, on or about the next day, Plaintiff received a written warning and five-day suspension from Defendant constituting an adverse employment action.

32. On November 2, 2023, Plaintiff then filed his first complaint with the KHRC and EEOC as result of the above discriminatory racial conduct based on race, color, and sex.

33. The discriminatory conduct and sexual harassment did not improve following Plaintiff's complaints to his supervisory staff or following Plaintiff's KHRC/EEOC complaint and Plaintiff was in fear of termination.

34. On or about July 24, 2024 Defendant terminated Plaintiff's employment in an act of discrimination and retaliation related to the hostile work environment and Defendant's failure to intervene, all in violation of his state and federal rights prescribed by Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Kansas Act Against Discrimination.

35. Plaintiff was not terminated for cause and the termination was in bad faith, based in discrimination, and in retaliation, as described throughout this complaint.

36. The termination described throughout this complaint was in retaliation for reporting this aforementioned discrimination, and retaliation due to race.

COUNT I
Race and/or Color Discrimination
(In Violation of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964
and the Kansas Act Against Discrimination)

37. Plaintiff incorporates by reference all aforementioned paragraphs 1 through 36 as if fully set forth herein.

38. Plaintiff is a member of legally accepted protected class, namely being an African-American or being "black."

39. Plaintiff was qualified to do his job and was performing satisfactory work at all times in this Complaint or any relevant time period.

40. Plaintiff suffered an adverse employment action when he was written up and ultimately terminated as result of his race and his color.

41. Plaintiff complained to appropriate members of his supervision about the discriminatory conduct based on race and color.

42. Similarly situated employees outside of Plaintiff's protected class were not treated in the same discriminatory manner that Plaintiff was treated.

43. Plaintiff was subject to adverse employment actions including unwarranted suspensions, unwarranted writes up, and ultimately, termination.

44. Defendant herein this case had knowledge of the racially and color-motivated discrimination toward Plaintiff, as evidenced by Plaintiff's complaints to manager Bret Woods and others referencing the behavior of Rumbley and others throughout his employment.

45. Defendant discriminated against Plaintiff on the basis of Plaintiff's race and color in regard to his overall compensation from Defendant.

46. Defendant discriminated against Plaintiff on the basis of Plaintiff's race and color in regard to his job training, and other terms, conditions, and privileges of his employment.

47. Defendant failed to take any meaningful action to prevent or cease the racial and color discrimination by Plaintiff's superior(s) and negligently and recklessly failed to recognize and deal with the discrimination.

48. Defendant has failed to properly train their supervisors concerning their duties and obligations under civil rights laws, including Title VII and KAAD.

49. Defendant's discriminatory conduct herein this case maliciously and recklessly violated Plaintiff's rights under Title VII and KAAD, and such a violation is sufficient to warrant an award of punitive damages.

50. As a direct and proximate result of all of Defendant's discriminatory actions herein this case, Plaintiff has suffered and will continue to suffer emotional distress, humiliation, deprivation of income, wage loss, front pay, back pay, attorney fees, as well as other monetary and non-monetary damages.

51. Plaintiff is entitled to attorney's fees as provided in Title VII, and for the fees and costs in bringing this action.

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff prays the Court enter judgment in his favor against Defendant on Count I of Plaintiff's Complaint, finding that he was subject to ongoing discrimination on the basis of his race and color in violation of Title VII and KAAD, for an award of back pay and benefits including interest, an award of front pay and benefits including interest, an award of compensatory and punitive damages, the costs of this action, reasonable attorney's fees, and for other such relief as the Court deems just and equitable.

Count II
Harassment & Hostile Work Environment
(In Violation of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964
and the Kansas Act Against Discrimination)

52. Plaintiff incorporates by reference all aforementioned paragraphs 1 through 51 as if fully set forth herein

53. Plaintiff was harassed due to his race and was subject to sexual harassment based on vulgar comments and conduct described above in this Complaint.

54. Plaintiff was subject to repeated and constant discriminatory harassment based on his race and color.

55. Plaintiff was subject to sexual harassment in the form of repeated and constant vulgar sexual gestures and verbal conduct and references to "sucking d—k" and "that he was owned by defendant," and implications that Defendant could behave in any manner toward Plaintiff.

56. The gestures and verbal conduct referenced in paragraph #55 were physically threatening to the Plaintiff.

57. The gestures and verbal conduct referenced in paragraph #55 were very humiliating to the Plaintiff.

58. Defendant's conduct was enough to alter or affect the employment of Plaintiff as it created an abusive working environment that made it difficult to actually work.

59. Plaintiff reported the harassment and hostile work environment, to which Defendant did nothing other than retaliate against Plaintiff by issuing baseless disciplinary action and ultimately terminating Plaintiff's employment.

60. The hostile work environment and harassment continued at all times during Plaintiff's employment and Defendant took no action to stop it and instead retaliated against Plaintiff by issuing disciplinary action and ultimately terminating Plaintiff's employment.

61. Defendant failed to take any meaningful action to prevent or cease the race and color discrimination by Plaintiff's superior(s) and negligently and recklessly failed to recognize and deal with the discrimination.

62. Defendant has failed to properly train their supervisors concerning their duties and obligations under civil rights laws, including Title VII and KAAD.

63. Defendant's discriminatory conduct herein this case maliciously and recklessly violated Plaintiff's rights under Title VII and KAAD, and such a violation is sufficient to warrant an award of punitive damages.

64. As a direct and proximate result of all of Defendant's discriminatory actions herein this case, Plaintiff has suffered and will continue to suffer emotional distress, humiliation, deprivation of income, wage loss, front pay, back pay, attorney fees, as well as other monetary and non-monetary damages.

65. Plaintiff is entitled to attorney's fees as provided in Title VII, and for the fees and costs in bringing this action.

**COUNT III
RETALIATION
(In Violation of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964
and the Kansas Act Against Discrimination)**

66. Plaintiff incorporates by reference all aforementioned paragraphs 1 through 65 as if fully set forth herein.

67. Plaintiff experienced racial discrimination, color discrimination, and harassment on the basis of sex and race as described above and Plaintiff reported the discrimination and harassment to Defendant and to the KHRC/EEOC.

68. Defendant repeatedly failed to take any corrective action in response to Plaintiff's various complaints.

69. Plaintiff engaged in protected activity when Plaintiff reported the discrimination, harassment, and retaliation he was experiencing from Rumbley.

70. Plaintiff engaged in protected activity when Plaintiff dually filed his complaints with the KHRC and EEOC.

71. As result of reporting discrimination and harassment, protected activity under Title VII and the KAAD, the Defendant wrote plaintiff up, suspended him, tried to make Plaintiff quit, and eventually terminated Plaintiff.

72. The retaliation Plaintiff experienced began as soon as Plaintiff reported the behavior of Rumbley and continued through the end of Plaintiff's employment.

73. Defendant retaliated against Plaintiff based on Plaintiff engaging in protected activity as it relates to Plaintiff's overall compensation from Defendant.

74. Defendant has failed to properly train their supervisors concerning their duties and obligations under civil rights laws, including Title VII and KAAD.

75. Defendant's retaliatory conduct herein this case maliciously or recklessly violated Plaintiff's rights under Title VII and KAAD, and such a violation is sufficient to warrant an award of punitive damages.

76. As a direct and proximate result of all of Defendant's retaliatory actions herein this case, Plaintiff has suffered and will continue to suffer emotional distress, humiliation, a deprivation of income, as well as other monetary and non-monetary damages.

77. Plaintiff is entitled to attorney's fees as provided in Title VII, and for the fees and costs in bringing this action.

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff prays the Court enter judgment in his favor against Defendant on Count III of Plaintiff's Complaint, finding that he was subject to ongoing retaliation on the basis of his race and ancestry in violation of Title VII and KAAD, for an award of back pay and benefits including interest, an award of front pay and benefits including interest, an award of compensatory and punitive damages, the costs of this action, reasonable attorney's fees, and for other such relief as the Court deems just and equitable.

DAMAGES

78. Plaintiff incorporates by reference all aforementioned paragraphs 1 through 77 above as if full set forth herein.

79. Defendants herein discriminated against Plaintiff on the basis of his race and color, and harassed the plaintiff on basis of race, color, and sex, allowing a hostile work environment to exist with malice and reckless indifference as to the legally protected rights of the Plaintiff.

80. Defendant then retaliated against Plaintiff for engaging in protected activity when Plaintiff reported the above discriminatory conduct and harassment with malice and reckless indifference as to the legally protected rights of the Plaintiff.

81. As a result, Plaintiff has suffered monetary losses, emotional pain, suffering, inconvenience, mental anguish, loss of enjoyment of life, among other non-monetary damages.

82. Defendant employs greater than 500 employees.

83. Plaintiff prays for compensatory and punitive damages in the amount of \$300,000.00, as Defendant employs greater than 500 employees.

84. Plaintiff prays for injunctive relief in the form of reinstatement with backpay including benefits and interest incurred.

85. Plaintiff alternatively prays for injunctive relief in the form of backpay including benefits with interest incurred, and front pay including benefits with interest incurred, in place of reinstatement.

86. Plaintiff prays for damages in the amount of reasonable attorney's fees.

87. Plaintiff prays for damages in the amount of court costs incurred in bringing this action.

88. Plaintiff prays for any other damages and relief as this Court may deem necessary, just, and equitable as allowed by Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Kansas Act Against Discrimination or any other relevant source of law related to these claims or within the power of the Court.

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff prays the Court enter judgment in his favor against Defendant on all Counts of his Complaint, finding that Plaintiff was terminated in an act of retaliation for opposing discrimination in violation of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Kansas Act Against Discrimination. Plaintiff prays for an award of compensatory and punitive damages in the amount of \$300,000.00, an award of back pay and benefits including interest, an award of front pay and benefits including interest, an award of reasonable attorney's fees, an award of the costs of this action, and for other such relief as the Court deems just and equitable.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/Bruce Alan Brumley

/s/Chloe Elizabeth Davis

BRUCE ALAN. BRUMLEY, #16066

CHLOE E. DAVIS, #28517

BRUMLEY LAW OFFICE

2348 SW Topeka Blvd. Suite 201

Topeka, KS 66611

(785) 267-3367

chloe@brucebrumleylaw.com

bruce@brucebrumleylaw.com

DEMAND FOR JURY TRIAL

COMES NOW, the Plaintiff, and pursuant to Federal Rule 38(b)(1), demands a trial by jury on all of these issues in the above-captioned case.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/Bruce Alan Brumley

/s/Chloe Elizabeth Davis

BRUCE ALAN. BRUMLEY, #16066

CHLOE E. DAVIS, #28517

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2348 SW Topeka Blvd. Suite 201

Topeka, KS 66611

(785) 267-3367

chloe@brucebrumleylaw.com

bruce@brucebrumleylaw.com