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## He Brought the Deal. She Took the Commission: Broker Alleges Breach in Multi-Million Dollar St. Croix Sale

After introducing a lucrative 2,000-acre west-end St. Croix land deal, California broker Adam Press says April Newland secured the listing and cut him out of the promised 30% referral fee, sparking a lawsuit over breach of contract and unjust enrichment.

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A promised 30% commission on a real estate transaction is the subject of a new lawsuit in District Court. The plaintiff, California-based real estate broker Adam Press, claims that local counterpart April Newland stiffed him out of a promised commission on a lucrative St. Croix property deal.

Mr. Press and Ms. Newland were introduced in 2017 by a mutual friend. Over the course of several conversations and emails, Ms. Newland reportedly indicated to Mr. Press that she was in the practice of offering “referral fees to industry colleagues who introduced her to real estate opportunities that resulted in deals,” the lawsuit says. She would be happy to do so in the case of Mr. Press, she said.

In 2021, Mr. Press brought her just such an opportunity. He had developed a working arrangement with a landowner who held over 2000 acres on St. Croix's west end. “As one of the largest contiguous undeveloped tracts in the U.S. Virgin Islands, it offers unique natural assets and significant development potential,” the lawsuit says about the parcel, which the owner wanted to put up for sale.

Mr. Press brought the potential opportunity to Ms. Newland's attention, "supplying background information, contacts, and strategic ideas for how to position the property for listing," the civil complaint states. The two brokers worked together to develop marketing materials and a strategic plan, with the understanding that Mr. Press would receive a 30% referral fee from Ms. Newland's commission if she successfully brokered a sale of the property. An email exchange establishing this framework occurred in January 2021, the lawsuit says.

Over the next couple of months, the collaborative work continued, until on April 15, 2021, Ms. Newland told Mr. Press that “she had secured the listing agreement.” A week later, she reportedly sent him a copy of a pitch deck that they had worked on together, using materials supplied by Mr. Press.

However, when he emailed Ms. Newland on April 24 to inquire about their fee-sharing agreement, he received a response not from April but from Scott Newland on her behalf. Mr. Newland informed Mr. Press that “there was no enforceable agreement,” the lawsuit says, and he “disclaimed liability for any referral fee.”

According to the complaint, Mr. Newland followed up the email with an angry voicemail and a phone call during which he threatened Mr. Press with harm.

In April 2023, lawyers got involved, but the Newlands maintained their stance that Mr. Press was entitled to nothing. The property went under contract in March 2024, and in July 2025, the escrow company indicated that a commission was being paid to Newland Real Estate only.

Mr. Press, and his company Press Holdings Inc., are therefore suing for breach of contract and unjust enrichment. The lawsuit seeks compensatory damages of at least the promised 30% fee. As of press time, Ms. Newland and Newland Real Estate, listed as co-defendants, have not yet filed a legal response.