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## **St. Thomas Woman Sues Travel + Leisure, Margaritaville Alleging Sex Discrimination, Retaliation, and Wrongful Termination**

**A St. Thomas employee alleges repeated sex-based harassment by a supervisor, ignored complaints by management, retaliatory pay cuts, and termination after taking medical leave, naming Travel + Leisure, Margaritaville, and multiple executives.**

Legal / **Published On December 16, 2025 07:12 AM /**

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**Margaritaville, St. Thomas USVI.**

**ST. THOMAS** — A St. Thomas woman is suing Travel + Leisure Co., Margaritaville Vacation Club–Caribbean, and several company officials, alleging she was subjected to years of sex-based harassment, a hostile work environment, retaliation, and ultimately wrongful termination after

repeatedly reporting abusive conduct by a senior supervisor.

According to a civil complaint filed in the Superior Court of the Virgin Islands, Katherine Landry alleges that she was twice employed by companies owned by Travel + Leisure Co., first at Limetree Beach Resort in 2022 and later at Margaritaville in 2024–2025, where she says she encountered the same abusive supervisor and a pattern of ignored complaints that culminated in her dismissal.

### **First employment and resignation**

Ms. Landry states that she worked at Limetree Beach Resort from January through June 2022. The resort is owned by Travel + Leisure Co., which also paid her salary. Her direct supervisor during that period, according to the lawsuit, was Italo Lara, who is named as a defendant.

From the outset, the complaint alleges, Mr. Lara treated Ms. Landry differently than male employees and created what the lawsuit describes as a discriminatory and hostile work environment. He is accused of imposing a six-day workweek, repeatedly yelling at Ms. Landry and other staff, and openly boasting that he had “scored the worst in empathy” on a company survey.

Ms. Landry says she lodged multiple complaints with company management regarding Mr. Lara’s behavior, but received little to no response. The situation escalated in May 2022 when, according to the complaint, Mr. Lara berated Ms. Landry and a co-worker in front of a client. The co-worker resigned the following day. After another complaint allegedly went unanswered, Ms. Landry resigned in June 2022, citing the hostile environment and demanding schedule.

### **Recruitment back into the company**

Nearly two years later, in January 2024, Ms. Landry says she was recruited by MWV Hospitality, Inc., which operates as Margaritaville in the territory and is also owned by Travel + Leisure Co. The complaint states that the two companies share senior management and human resources staff.

Ms. Landry alleges she was hesitant to accept the position because Mr. Lara remained employed by the company and feared renewed abuse. According to the lawsuit, Margaritaville assured her that she would not have professional contact with Mr. Lara and that any hostile behavior would be promptly addressed. Based on those assurances, Ms. Landry accepted the position and began work in late January 2024.

### **Alleged return of harassment**

The lawsuit claims those assurances quickly dissolved. Ms. Landry alleges that shortly after starting work she again experienced sex-based harassment from Mr. Lara, including disparaging comments made in front of colleagues. She says she repeatedly reported the conduct, but that management failed to intervene.

Named as defendants alongside Mr. Lara are Camille Passalacque, regional vice president of sales and marketing for Travel + Leisure Co./Margaritaville Vacation Club–Caribbean, and Melissa Aguilar, a human resources employee serving both companies.

Despite the alleged hostility, Ms. Landry says she was promoted after three months to Frontline Manager, where she “excelled and consistently met budget expectations.” In February 2025, however, Mr. Lara was promoted to director, a move the lawsuit says increased his authority and

intensified the hostile interactions.

Ms. Landry alleges that after Mr. Lara's promotion, his behavior toward her became more degrading and that he encouraged other male employees to adopt similar conduct. She says repeated complaints were again met with assurances that no hostile behavior would be tolerated, but no corrective action followed.

### **Workplace incidents and pay dispute**

In February, Ms. Landry says she conducted a verbal coaching session with her team addressing respect and professional conduct. Days later, the lawsuit alleges, a male sales representative verbally attacked her in a derogatory manner in front of guests and a company trainer. Although Ms. Landry and a colleague sought disciplinary action under company policy, the employee resigned a week later without discipline. Mr. Lara allegedly circulated notice of the resignation to staff but excluded Ms. Landry, despite her being the employee's supervisor.

Later that month, Ms. Landry says she received a revised compensation plan that reduced her bonus by 37 percent. The lawsuit claims the reduction was retaliatory and linked to her complaints. Requests to discuss the pay change were allegedly ignored. Despite this, the complaint states that in March 2025 her department ranked first regionally.

### **Escalation and termination**

According to the lawsuit, the work environment continued to deteriorate, with racially derogatory remarks and expletives allegedly used by coworkers without consequence. Ms. Landry says her demanding schedule persisted, and her requests for relief were mocked.

In late April, she received what the complaint describes as her first formal notice of dissatisfaction with her performance, labeled "escalated corrective action," which she alleges contained vague and unsupported claims and violated company procedures.

The cumulative stress, Ms. Landry says, led her to seek psychiatric care. After additional workplace conflicts in July, she was informed that complaints had been lodged against her, while her prior complaints against Mr. Lara remained unaddressed. On July 17, she went on Family and Medical Leave Act leave due to what the lawsuit calls a mental health crisis caused by workplace conditions.

When her leave ended on September 26, Ms. Landry was terminated immediately. The complaint alleges the termination was based on false accusations of bullying and dishonesty and occurred without her being interviewed as part of the company's investigation.

### **Legal claims**

Ms. Landry contends that her termination was retaliatory and violated the Virgin Islands Wrongful Discharge Act. She has also alleged sex discrimination and intentional infliction of emotional distress against all named defendants.

As of press time, none of the defendants have filed a response to the lawsuit.