
EMPLOYMENT - ALABAMA

Hollis v. Town of Mount Vernon

United States District Court, S.D. Alabama, Southern Division - July 26, 2013 - Slip Copy - 2013 WL 3878947

Plaintiff Francie Michelle Hollis was hired as a dispatcher for the Town of Mount Vernon in 2007. Hollis, Mount Vernon's only full-time dispatcher, also served as the supervisor for approximately ten part-time dispatchers. During the time period relevant to Hollis' claims, defendant Joseph Cassidy, a police lieutenant, was acting police chief. Defendant Jerry Lundy was the Town's mayor during the relevant time period. William Cannon was a part-time dispatcher for the Town who worked the midnight to 8:00 a.m. shift.

Some time around early November 2009, Mr. Cannon took a shine to Hollis, as well as to a fellow dispatcher, Tina Dillard. Sadly, his love was unrequited. Nevertheless, Mr. Cannon continued to pursue both women. His endearing pursuit included activities such as:

- Going to the police station on nights when he was not working and watching Ms. Dillard through the windows;
- Sending Ms. Dillard, who is African American, an email "saying that he didn't know that he could love chocolate so much";
- Telling Hollis that he was just trying to be sure that Dillard was safe because the inmates are not locked down and walk around at night, but he promising not to do it any more;
- "Coming in there. No underwear, wearing these little bitty shorts, with his legs open";
- Obtaining an official ruling that visitors were allowed in the dispatch room for eight minutes at a time;
- Writing poetry to Hollis, his "muse," and writing in her journal; and
- Following Hollis to a chemotherapy appointment.

What girl wouldn't be flattered?

When Hollis informed Lt. Cassidy, who was acting police chief, about the peeping tom incidents, Cassidy responded "That man is crazy. I don't know what to say about that man. You all better watch him." Really, what authority could the police chief possibly exercise over one of his employees?

When Hollis informed Mayor Lundy that Cannon was following her around, Lundy responded, "I don't blame him baby. I'd like to follow you around, too. Look at you. Why wouldn't he want you?"

What followed was a pretty standard-issue sexual harassment lawsuit.

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