

# Lawsuit: Longtime Hallmark manager fired under pretext that he used a profanity

*The company is actually retaliating for questioning a decision to pay some employees less than minimum wage, lawsuit says*

LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA, UNITED STATES, May 9, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Hallmark says it “helps give voice to caring thoughts and emotions.” Now, a single profane word it wouldn’t put on a greeting card is at the core of a new wrongful termination and retaliation lawsuit filed by its longtime Western region district manager who was trying to ensure his employees were all paid their correct wages.

“

His firing wasn’t about profanity. It was about his concern over wage violations and daring to speak up on behalf of his workforce.”

*Attorney Ilya Filmus*

Hallmark claims the manager’s single use of the “f-bomb” — during a phone call on his day off — is what cost Rohn La Coria his job after nearly 15 years of exemplary

performance. But that’s just a pretext, according to the lawsuit, filed recently in Los Angeles County Superior Court.

The real reason for La Coria’s termination is that he questioned the legality of Hallmark’s decision to pay employees in Los Angeles County less than minimum wage, the lawsuit states.

Hallmark considered La Coria an excellent manager, and entrusted him with overseeing operations at 25 Hallmark stores, with 300 to 400 employees in his reporting structure, in California, Oregon, Washington and Hawaii.

In June, 2023, Hallmark changed its wage structure for employees in Los Angeles County stores, resulting in some people being paid less than the county minimum, the lawsuit states.

La Coria brought his concerns over the legality of the wage disparity to his manager, Erin Schryer, during their weekly meeting. A month later he brought his concerns to a Hallmark human resources representative, and followed up with Schryer in an email, telling her that while he still disagreed with the company’s decision, he would nonetheless follow it.

The next day La Coria took his first day off in two weeks. As he was driving his spouse to the airport he received a call from Schryer. According to the lawsuit, during the call Schryer berated

and bullied La Coria, she questioned his leadership and company loyalty, and she pressured him to answer whether he intended to quit — despite him repeatedly asking Schryer to continue their call at a later time.

“He was frustrated by the incessant badgering, so he used the f-word in his assessment of the situation and how he felt, but did not direct it towards his manager in any way,” said attorney [Ilya Filmus](#), a partner at San Francisco-based [Infinity Law Group](#). “A lot of people in similar situations use this exact phrase when they are unfairly attacked.”

La Coria was fired three days later on the pretext that he’d used the profanity during the phone call from Schryer on his day off, Filmus said. His firing came just about six months before he would have been vested in Hallmark’s pension plan.

“Hallmark claims to be ‘dedicated to creating a more emotionally connected world and making a difference in the lives of others,’” the lawsuit states. Yet “Hallmark’s prior CEO for the retail division, Steve Farley, was known for his colorful language and slurred profanities during many business meetings. In the presence of Hallmark employees, Mr. Farley would ask, for example, ‘what the f\*\*\* is this product’ and ‘who the f\*\*\* approved this s\*\*\*,’ among other things.”

Hallmark’s culture of profanity reverberated to employees at all levels, according to the lawsuit, which includes multiple examples including some where Schryer used the word.

“There’s a stark contradiction within Hallmark’s operations,” Filmus said. “Despite the company’s wholesome facade, we found a workplace culture steeped in the very profanity they claim to have fired Mr. La Coria for. His firing wasn’t about profanity. It was about his concern over wage violations and daring to speak up on behalf of his workforce.”

La Coria seeks to recover economic, non-economic, compensatory, and punitive damages. The lawsuit was filed in Los Angeles County Superior Court; La Coria v. Hallmark Marketing Co. LLC; Case 24VECV01980 (April 29, 2024).

About Ilya Filmus: Ilya Filmus, a partner at the Bay Area’s Infinity Law Group LLP, is dedicated to defending the rights of employees against unfair labor practices. With decades of experience with employment and business law, personal injury and commercial litigation, Infinity Law Group LLP stands at the forefront of legal battles for justice.

Robert Frank  
Newsroom Public Relations  
+1 206-790-6324  
[email us here](#)

---

This press release can be viewed online at: <https://www.einpresswire.com/article/710319077>

EIN Presswire's priority is source transparency. We do not allow opaque clients, and our editors

try to be careful about weeding out false and misleading content. As a user, if you see something we have missed, please do bring it to our attention. Your help is welcome. EIN Presswire, Everyone's Internet News Presswire™, tries to define some of the boundaries that are reasonable in today's world. Please see our Editorial Guidelines for more information.

© 1995-2024 Newsmatics Inc. All Right Reserved.