

Press Release: Former Blush & Blu workers file lawsuit over rampant wage theft and race-based worker mistreatment

DENVER, November 16, 2021 – On Friday, three former employees of Blush & Blu, one of the few remaining lesbian bars in the country, filed a [lawsuit](#) against the prominent Denver bar. The workers allege that Blush & Blu and its owner Jody Bouffard discriminated against one of the bar’s only Black workers, habitually failed to pay its employees minimum wage, and, at times, failed to pay them at all.

“When you’re queer or trans, it can be hard to risk exclusion from queer spaces and the queer community. I put up with mistreatment and underpayment at Blush for years, but I am proud to finally speak out,” said **Plaintiff Jordan Feltner**.

Blush & Blu has recently received national attention as one of the last remaining lesbian bars in the country, including from [NBC News](#), the [Advocate](#), and the [Lesbian Bar Project](#). Lesbian bars have long played a crucial role in building queer community and creating a safe space for the queer and trans communities. But the complaint asserts that, for close to a decade, Blush & Blu weaponized the so-called “safe space” and “family” at the bar to create a culture of obligation and manipulate workers into enduring mistreatment, racism, and oppressive employment practices.

“Lesbian bars are supposed to be about support and community. I thought we were a family at Blush, but families shouldn’t exploit each other for their own profit,” said **Plaintiff Hannah Williams**.

The complaint details rampant race-based hostility at the Colfax Ave fixture, including pervasive derogatory and racialized comments, stricter rules for one of Blush’s only Black workers, and other forms of discrimination.

“Queer spaces aren’t immune from issues of racism and discrimination, and ignoring these issues doesn’t make them go away. I’m proud to speak out,” explained **Plaintiff Jessica Savage**.

The former employees are represented by Towards Justice, a Denver-based non-profit legal organization.

“The important role of lesbian bars doesn’t excuse the mistreatment and underpayment of queer and trans workers. The law is clear that all employees are entitled to minimum wage and other basic labor protections,” said **Valerie Collins, an attorney at Towards Justice**.

“We are proud to represent these workers in their fight to make queer workplaces safer for queer workers. Our communities can thrive without resorting to exploitation,” said **Brianne Power, an attorney at Towards Justice**.

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