

Employee wouldn't dance to Bojangle's manager's tune

A Greensboro-area Bojangle's restaurant has agreed to pay \$33,426 to a former female employee after she was harassed, retaliated against and fired for refusing her manager's advances. Shannie complained that her manager routinely made obscene remarks and repeatedly asked for sex.

Her complaints took on greater urgency after an incident in a shed outside the restaurant. Shannie said the man exposed his genitals to her and asked her to touch him.

She complained to a regional manager and the company's HR department. Instead of investigating, the company terminated Shannie. She filed a complaint with the EEOC, alleging both harassment and retaliation.

In addition to the monetary settlement, Bojangle's agreed to provide Shannie with neutral references to prospective employers. The company will conduct annual anti-sexual harassment training, post a copy of its anti-harassment policy for all employees to see and report directly to the EEOC any sexual harassment or retaliation complaints arising in Bojangle's Southeast region during the two years of the agreement.

Note: In 1988, the U.S. Supreme Court provided employers with a safe harbor defense if they develop and post an anti-harassment policy, promptly and fairly investigate sexual harassment complaints and address the issue.

Despite the existence of this safe harbor, it appears some employers would rather write large checks than offend harassing employees.