

Recent Legal Battles Provide Lessons

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If the first month of the year is any indication, 2012 should be a wild and wacky year for employers. Here are four stories that should make every employer sit up and take notice.

Should I watch "Blazing Saddles" with my employees? When officials in a sheriff's department in rural Indiana decided to terminate the employment of a probationary deputy, they had no idea they would be facing a race discrimination lawsuit.

Can a strip club fire a pregnant waitress? A former cocktail waitress in New York City recently filed a lawsuit claiming she was fired illegally after becoming pregnant. She claims that a standard outfit required for the all-female wait staff was decidedly skimpy and that she would not have been able to continue to wear the outfit as her pregnancy continued.

Is it wrong to advertise a job before firing an employee? A convenience store clerk claimed his supervisor had been combative and argumentative with him, to the point where he filed a workplace grievance attempting to seek some relief. When he heard that he was being accused of dishonesty and possible theft, he thought he was being set up to be fired. He started searching online for a new job, and was shocked to find his own job being advertised in the classifieds.

Should I double-check an important contract before signing it? A former team lawyer for the NFL felt pretty good when he was able to ink seven of the team's assistant coaches to another year of service at the end of the 2010 season. He drafted contracts that locked them in for the next season. Unfortunately, the team struggled in 2011. After the season ended, the new ownership group cleared house and fired many members of the old regime, including the seven assistant coaches.

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