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DFEH Sues Producers and Studios For Sexual Harassment On Set Of *Criminal Minds*

Suit Alleges Pervasive and Severe Sexual Harassment by Director of Photography on Disney and ABC-CBS Joint Production

Sacramento - The California Department of Fair Employment and Housing (DFEH) has filed a sexual harassment lawsuit in Los Angeles County against the Walt Disney Company, ABC Signature Studios, Inc., CBS Studios, Inc., Gregory St. Johns, and members of the executive production team of the television series *Criminal Minds*.

The lawsuit alleges that over the course of 14 years, Gregory St. Johns, Director of Photography for *Criminal Minds*, used his position of power to create an unchecked hostile work environment in which he subjected production crew members to frequent sexual harassment, including touching and caressing numerous employees. The lawsuit further alleges that the executive production team knew of and condoned the unlawful conduct, firing over a dozen men who resisted St. John's harassment.

The DFEH seeks damages for all production employees who were subjected to harassment for violations of the Fair Employment and Housing Act, the Ralph Civil Rights Act, and Civil Code section 51.9, which prohibits sexual harassment in business, service, and professional relationships.

"All people in California have the right to make a living free from sexual harassment," said DFEH Director Kevin Kish. "Companies and leaders who protect harassers and retaliate against those who complain violate the law."

After two former employees filed administrative complaints, the DFEH in March 2019 issued a Director's Complaint and began a systematic investigation into the allegations that resulted in this lawsuit.

Chief Counsel Janette Wipper, Senior Staff Counsels Martha Gomez and Olivia Tran, and Staff Counsel Soyeon Mesinas represent DFEH in this matter.

The case is captioned Department of Fair Employment and Housing v. The Walt Disney Company, et al. (McNeely and Matulic), Case No. 20STCV19182 (Los Angeles County).

The DFEH is the state agency charged with enforcing California's civil rights laws. The mission of the DFEH is to protect the people of California from unlawful discrimination in employment, housing and public accommodations and from hate violence and human trafficking. For more information, visit the DFEH's web site at www.dfeh.ca.gov.

