



## SF Firefighter: Station Was 'Like a Sex Brothel'

By Vic Vela Journal Northern Bureau

SANTA FE — Even after her 5-year-old daughter walked out of a restroom at the Santa Fe Fire Department's Station 4 holding a "Barely Legal" pornographic magazine, Regina Bryant says, she kept her mouth shut.

That was around the same time that Bryant said she found pornographic movies in DVD players at the firehouse in the spring of 2006. Bryant says the environment at Station 4 has historically been "like a sex brothel." Although her supervisors later acknowledged they had heard rumors about the porn and about alleged sexual harassment of Bryant by a fellow firefighter, they were not directly told of the incidents until July 2007 — and then the news allegedly came from Bryant's 7-year-old son during the department's Family Fun Festival.

"(My son) said to Chief (Chris) Rivera, 'You need to make it so my mommy doesn't cry when she comes home from work,'" Bryant recalled.

Two months later, Bryant, 40, an 18-year firefighter and recently promoted engineer, filed a formal complaint against firefighter and union Vice President Paul Moreno, who she maintains exposed himself to her and cornered her at the firehouse while demanding she have sex with him.

Bryant was one of two women who accused Moreno of sexual harassment, an accusation that cost him his job. Moreno was fired Aug. 5 after being placed on administrative leave in November on the heels of the allegations. The leave started after Bryant accused Moreno of urinating on her firefighting gear as retaliation for her complaints.

Moreno, a former Marine who had been with the department for four years before his termination, denies any wrongdoing.

"I have done nothing but live my life with honor," he said in a recent interview.

Bryant also blames the department administration for not keeping her complaints against Moreno confidential. Bryant said that the day after she told Rivera about the harassment, news of her complaint spread through Fire Station 4. She then started receiving unspecified threats while department administrators did nothing to protect her, she says.

Bryant said she was scared of Moreno, a former professional cage fighter.

Bryant would eventually file a complaint with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, combined with her formal complaint filed with the city.

"I was egregiously sexually harassed by a male coworker who did such things as repeatedly propositioned me for sex, touched and tried to display his penis, then later forcibly grabbed me and forced his genital area against me," she wrote in the complaint.

The firefighter accused in that incident is Paul Moreno.

"He asked me to have sex with him," she said. "He decided that showing me his member would be the way to convince me."

Bryant also claimed that Moreno would have female visitors late at night while on duty at Station 4 and that there was a history of that kind of activity there. That claim was rejected after a city investigation.

Rivera said that he has no knowledge that supports the "brothel" allegation and that he could not comment on the Bryant case because it's a personnel matter.

Bryant's was the second sexual harassment allegation made against Moreno within the department. Another

woman, Nora Salazar, an administrative assistant, provided a similar account, saying Moreno exposed himself to her, according to her complaint with the state Human Rights Division.

Although her complaint was deemed to be without sufficient cause to warrant sexual harassment by standards of federal law, a lawsuit was filed Friday on her behalf in state District Court.

The suit names Moreno, Rivera, Assistant Chief Randy Neumann and the city of Santa Fe as defendants. Salazar claims, among other things, that the Fire Department was an "out-of-control and sexually pervasive, demeaning and disruptive office atmosphere."

Like Rivera, Neumann declined to comment.

Moreno, 32, flatly denies he did anything wrong, and he questioned the motives and credibility of both women who have accused him.

Bryant, whom Moreno called "sue-happy," had filed a discrimination complaint against the department with the state Human Rights Division for a previous, unrelated incident. And Salazar didn't file a formal complaint in the matter until she was facing termination for making a profane comment against Rivera. In 2007, Salazar pleaded guilty to a battery charge.

"Just look at the women who are accusing me of this," Moreno said. "I'm not a (expletive) pervert. This has been the worst 10 months of my life."

According to the Human Rights Division documents, Moreno said in a Nov. 27 interview that the allegations were a "surprise."

"I'm appropriate, and I'm professional and I don't do stupid crap like that in front of females or with the chiefs or any kind of garbage like that, so that's why this is all a surprise to me."

Moreno is appealing his firing. Meanwhile, Bryant, who is two years away from retirement, is on administrative leave until the situation is resolved. She said she hopes that day comes soon.

"I love this job," she said. "It's the best job in the world. But the last two years have been robbed from me." **Online**

For more on fire station story go to **ABQjournal.com** .



**EDDIE MOORE/JOURNAL** Santa Fe Fire Station 4: A female firefighter says the station was "like a sex brothel."