

Bosses made us kiss & wrestle for photos: suit

By [Rich Calder](#)

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The infamous bull inside Johnny Utah's

Photo: Patrick McMullan

A “Wild, Wild West”-themed Midtown bar is so wild that its owners encourage customers to photograph and video sexy staffers dancing in bikinis and making out with one another without getting the women’s consent, new court filings claim.

Ex-staffers at Johnny Utah’s in Rockefeller Center have amended an already salacious sexual harassment lawsuit against the urban cowboy bar’s owners and managers with a series of creepy new charges.

They include allegations that titillating videos and photos of the workers are routinely posted on social media without their consent by their bosses and customers.

The revised Manhattan federal court complaint, filed July 1, alleges the bar’s operators used cellphones or in-house security cameras to record the footage, including video of women wrestling in kiddie pools filled with cranberry sauce.

Then, the suit says, they tried to profit off the sleazy shots by posting them on advertising billboards and to the bar’s official Facebook and Twitter accounts.

Jeanne Christensen, a lawyer for 23 of the former workers, said she hopes the suit will set a precedent prohibiting such recordings of scantily clad women in bars unless they give consent.

The class-action suit, which seeks unspecified money damages, has seen its list of plaintiffs soar from 8 to 23 since being filed last month.



It alleges Johnny Utah's female staffers are subjected to unwelcome sexual comments and groping by their bosses and customers – and risk having hours cut or losing their jobs if they complain. It also alleges the bar is breaking state and federal laws by cheating workers out of legal wages, including overtime.

The suit says that the most popular songs played at Johnny Utah's include Katy Perry's "I Kissed a Girl."

It's played while two women workers ride a mechanical bull together. When the music stops, customers – knowing they'll get free shots if the staffers make out – egg them on to lock lips.

The workers are expected to "subject to the degradation," the suit says.

One of the plaintiffs, Destiny Frye, was only 19 when she worked at the bar as a hostess in 2011. Despite being underage, she and other some staffers were required to get liquored up before riding the dangerous mechanical bull in bikini tops and making out, the suit says.

Frye and other plaintiffs also say they were ordered to party with two of the defendants – managers Thomas Casabona and JR Lozado – and the men's friends.

Other defendants include the bar's co-owners – tavern tycoon John Sullivan and Robert Werhane.

Sullivan, who also owns popular McFadden's bar in Manhattan, also routinely recruited female staffers for wild parties he threw for friends, the suit says. The staffers he picked included Frye and another plaintiff, ex-hostess Nykya Luce, 24, of Manhattan.

Workers who refused to dance privately or complained about being groped during the parties risked losing their jobs, says the suit.

Messages left for the defendants were not returned.

