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Former sales reps for The Villages skewered on witness stand in federal trial

April 1, 2021 **Meta Minton**

John Laur

A high-profile attorney working on behalf of Properties of The Villages relentlessly grilled two former top performers who are being sued by their former boss in a federal trial in Tampa.

John Lauro, known to many for his role as a Fox News legal analyst, spent hours Wednesday and Thursday in a blistering cross examination of Christopher Day and Jason Kranz, who left Properties of The Villages in 2019 to form KD Premier Realty, which is directly competing in The Villages market.

The Villages is suing the pair, along with former Properties of The Villages representatives Nanette Elliott, Angie Taylor and Angela Kranz for breach of contract and violating non-compete agreements that were to last 24 months. They have all made counterclaims alleging they were treated as employees and not independent contractors, and as such are owed overtime they should have been paid.



Chris Day and Jason Kranz are running a real estate venture in the crosshairs of Properties of The Villages.

Lauro read aloud numerous emails sent by Day and Kranz to their superiors at Properties of The Villages. The emails were largely gushing with praise for Vice President of Sales for The Villages Jennifer Parr and others, repeatedly thanking them for the opportunity to sell for Properties of The Villages. Kranz's emails were sometimes deeply personal, thanking Parr for

his daughter having the chance to serve as a captain of the Golden Girls, the performance dance team at The Villages High School, and his being made to “feel like a man again.”



Kranz had lashed out in testimony against Mike Berning, the longtime Properties of The Villages executive who holds the company’s broker’s license. Kranz described a 7 a.m. phone call from an irate Berning when he launched the “F bomb” repeatedly. But that didn’t square with Kranz’s email in which he praised Berning as a “great leader and mentor.”

Lauro repeatedly referred to the emails as personifying the “pre-litigation” Kranz and Day.

He got each of them to reveal they were earning about a half a million dollars in commissions annually in their final years at Properties of The Villages.

However, they both testified the money had come at a price. They described duties they were required to perform, including answering phones, greeting potential buyers at the sales centers, trolley rides and joining in caravans. Both also admitted that as their careers blossomed at Properties of The Villages, they were able to shed those duties. They said the many hours they worked robbed them of time they could have spent with their families.



Christopher Day

Lauro accused Day of basking in the glow of the Properties of The Villages brand when it suited his new business venture. Lauro showed an image of the two salesmen together as it first appeared in a Properties of The Villages campaign. Lauro claimed that Day photoshopped the same image as part of a promotion of his fledgling company. The attorney pointed to a post mined from Day’s Facebook page, of Day bragging about the Day Drive street sign in the Village of Antrim Dells. The street was named in his honor during the heady days of his career with Properties of The Villages.

During the course of his testimony, Day acknowledged he is a millionaire and owns several investment properties in The Villages.

“And it was all made possible because of opportunities given to you by Properties of The Villages, isn’t that right?” Lauro asked.

Day did not agree, and said he made his fortune by his own hand.

Lauro dragged out an old email document related to Day’s previous employment as a sales associate with AT&T. Lauro said the email indicated that Day lost his job with AT&T because he had been “less than honest.”

Day came to The Villages “without a job” and took a \$50,000 draw from Properties of The Villages during his 12-month training period, Lauro said.



Jason Kranz

He turned the same tactics on Kranz during a cross-examination Thursday afternoon.

Several times, Lauro alluded to a “bankruptcy” in Kranz’s past prompting him finally to admit he had owned nine houses in Minnesota at a time when the real estate market took a deep dive.

Lauro also accused Kranz of failing to mention a past criminal conviction during the time he was seeking employment with Properties of The Villages. He dismissed it as a technical matter over a “rental house sticker” and said, “I didn’t disclose it because I didn’t think it was a crime.”

Day and Kranz told similar stories about forming the Elite Sales Team in an effort to make more money for themselves, their associates and Properties of The Villages. But the team came crashing down when they placed an advertisement prominently featuring their faces – and phone number – in The Villages Daily Sun.

Kranz recalled being called into Parr’s office when the ad was published.

“Hey, look at this ad,” Parr reportedly told him.

She picked up the phone and called the Elite number which appeared in the ad.

“Elite?” she asked. “Is everybody else a piece of (expletive)?”

Kranz said it taught him a valuable lesson.

“I always tried to fly under the radar after that,” he said.

But when pressed, both Day and Kranz admitted they had cared about Parr and had believed she cared about them and their families.

That prompted a question from Lauro.

“But when you left to start KD Realty you didn’t have the decency or integrity to say goodbye to her?” he asked.

On the day of their departure on Dec. 16, 2019, **Day and Kranz now infamously sent an email to all of their colleagues at Properties of The Villages** announcing they were leaving. Parr was on the distribution list.

Parr testified on the first day of the trial and has been in the hallway of the 17th floor of the federal courthouse every day this week. She cannot be readmitted to the courtroom unless she is called to testify again. That could take place on Good Friday, as the trial is scheduled to wrap up.

