

## Broward's Vera Cadillac Accused of Wild Escalation of Actions After Totaling Family's \$100K Escalade

"What Vera Cadillac, its counsel, and the defendants did to this young couple is one of the grossest disregards of the law and ethics I have come across in 17 years of law practice," says Javier Lopez, a partner at Kozyak Tropin & Throckmorton.

December 09, 2022 at 04:49 PM

Litigation



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### What You Need to Know

- Kozyak Tropin & Throckmorton attorneys filed the lawsuit in the Miami-Dade Circuit Court.
- The plaintiffs sued under 11 counts.
- The matter escalated with the defendants allegedly trespassing on the family's suburban property with a fake court order and guns to repo a loaner vehicle.

After totaling a family's \$100,000 vehicle and having the family's insurance company pay for the damage, an automotive company's employees are accused in a lawsuit of trespassing on the family's suburban property when "blackmail" failed "with visible guns and badges pretending to be police officers."

The defendants, Vera-Williamson Automotive Inc. and multiple "team members," are alleged to have falsely represented that a white sheet of paper they were holding was a court order to repossess a loaner vehicle, which allegedly traumatized the plaintiffs' three children in the process.

And that is [according to a complaint](#) that Javier A. Lopez and Jeffrey J. Leavitt, a partner and associate, respectively, at Kozyak Tropin & Throckmorton in Miami, filed Friday on behalf of the plaintiffs, Michael and Kathleen Mendez.

"As lawyers, we have an ethical obligation to hold ourselves and our profession to the highest standard," Lopez said. "We cannot let the bottom line dictate our moral compass. The same goes for companies, such as Vera Cadillac, that allegedly hold themselves to such high standards."

The defendants, in addition to Vera Cadillac, are Louis Vera, Richard Gonzalez, Leo Pena, George "Ed" Williamson II, George "Trae" Williamson III, and Jason Allen. Allen, their legal counsel and a partner at Bass Sox Mercer in Tallahassee, declined to comment.

Now, in the Miami-Dade Circuit Court case, the plaintiffs alleged multiple causes of action, including breach of contract; fraudulent misrepresentation; unjust enrichment; intentional and negligent infliction, and conspiracy to commit emotional distress; armed trespass; and malicious prosecution.

The dispute dates to September 2021, when six months after the plaintiffs purchased a 2021 Cadillac Escalade ESV, Vera picked up the vehicle from the family's Pinecrest residence to perform maintenance, according to court documents. But about a week later, a Vera driver completely totaled the vehicle while seeking to return it. And a Vera service manager failed to follow through with the company's insurer to report the accident and assume liability.

The dealership placed an order for a new Cadillac Escalade and had the plaintiffs pay a deposit for the purchase of the new vehicle, while at the same time directing them to continue to pay the monthly payments due on the totaled vehicle, according to the complaint. And the dealership provided the family with a loaner vehicle until the new vehicle was delivered.

Meanwhile, the employee who totaled the family's vehicle sent a demand letter for personal injury coverage, leaving the plaintiffs stunned, according to the lawsuit. In response, Vera falsely "advised" them that "several insurance policies would afford coverage," before the plaintiffs' policy, according to the complaint. Soon after, plaintiffs' insurance premiums increased, the suit claims.

In addition, Vera allegedly "agreed in writing" to pay back more than \$100,000, consisting of the cost of the totaled car and monthly payments. Plaintiffs also alleged in the lawsuit that Vera "attempted to blackmail the plaintiffs" by refusing to deliver the newly purchased vehicle unless they agreed to release Vera from any potential liability arising from the car accident.

Having failed to come to an agreement with the plaintiffs, Vera gave them a deadline to return the vehicle, which would have left them unable to drive

their kids to school, according to court documents.

Then, in April, when the Vera team failed to “repossess” the loaner, the defendants, including their counsel, Allen, reported the loaner vehicle stolen and made a false police report, despite knowing exactly where the loaner vehicle was located, who was in possession and why, according to the complaint.

**Read the complaint:**



In body camera footage, the plaintiffs claimed that Vera admitted to an officer that Mendez “is not a thief,” while acknowledging that the vehicle was not stolen.

Lopez said, “What Vera Cadillac, its counsel, and the defendants did to this young couple is one of the grossest disregards of the law and ethics I have come across in 17 years of practice.”

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