

Roberto Ramirez, Carl's Jr., California

My name is Roberto Ramirez, and I am a member of ROC United. I have been working in the restaurant industry for more than 18 years, from fast food to casual dining. It is a trade that I've learned out of necessity but it became something that I enjoyed doing.

Most of my experience in the industry has been working for Carl's Jr in Los Angeles where I reside. When I started, I really wanted to make a good impression on my managers – I was always on time and I was always ready to learn other positions to be able to help in different areas of the restaurant.

At the beginning, even though the pay wasn't great, the work environment was really good. My co-workers were very happy to be working and to see each other every day. Then a few years ago, things started to change. Management started cutting hours and employees were made to perform the work of more than one person. I was told to do prep work, cleaning work and cashiering work, even food running work since we are the only fast food chain that delivers the food to the guests' table.

For many years, I started working 30 minutes before my clock-in time to make sure that I finished all my duties on time. Our restaurant was located beside a school, and our mornings were always very busy. My managers were aware that I was working those extra 30 minutes but I was never paid for that time or asked to clock in when I started working early. Managers would become very upset if I didn't finish my duties before the end of my shift, and several times they retaliated against me for it - they would cut my hours, change my schedule or send me home early.

My last incident with them was when I went on vacation. I requested my paycheck of \$150 and I was told that it was being processed, but then I never heard about it again. Then my manager got transferred and I asked for my check from the new manager. After a few days she told me that it was cashed by the manager who was just transferred, but one of my coworkers told me that she saw the check and recognized the signature of the new manager.

I was outraged, not for the amount of the check, but for management stealing from me. I complained to the district manager whom came to the store to tell me that there was nothing I could do and if I wanted to still fight for it I would do it outside the restaurant by filing a lawsuit against the manager but I couldn't involve the restaurant. Then they started cutting my hours, and one of my coworkers even told me that my manager was pressured to get me out of the restaurant. They ended up firing me.

I didn't know what to do at the time, but now I want to let everyone know that we are the only ones to stop the abuse and this mistreatment, that everyone has rights in this country and we need to learn them so we can defend ourselves. This happened to me for many years and I would hate that future generations would experience the same situation that I did. There are a lot of things to work on and only together we can do it.

Spanish

Hola, buenas tardes mi nombre es Roberto Ramírez. Soy miembro de ROC United y trabaje en Carl's Junior por aproximadamente 18 años, Fui contratado como preparador pero en mis últimos años hacia el trabajo de 4 personas. (traducción)

Mi día de trabajo consistía en empezar 30 minutos antes de mi entrada oficial para poder empezar a preparar los alimentos para el desayuno, limpiar baños, pisos, los utensilios de la cocina, freidoras, charolas, atender las cajas y llevar la comida a los clientes. (traducción)

En la compañía sufrí de robo de salario, explotación y el robo de mi cheque de fondo. Nunca se me pago el tiempo en el que entre más temprano de mi hora regular, cada que mencionaba algo que no estaba bien a mi parecer se me castigaba con cortarme las horas y cambiarse los turnos.(traducción)

La última que les aguante fue que me robaron mi cheque de depósito, una de las gerentes cambio mi cheque en una casa de cambio. Cuando esto llegó a los oídos del gerente de distrito, el se dirigió a mí y me dijo que me las arreglara con la gerente pero afuera del restaurante, en la corte, que el restaurante estaba fuera de cualquier responsabilidad. Y nunca vi mi dinero, la cantidad fue muy pequeña pero lo que me dolió más fue la acción. A partir de ese incidente me empezaron a cortar las horas obligándome a irme. (traducción)

Si Andy Puzder, es elegido como secretario de labor, lo que me paso en este restaurante se va a multiplicar a nivel nacional. Me haría muy triste ver a nuevas generaciones entrar a esta industria y que sean tratados de esa manera. La mayoría de la gente que conozco cuando dejan el restaurante tienen serios problemas psicológicos que a la larga afecta el núcleo familiar. (traducción)

Todos tenemos el derecho de vivir con dignidad y respeto en el trabajo y hoy you contribuyó con mi testimonio hacia un camino para un salario justo y un trato digno.

Muchas gracias (traducción)