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## Lawsuit Alleges Racial Discrimination Against Local Real Estate Agents

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Two local real estate agents are facing a federal lawsuit alleging racism and violations of the Fair Housing Act.

The suit was filed against real estate agents Rick Beaudin of KW Realty Livingston and Mary Kay Ikens of RE/MAX Platinum in U.S. District Court in Detroit. It was filed by Verdell and Julie Franklin, who reside in Ohio but have been visiting friends for the past decade on Zukey Lake. Verdell Franklin is African American and the longtime Chief Financial Officer of the Toledo Fire Department. Julie is white and a certified registered nurse. The couple has been married for 30 years and have two sons.

The complaint states that upon information and belief, currently there are no African American home owners on Zukey Lake and there never has been. It was also stated that it's rare for a homes on the lake to be put up for sale. When a home was listed, the Franklins immediately called and set up a showing with Ikens on September 4th, 2020. The listing price was \$350,000 and contained



no conditions such as being “sold as-is” or requiring an all cash offer. The Franklins were believed to be the first potential buyers to view the property.

As part of ordinary practice, agents typically inquire about certain qualifications to purchase a home. The complaint alleges Ikens demonstrated no interest in the Franklins as potential buyers, didn't ask about their occupations or financial ability. When the Franklins said they wanted to put in an offer immediately, Ikens allegedly reacted in an awkward way and instead of following through, told them she had to show a friend a home nearby. Ikens is said to have taken much longer than anticipated to return and eventually informed the Franklins that she spoke with her boss, identified as Beaudin.



The complaint states that the agents set forth various conditions and provided false information to dissuade them from making an offer because of their race. The suit alleges the two imposed unfair conditions of sale included cash-only, a higher sales price and “as is”. A few days later, the home was listed as pending offer and in late October, it was listed as sold for \$300,000 to a white man who did not purchase the home with cash and was allowed an inspection prior to purchase. Beaudin was the listing agent on that sale. When the Franklins learned of what had happened, they were said to be heartbroken and outraged to have been victims of blatant race discrimination.

Beaudin told WHMI he was not the Franklins agent and “I’ve never met, spoke to, or had any communication with them ever I never received an offer from the Franklins via their agent. I represented the sellers — they were presented any offers received. I’m a realtor; we live by the code of ethics. Discrimination has no place in real estate, especially here in Livingston County.” The suit alleges that “Beaudin has a history of engaging in racially inappropriate behavior,” noting that in June of 2020, [Beaudin was terminated from his former employer](#), RE/MAX Platinum, “because he made public comments on his social media accounts in opposition to the Black Lives Matter movement.”

The suit alleges several violations of the Fair Housing Act and the Elliott-Larsens Civil Rights Act. The suit seeks actual damages and damages related to emotional distress and embarrassment,

injunctive relief requiring Ikens and Beaudin to surrender their real estate licenses and punitive damages for alleged discriminatory statements made by the defendants.

An email and voicemail request for comment were left with Ikens.

A copy of the complaint is attached.

Photos: Beaudin - Facebook, Ikens - Zillow.

<b>Attachment:</b>	<a href="#">Franklin Beaudin complaint.pdf</a>
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