

Driver taken for ride: suit

By Kieran Crowley

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TOO MUCH IDLE TIME: A suit against wealthy Westchester couple Paul and Paige Bluhdorn (above) by their disgruntled former chauffeur claims he was on call up to 18 hours a day without overtime compensation.

Photo: Clint Spaulding/PatrickMcMullan.com

He would have been better off driving Miss Daisy.

A wealthy Westchester couple stiffed their Bronx chauffeur out of more than \$170,000 in overtime pay he earned driving them around and looking after their posh estate, he charges in a lawsuit.

George McKenzie said he was on call “round the clock,” driving family members, running errands and caring for the huge estate and five family dogs.

Often, those duties took place after his eight-hour shift, with jaunts from their Bedford Hills manor to Manhattan hot spots in the wee hours of the morning, according to the suit filed in Bronx Supreme Court.

In the legal papers, McKenzie, 53, accuses former movie mogul Paul Bluhdorn and his socialite wife, Paige, of cheating him out of back pay.

“That’s my Maserati, but it’s in his name,” quipped McKenzie, who said he is owed much more than the \$126,000 the Italian sports car is worth.

McKenzie said he spent nearly two years behind the wheels of the Bluhdorns’ vehicles for outings to the couple’s Central Park West apartment and to bring their kids to school

One of those trips was to the Four Seasons Hotel, where he was left to sit in a car all night because Paige Bluhdorn forgot about him and did not answer her phone, McKenzie said in the suit, which was filed in October.

McKenzie said he was not paid extra for the wait.

According to his lawsuit, McKenzie received \$30 an hour for an eight-hour day, a flat rate of \$240 a day. But he quickly began working 12- to 18-hour days without any extra compensation.

“They were just trying to rip me off,” said McKenzie. “They’re trying to get extra time out of people because they think they can get away with it.”

McKenzie’s lawyer, Neil Greenberg, said McKenzie racked up \$173,376 in unpaid overtime in 16 months but with penalties and other missed pay the total is almost \$250,000.

Paige Bluhdorn did not return phone calls made to her assistant, and the couple’s lawyer declined to comment on the case.

McKenzie said the schedule became so hectic, he had to move into the estate. He said he was fired after he demanded overtime.

Paul Bluhdorn’s father, Charles, founded Gulf+Western, which in the 1960s acquired Paramount Pictures, the studio behind such hits as “The Godfather” and “Chinatown.”

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