

Aaron A. Bartz (SBN 198722)
aaron@bartzlawgroup.com
Rex J. Phillips (SBN 237747)
rex@bartzlawgroup.com
BARTZ LAW GROUP, APC
5151 California Ave., Suite 100
Irvine, California 92617
Telephone: (949) 504-4413
Facsimile: (949) 656-7760

Electronically FILED by
Superior Court of California,
County of Los Angeles
5/01/2025 2:44 PM
David W. Slayton,
Executive Officer/Clerk of Court,
By R. Lozano, Deputy Clerk

Attorneys for Plaintiffs ALIXUS CORTEZ, KIARA THIBODEAUX, and ASHLEY MENDEZ
and all others similarly situated

SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

FOR THE COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

ALIXUS CORTEZ, an individual; KIARA
THIBODEAUX, an individual; ASHLEY
MENDEZ, an individual; on behalf of
themselves and all others similarly situated
and the general public,

Plaintiffs,

vs.

BLACK KNIGHT PATROL, INC., a
California corporation; and DOES 1 through
100, inclusive,

Defendants.

) Case No. 23STCV02135

) [Assigned for All Purposes to:
) The Hon. Stuart M. Rice, Dept. 1]

) **DECLARATION OF CLASS**
) **REPRESENTATIVE KIARA**
) **THIBODEAUX IN SUPPORT OF**
) **PLAINTIFF'S MOTION FOR FINAL**
) **APPROVAL OF CLASS ACTION**
) **SETTLEMENT**

) Date: May 23, 2025

) Time: 10:30 a.m.

) Dept: 1

1 I, KIARA THIBODEAUX, declare as follows:

2 1. I am over the age of eighteen and am a Class Representative Plaintiff in the matter
3 *Alixus Cortez et al. v. Black Knight Patrol, Inc.* The foregoing is based upon my personal
4 knowledge and, if called as a witness, I could and would competently testify thereto.

5 2. I submit this declaration in support of Plaintiff's Motion for Final Approval of
6 Class Settlement.

7 3. I have been employed as a security guard for Defendant Black Knight Patrol, Inc.
8 ("Defendant") between August 2022 and the present. During my time working for Defendant, I
9 have been subjected to the same wage and hour policies and practices that are at issue in this
10 case, including the Defendant's practice of failing to pay employees all wages owed, failing to
11 provide meal periods, failing to authorize and permit rest periods, failing to provide accurate
12 wage statements, failing to reimburse employees for their reasonable and necessary expenses,
and related issues.

13 4. Since the beginning of this case, I have been closely involved in assisting my
14 attorneys to prosecute this action and have done so diligently and aggressively since this action
15 was first filed. Prior to becoming one of the named class representatives in this case, I spoke at
16 length with my attorneys and relayed to them the alleged illegal wage and hour policies and
17 practices of Defendant. I spent countless hours discussing the issues in the case and the
18 possibility of filing a representative action with my attorneys at that time.

19 5. Prior to filing this case, I worked with my attorneys to interpret documents that
20 had been produced as part of my personnel file, including my wage statements and Defendant's
21 pay and reimbursement policies. My attorneys also called me frequently to discuss issues
22 pertaining to other current and former employees, and I connected my attorneys with other
employees who experienced similar wage and hour issues as myself.

23 6. In 2024, the parties agreed to go to Mediation, and I worked with my attorneys to
24 prepare for the Mediation. I spoke with my attorneys numerous times prior to the Mediation, and
25 I was on-call during the Mediation on May 29, 2024, and spoke to my attorneys during the
26 Mediation to address factual issues that arose.

1 7. After the Mediation, I thereafter worked with my attorneys to ensure that the
2 settlement was fair to all class members. I reviewed the Settlement Agreement and discussed
3 with my attorneys to resolve any questions I had.

4 8. I have also continued to keep tabs on the settlement agreement, calling my
5 attorneys from time to time to ensure that the settlement was on track.

6 9. As detailed above, I actively participated in all stages of litigation and have been
7 continuously apprised of all aspects of this case. I believe that if not for my efforts and
8 persistence in this case, that the class members would have benefitted far less without my
9 involvement. I am an adequate representative of the hourly employees. My interests are the
10 same as the other hourly non-exempt employees, as Defendant uniformly failed to provide
11 compliant meal and rest periods. Furthermore, I believe Defendant failed to pay me all of my
12 wages that were due to me, and failed to provide legally compliant pay stubs to the entirety of
13 the class.

14 10. All in all, I estimate that I have spent more than 45 hours in conjunction with the
15 case. I dedicated my time to the pursuit of this case, including consulting with my attorneys
16 regarding the issues raised in the action. I have also assisted my counsel in reviewing, analyzing,
17 and interpreting various internal documents generated by Defendant. Additionally, I have
18 participated in numerous telephone conferences with my counsel to discuss the case. I have also
19 assisted my counsel by corresponding with them on repeated occasions to answer any questions
20 about my employment. I also discussed mediation and post-mediation settlement strategies with
21 my counsel at various points over the last year. I have been diligent, and I believe I acted above
22 and beyond that which was expected of me as a Class Representative throughout all stages of the
23 litigation, up to and including the settlement of this Class Action. I have no claim that was
24 antagonistic to the class. I accepted the potential risk of being liable for the opposing parties'
25 costs if we were unsuccessful in this lawsuit.

26 11. In addition to performing work on this matter, I assumed a substantial risk in
27 serving as a class representative if the Defendant prevailed in this case. My willingness to
28 assume the financial risk was and is significant. Although I was confident in the merits of this
lawsuit, I do not have any substantial savings and bringing this lawsuit was a serious
commitment on my behalf and exposed myself to considerable risk. My attorneys have advised

1 me that California law provides that the losing party must pay the prevailing party's costs. As
2 such, if the Defendant had prevailed in this case, I would have been subjected to a cost award in
3 the amount of tens of thousands of dollars. Notwithstanding these risks, I chose to serve in my
4 capacity as Class Representative and pursue all claims against Defendant. Many employees have
5 been afraid to challenge Defendant's policies because they were afraid that they would lose their
6 jobs or face retaliation in the pursuit of other employment. I had that fear myself, but I pressed
7 on with the case nonetheless.

8 12. Considering the amount of time I put into the case, the stigma of filing litigation,
9 and the impact it has had on all class members, I believe an enhancement of \$7,500 is fair and
10 reasonable.

11 I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of California that the
12 foregoing is true and correct.

13 Executed on April 30, 2025, at Los Angeles, California.

14 DocuSigned by:

15 

81B59D71407D498...

16 Kiara Thibodeaux