

# Five cruel words pregnant employee claims boss said to her before she was fired

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Caroline Ruiz was just starting her fourth week working as global head of North America procurement at beauty company Avon, when she was suddenly fired.

At the time of the incident, Ruiz says she was expecting a baby and had just been rushed to hospital after experiencing heavy bleeding.

Doctors are said to have given the mum-to-be some devastating news - she had a high-risk pregnancy, meaning there was "an exceedingly high likelihood" she would suffer a miscarriage.

Ruiz claims medical experts advised her to take time off of work and stay on bed rest, but having just started her new job she was "reluctant" to do so.

So the following week she returned to Avon's Manhattan-based office, but it ended up being a huge mistake.

Ruiz, who is currently involved in a lawsuit with the cosmetics giant, claims that the day after her return, she was confronted by her boss, Raj Nath and a HR representative, over unspecified "performance issues".

She says she explained her diagnosis and asked if she could work from home for one week.

According to court documents filed on October 3, Nath allegedly responded by saying five rather cruel words: "Your health isn't my concern."

He is said to have added: "But your performance is."

Following this, Ruiz says she received an email informing her that her request to work remotely had been denied, so she spent the weekend preparing for a big presentation as she was "determined to do an excellent job".

But according to the court documents, when she got to work on Monday, things took a turn for the worse as she was called into a meeting and fired for "performance deficiencies".

Ruiz is said to have "responded that she believed she was being fired because she was pregnant, particularly given that she had worked at Avon for less than four weeks, and had not been given a fair chance to perform."

In a statement for Jezebel, Jeanne Christensen of Wigdor LLP, the lead attorney on Ruiz's case, said Avon "abhorrently fired our client simply because she disclosed her pregnancy. Such overt discrimination is intolerable by any company, but is even more disturbing when the company is Avon - an alleged leader for women."

An Avon spokesman denied Ruiz's claims in a statement provided to the same publication, and added that it was "company policy" not to comment on legal matters.

They said: "We are very proud of our reputation as 'the company for women' and our strong and ongoing commitment to empowering women since our founding over 130 years ago.

"As a pre-eminent employer of women, with a workforce comprised of more than two-thirds women, we understand the particular needs working mothers have, and we are committed to supporting them before, during and after maternity leave."