

# Are the Grammys Really Going to Happen on Sunday?

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 [vanityfair.com/style/2020/01/deborah-dugan-recording-academy-complaint](https://www.vanityfair.com/style/2020/01/deborah-dugan-recording-academy-complaint)

In the days after **Deborah Dugan** was removed from her post as president and chief executive of the Recording Academy, there was a growing sense that deeply entrenched organizational issues were to blame. On Tuesday afternoon the extent of those issues, as Dugan has portrayed them, became clear in an explosive complaint she filed with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission that alleges sexual harassment, gender discrimination, and more.

In a statement Dugan's lawyers, **Douglas Wigdor** and **Michael Willemin**, said: "The complaint that we filed today against the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences (the Grammys) highlights tactics reminiscent of those deployed by individuals defending **Harvey Weinstein**. As we allege, the attempt by the Recording Academy to impugn the character of Deborah Dugan is a transparent effort to shift the focus away from its own unlawful activity. This blatant form of retaliation in corporate America is all too common, even post #MeToo, and we will utilize all lawful means necessary to ensure that those responsible are held accountable for their actions."

The complaint alleges that Dugan told HR in an email on December 22, 2019, that she had been sexually harassed by the academy's general counsel and former trustee **Joel Katz**. It says that her predecessor, **Neil Portnow**, already "in disgrace after making misogynistic remarks about woman recording artists," was, "upon information and belief," ousted not because of those comments (which he's said were taken out of context), but because he "allegedly raped a female recording artist." In addition, the complaint claims, Dugan's administrative leave "had nothing to do with any accusations made against Ms. Dugan. It was retaliation, pure and simple." Katz and the academy couldn't immediately be reached for comment. The *New York Times* and *Variety* wrote that Portnow hasn't responded to their requests for comment.

The complaint extended to the Grammy Awards selection process as well. Dugan's December 22 email "also detailed egregious conflicts of interest, improper self-dealing by Board members and voting irregularities with respect to nominations for Grammy Awards, all made possible by the 'boys' club' mentality and approach to governance at the Academy," according to the complaint.

The turmoil at the highest levels of the Recording Academy had already made it difficult to imagine what the Grammys would look like on Sunday—but now, with a prominent accusation that the awards may be fundamentally compromised, it's become that much harder. Regardless, Dugan's complaint could end up revealing far more about the academy and its priorities than any awards that do get handed out.

