

Wigdor Files Gender Discrimination and Retaliation Complaint Against Enterprise AI Software Company C3.ai

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Wigdor LLP has filed a complaint on behalf of Dr. Sharareh Noorbaloochi (linked below), alleging that she was subjected to gender discrimination, a hostile work environment, and, finally, terminated in retaliation for calling out the aggressive behavior.

In the notoriously competitive tech and AI field, Dr. Noorbaloochi outshined her peers, receiving multiple promotions, bonuses, praise, and eventually serving as the highest-ranking female employee in C3.ai's Data Science division after less than three years with the company. Despite these achievements, she was denied a promised promotion, and her supervisors were clear that the decision was due to her calling out male colleagues' rude, demeaning, and hostile treatment of her. When she explained that she felt the denied promotion constituted retaliation, she was swiftly terminated.

Though Dr. Noorbaloochi continuously produced results for C3.ai, she was constantly undermined. Her supervisor, Dr. Ohlsson, refused to acknowledge her elevated role at the company out of concerns that a male employee two rungs below him on the org chart did not manage employees when Dr. Noorbaloochi did. She was often excluded from planning meetings for her own department, her male colleagues failed to attend her session at the annual company meeting, and her name was improperly replaced on a public staffing sheet with that of a male colleague. She was frequently subjected to gendered language (including being called "emotional" during a meeting) and was sent an anonymous, sexually suggestive note that the company failed to investigate or take meaningful action against.

In early 2024, biased behavior reached a fever pitch as Dr. Noorbaloochi began working on a project for Quest Diagnostics. Her coworker on the project – who sat below her in the corporate hierarchy – frequently interrupted her, subverted her expertise, ignored both her directions and her comments on written work, and excluded her on crucial communications. Eventually, Dr. Noorbaloochi confronted her colleague and alerted senior leadership of the unfair treatment. She was warned that formally pursuing her concerns of gender bias at the Company would be problematic; indeed, her unofficial complaint turned out to be the source of her downfall at C3.ai.

Despite praise from C3.ai's CEO that she had been performing particularly well on the project, Dr. Noorbaloochi was not promoted to Vice President as expected. When she scheduled a meeting to discuss the decision, she was told denying the promotion was not a reflection of her performance, which had "been amazing," and that she "knocked everything out of the park workwise." It was, however, "interpersonal issues," specifically her raising concerns about gendered dynamics at C3.ai, that caused them to withhold the promotion. The more junior male coworkers who habitually undermined her were, in fact, both promoted. Soon after Dr. Noorbaloochi replied that denying her the promotion seemed like retaliation, a campaign was initiated to collect negative feedback that would discredit her work so they could ultimately terminate her under the guise of "performance-based reasons."

C3.ai is recognized as a pioneer in enterprise AI. However, the company's founder and longtime CEO stepped down this month for health reasons and there was a significant revenue drop in the most recent fiscal quarter. In the past month, they have seen a 33% decline in stock and investors are on high alert. As the company rushes to mediate these disruptions, both internally and through PR, it is imperative that Dr. Noorbaloochi's story is not disregarded or pushed to the side.

Statement from Attorney Meredith A. Firetog:

"It is no secret that the tech world is rife with discrimination against women. What makes C3's actions particularly troubling is their decision to double down on such behavior against our client, rather than seize the opportunity to change its culture once concerns were raised. At this pivotal moment in company history, C3.ai would be wise to recognize that ignoring systemic bias will only reinforce their instability."

Statement from Dr. Sharareh Noorbaloochi:

"I am seeking accountability from C3.ai on behalf of myself and the many women who have been undermined in the notoriously male-dominated tech field. I want to encourage other women to never settle for mistreatment. You are not alone, and you have options."

The full Noorbaloochi v. C3.ai, Inc., Nikhil Krishnan, and Henrik Ohlsson complaint may be found [here](#).

For any questions, please reach out to attorney Meredith A. Firetog (mfiretog@wigdorlaw.com) or Director of Marketing Tess Neudeck (tneudeck@wigdorlaw.com).