

# Wigdor LLP Represents Former Producer In EEOC Charge Of Discrimination Alleging Rampant Sexism At TMZ And TooFab

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On August 25, 2020, Wigdor LLP filed a Charge of Discrimination with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission alleging that celebrity gossip website TMZ and its related pop culture site TooFab have fostered a toxic and misogynistic culture under the leadership of TMZ's founder Harvey Levin. The Charge was filed on behalf of Bernadette Zilio, former on-camera talent at *TMZ on TV* and former Associate Producer at TooFab.

TMZ and TooFab, which are both owned and operated by EHM Productions Inc. ("EHM") and Warner Bros. are among several television and online media programs operated under the Warner Bros.' subsidiary Telepictures — including *The Ellen DeGeneres Show*. EHM and Warner Bros. are both named as Respondents in the EEOC Charge, along with Mr. Levin, TooFab Managing Editor Shyam Dodge, and TooFab Senior Producer Ross McDonagh.

As set forth in the attached EEOC Charge, Ms. Zilio held various roles at TMZ and TooFab from 2015 to 2020. As alleged, Ms. Zilio and her female colleagues were routinely subjected to rampant misogynistic treatment at EHM, which they described as a **"boys' club," "100% a bro fest"** and a **"[f]reaking frat house."** Ms. Zilio alleges that female employees at TMZ and TooFab were often belittled and abused, held to more stringent standards than their male colleagues, excluded from business and social interactions in which only men participated, denied advancement opportunities and retaliated against for complaining about gender discrimination.

Ms. Zilio alleges that she filed multiple complaints of discrimination on behalf of herself and her female colleagues (which included complaints about Mr. McDonagh's sexist and offensive articles being published on the TooFab website) that not only fell on deaf ears but were also met with retaliatory discipline and abuse. Incredibly, as alleged, Ms. Zilio was terminated within a few days of Warner Bros. and EHM's Human Resources telling her that it rejected her complaints of gender discrimination and instead accepted the excuses that her male supervisors gave for this differential treatment. Though Ms. Zilio had just been given a significant merit-based raise for her work a few months earlier, as alleged, she was fired directly after she complained about discrimination.

The EEOC Charge further alleges that Warner Bros. and EHM continued to retaliate against Ms. Zilio even after she was terminated. When Ms. Zilio raised complaints that her termination was retaliatory, Warner Bros. and EHM threatened to sue her if she went public with her allegations — a clear attempt to intimidate her into silence.

NEW: [@TMZ](#) and [@TooFab](#) have fostered a toxic and misogynistic workplace culture under the leadership of [#HarveyLevin](#), as alleged in an EEOC Charge of Discrimination filed today by ex-employee Bernadette Zilio.

<https://t.co/qTwno99KMu>

– Wigdor LLP (@WigdorLaw) [August 25, 2020](#)

Ms. Zilio is represented by Wigdor LLP Partner [David E. Gottlieb](#).

Statement from David E. Gottlieb:

“The only way to fix a toxic work environment is to truly encourage employees to speak up and provide a genuinely effective avenue to raise concerns. Ms. Zilio’s experience demonstrates the exact opposite approach at Warner Bros. and EHM Productions where Ms. Zilio was shunned after she first complained, fired after she complained a second time, and then threatened if she dared to speak publicly about her experiences.”

[Read the Full EEOC Charge Here](#)

#### **The New York Times**

*“A Former TMZ Host Claims the Gossip Outlet Had a Toxic Workplace”*

August 25, 2020

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*“Former TMZ employee sues site over sexism allegations”*

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#### **Deadline**

*“TMZ’s Harvey Levin & Warner Bros Hit With Discrimination & Retaliation Action Over Outlet’s Alleged “Sexist & Misogynistic” Culture”*

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#### **Law360**

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*"Ex-TMZ Employee Decries Sexism In EEOC Complaint"*

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**Celebrity Insider**

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**Buzzfeed News**

*"TMZ's Newsroom Is A Hotbed For Racism, Misogyny, And Verbal Abuse, Ex-Employees Say"*

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**The Daily Beast**

*"Ex-TMZ Employees Allege 'Toxic Environment' Rife With Bullying"*

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**Buzzfeed News**

*"A Former TMZ Employee Said She Was Fired After Complaining About A Sexist, Toxic Work Environment"*

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**The Daily Beast**

*"Former TMZ Employee Files Discrimination and Retaliation Complaint Over 'Sexist and Misogynistic' Culture"*

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**TheWrap**

*"Former TMZ Employee Says She Was Wrongfully Fired After Complaining About 'Bro Fest' Work Culture"*

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**Law & Crime**

*"TMZ Boss Harvey Levin Accused of Running a Sexist, Misogynistic 'Boys' Club' and 'Frat House' in Lawsuit"*

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**Mediaite**

*"Former and Current TMZ Employees Allege Misogyny, Racism in BuzzFeed News Exposé"*

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