

'SOURCE' OF SEX HARASS

HIP-HOPPIN' MAD: Kim Osorio, ex-editor at The Source, says she was subjected to sexual harassment at the mag.



BAD RAP: David Mays (left) and Ray "Benzino" Scott (center) have been hit with the suit.



Rex Dittman

Lady execs sue hip-hop magazine

By LEONARD GREENE

Two female executives slapped The Source magazine — the "bible" of the hip-hop industry — with sexual-harassment charges yesterday in the latest complaint that a sexist culture plagues the business.

In the federal complaint filed with the U.S. Equal Opportunity Employment Commission, the Source's ex-editor-in-chief and its former president of marketing allege the magazine's owners unlawfully fired them for complaining internally about sexual harassment and gender discrimination at the popular publication.

"I could no longer endure the blatant gender discrimination and harassment, so I spoke up," Kimberly Osorio, the magazine's first female editor, said in a statement.

Her complaint, which she filed jointly with Michelle Joyce, a former marketing vice president, names The Source and its two top execs, CEO and co-owner David Mays and co-owner Raymond "Benzino" Scott, who also is a rap artist.

Scott called the complaint "crazy," and vowed to file a counter-suit.

"We let a man go to hire her [Osorio] to be editor-in-chief," Scott told The Post. "She filed one complaint since she has been here and it came after she was fired. I'm sure you'll see this go away fast."

Joyce and Osorio outlined a host of charges:

■ Scott once said there was "too much estrogen in the room" and said that problems with the magazine stemmed from having "too many women" in charge.

■ Female employees and executives were sexually propositioned and inappropriately touched by male co-workers or subordinates.

■ A number of male associates were allowed to smoke marijuana openly in the office, and kept their positions despite poor job performance.

■ Male employees routinely displayed pictures of women in G-strings despite complaints.

■ A subordinate offered to give Joyce "something to suck on" after seeing her with a lollipop in her mouth. He was not disciplined.

Though his publicist tried to retract an earlier statement, Scott stood by the assertion that Osorio slept around with industry artists.

"We just weren't happy with her work and how she was conducting herself," Scott said. "It just wasn't good for the magazine."

Osorio could not be reached for comment.

"They just gave us another claim for defamation," said the women's lawyer, Kenneth Thompson, a former federal prosecutor who prosecuted the Abner Louima federal civil rights case.

Thompson said the charges against The Source are serious enough to seek federal relief.

"I'm not against hip hop."

Thompson said. "I understand it. But I also understand there have to be rules and standards."

The Source's statement wasn't the only message retracted. Last week Scott announced that he was resigning from the magazine and selling his interest because of fallout from an ongoing feud with rapper Eminem.

A spokeswoman said industry and community leaders, including the Rev. Al Sharpton, convinced him to stay.

The EEOC complaint is the latest salvo in a battle against the male-dominated industry. Last month, Essence, a magazine aimed at African-American women, launched its "Take Back the Music" campaign against sexually degrading lyrics and music videos.

The Source, which competes with XXL and Vibe, sells close to 350,000 magazines every month.