

2 black women sue Fox News Network for alleged racial discrimination

Kevin McCoy, USA TODAY

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Fox News Network has been sued with new allegations the media giant failed to address racial discrimination against two black women who work for the company.

Tichaona Brown and Tabrese Wright sued the news organization Tuesday in a Bronx Supreme Court lawsuit in New York City that charged they and “other dark-skinned employees suffered years-long racial animus” from Judith Slater, a former senior vice president and company controller.

The lawsuit alleged that Slater “ridiculed black employees by mocking stereotyped speech” and forcing them to pronounce the words ‘mother,’ ‘father,’ ‘month’ and ‘ask’ correctly “in front of white employees.”

The former executive also claimed the Black Lives Matter movement is racist, “and wondered what would happen if there was a parallel ‘White Lives Matter’ movement, the lawsuit alleged.

Aware that Wright had three children, Slater asked her if the children “were fathered by the same man,” the lawsuit charged.

Fox for years allegedly allowed Slater to subject minority employees to “a racially hostile work environment without fear of punishment or reprisal.”

“No longer willing to remain silent while Fox treated employees of color as second-class citizens, Ms. Brown and Ms. Wright dared to speak out about the intolerable work environment, including their unequal pay and opportunities for advancement and development as compared to similarly-situated white employees,” the lawsuit charged.

After learning the allegations would be filed in court, the company fired Brown and demoted Wright, the lawsuit charged.

“We are confident that the good men and women of the Bronx will hold Fox accountable for what we believe to be its abhorrent racist conduct reminiscent of the Jim Crow era,” plaintiff attorneys Douglas Wigdor and Jeanne Christensen said in a written statement about the case.

In response, Fox News issued a statement that said: “We take complaints of this nature very seriously and took prompt and effective remedial action before Ms. Brown and Ms. Wright sued in court and even before Ms. Wright complained through her lawyer.”

“There is no place for inappropriate verbal remarks like this at Fox News,” the company statement added. “We are disappointed that this needless litigation has been filed.”

Slater was fired on Feb. 28, Fox said, challenging the lawsuit’s allegation that the dismissal occurred as the case was going to court. Slater could not immediately be reached for comment.

Brown remains a company employee, Fox said. Wright was not demoted, but instead was transferred to a lateral position with the same work title, salary, and benefits, the company said.