

Mom whose child died fired from USA Today over 'negative attitude': suit

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By Alexandra Steigrad

A former ad sales executive at USA Today was cruelly reprimanded for having “a negative attitude” after returning to work following the death of her child, according to a new lawsuit.

In a suit filed in Manhattan federal court on Thursday, Serena Bhaduri said that she returned to work in February of this year after giving birth to a baby boy in November who died a few months later.

Once she was back to work at USA Today, Bhaduri’s supervisor “cruelly accused” her of “having a negative attitude that ... caused her coworkers to suffer low morale.”

The boss behind the allegedly insensitive comment, Estee Cross, then began “micromanaging” Bhaduri, despite the fact that she was named one of USA Today’s top salespersons in 2018, the lawsuit alleged.

Bhaduri asked higher ups if she could report to someone other than Cross, who had admitted that she never managed a pregnant employee before, but the request was ignored, the suit said.

When Cross found out about Bhaduri’s complaints, she “scolded” her and “accused her of insubordination,” the suit alleged.

A few months later, Bhaduri asked human resources if she could take a one-month bereavement leave to grieve her son’s tragic passing.

After the time was granted, Cross “inexplicably” stripped Bhaduri of many of her high revenue clients, including a multimillion-dollar account from media marketing agency Carat Global, the suit said.

Bhaduri’s clients had all been reassigned to “newly hired, single male employees, who did not have children,” the suit said.

When Bhaduri returned in July, Cross and another advertising supervisor, Anna Riddle, began assigning her smaller clients that brought in less money, the suit said.

Things worsened at the end of July when Bhaduri told Cross and Riddle that she was pregnant again.

Within days of that announcement, Cross and Riddle began canceling their work meetings with Bhaduri, the suit said, adding that Bhaduri noticed that her position was posted on LinkedIn soon after.

By Aug. 13, Riddle fired Bhaduri, claiming that she “contributed to a toxic workplace,” and that she “did not take direction well,” according to the lawsuit.

Bhaduri says she was fired because she was pregnant — and also claims that shortly after she left, USA Today fired another pregnant employee from the same understaffed team at the publication.

The lawsuit, which alleges workplace discrimination and retaliation, is seeking damages of an unspecified amount.

USA Today, Riddle and Cross did not respond to The Post’s requests seeking comment.