


MTA ignored white supervisor's assault of Black attorney: suit

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By Clayton Guse

Jan 19, 2021

MTA officials allowed a white supervisor to continue working after he assaulted one of the agency's Black lawyers, a lawsuit filed Tuesday in Manhattan Federal Court claims.

Kellie Walker, who's worked for the Triborough Bridge and Tunnel Authority for 12 years, said in the suit that transit officials have allowed supervisor Victor Muallem to harass and abuse her for more than a year.

Muallem, who works in labor relations at the MTA, "hurled back his arm and physically hit" Walker during an arbitration meeting with several other people present, the suit claims.

The assault followed two other incidents in which Muallem verbally berated Walker, she says in court papers.

Walker reported the incident to police, but Muallem has remained in his supervisory position.

Walker is "expected to work as if nothing ever happened," the suit claims. "She lives in fear of working in the same courtroom as Muallem."

Walker's lawyers suggested Muallem's apparent impunity was racially charged.

"The MTA should not be allowed to sit by and do nothing when a white male supervisor is credibly accused of assaulting a Black female employee, not to mention in the presence of multiple witnesses," said Jeanne Christensen, a partner at Wigdor LLP, the firm representing Walker in the suit.

"We look forward to holding the MTA accountable for this appalling and discriminatory conduct and hope this lawsuit sends a loud message that no woman should ever have to live in fear of being in the same room as her male boss."

MTA officials did not respond to an immediate request for comment.