

Shaila Scott Files Lawsuit Against MediaCo And Emmis Communications Over Dismissal

 vibe.com/news/radio/shaila-scott-mediaco-wbls-lawsuit-1234677074

July 12, 2022

After 30 years, Shaila Scott was fired as radio personality for 107.5 WBLS in New York City on May 9. In a statement shared by Scott and her daughter—fellow media personality Scottie Beam, Scott stated, “Sadly, Mediaco decided not to renew my contract and advised me that ‘the station is going in a different direction.’”

The initial announcement, naturally, warranted outrage among fans and those closest to Scott. However, it appears the relationship between Scott and MediaCo was far worse than expected as the 59-year-old cites that her dismissal was ageist, and violated several New York City and State Human Rights Laws including “the equal pay, anti-discrimination and anti-retaliation provisions of the Equal Pay Act.”

Scott—born Amilee Cattouse—and her legal team at Wigdor LLP and Gilda L. Kramer & Associates, shared the full 12-page complaint against MediaCo and Emmis Communications with VIBE.

According to the document, Scott was allegedly paid “thousands or perhaps even hundreds of thousands of dollars per year less than two comparable male on-air personalities, despite her superior ratings and ability to generate revenue.” She claims that MediaCo withheld her severance unless she promised not to sue the company for sex and age discrimination, including violations of the equal pay laws.

The filed lawsuit also alleges that Scott, 59, was replaced by someone 25 years her junior. With her being the oldest of MediaCo’s weekday, regular, non-syndicated on-air personalities, MediaCo allegedly employed new weekday personalities aged from 33 to 53. Scott also states MediaCo’s managers ridiculed her due to her age. The complaint reads, “In November 2021, Cattouse’s supervisor, Cynthia Smith, told Cattouse, who was assembling a music program, not to create a concert lineup that was ‘too geriatric.’”

She added in the document, “In January 2022, the Digital Director of WBLS and Hot97 commented about ‘old Negro spirituals’ being played for the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday.” Most recently in March 2022, Scott was asked to create a podcast, but a younger employee was asked to record the podcast after Scott “laid the groundwork and prepared to record the podcast [herself].”

Furthermore, Scott claims, “On multiple occasions, MediaCo managers and directors made comments about the Company needing a ‘fresh’ approach—a transparent reference to jettison older employees in favor of younger hires.”

In a statement sent to VIBE, Scott says, “I am shocked and saddened that WBLS decided that when I reached 59, it was time to discard me. I dedicated my career to radio and to the fans that listen, who I will miss greatly. I hope my decision to speak up will shine a light on the realities that women still get paid less than men for the same job and at a certain age, they are no longer valued.”

Valdi Licul, Partner at Wigdor LLP, added, “This is yet another troubling example of the hurdles faced by even the most accomplished women. They are paid less than men who perform the same job and then discarded when they reach a certain age. Thankfully, Ms. Scott is one of the brave women who has decided to fight back.”