

Is It All Over For a Hip-Hop Dynasty

Written by Robert ID1151
Monday, 11 April 2005 03:13 -

Things just keep looking worse and worse for the leading hip-hop / rap magazine; The Source.

First Chief Operating Officer of The Source magazine, Jeremy Miller left and then Ray 'Benzino' Scott announced Friday he was leaving, and now today we receive this news.

Earlier today, two of the highest-ranking former female executives of The Source magazine, the self-proclaimed "Bible of Hip Hop," filed charges of discrimination with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission accusing co-owners David Mays, the

Chief Executive Officer, and Raymond "Benzino" Scott, the Chief Brand Executive, of committing gender discrimination, sexual harassment and unlawful retaliation against women at the Company.

The charges were filed by Kimberly Osorio, who was the first female Editor-in-Chief of The Source, and Michelle Joyce, who was the Vice President of Marketing. According to the charges, female employees were consistently discriminated against on the basis of their gender in favor of male employees, particularly with respect to hiring, promotions, compensation and benefits, working hours and discipline.

The charges also allege that:

- * Raymond "Benzino" Scott has taken virtually complete control over The

Source from David Mays, and has placed many of his male associates from

Boston on the payroll who performed no meaningful work and/or did not

adhere to the same rules, policies and procedures that all female

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employees were required to follow.

* Scott and Mays have fired or forced out of the Company without cause

many competent, dedicated and hardworking female employees and have

replaced them with men.

* David Mays yelled and cursed at female executives at The Source, whereas

he would not treat or talk to comparable male employees in such a

manner.

* Scott and Mays allowed another male employee to openly utter profanities

at Ms. Osorio, degrade her and threaten her with physical violence

without being punished for his actions.

* Women at The Source were repeatedly subjected to degrading acts of

sexual harassment.

* The sexual harassment was so severe and pervasive that the former

Managing Editor at The Source would often hide in her office and avoid

walking through the corridors out of fear of being sexually harassed.

* The Source engaged in a gender-based smear campaign against Hot 97 radio

personality and recording artist Angie Martinez.

"After dedicating five years to The Source, I could no longer endure the blatant gender discrimination and harassment so I spoke up, but it only hurt the situation because I was fired shortly thereafter. Unfortunately, discrimination and harassment in the workplace is very common and now I must speak out for all women who have been victims of this same type of treatment," said Ms. Osorio. "I chose to take a stand for women of the Hip Hop generation and for all women who quietly endure such treatment for fear of retaliation and for those women who have suffered in silence and quietly surrendered," said Ms. Joyce.

"Ms. Osorio and Ms. Joyce have shown extraordinary courage in coming forward, and we will fully vindicate their rights at trial," said Kenneth P. Thompson, their attorney and a former Federal Prosecutor who prosecuted the Abner Louima federal civil rights case. "All women should be treated fairly and with the utmost respect whether they are in the world of Hip Hop or not and we will prove that in this case," said Thompson.

According to the charges, both Ms. Osorio and Ms. Joyce complained about the discriminatory treatment against women at The Source, all to no avail. Instead of taking prompt action to end the discrimination, they allege that Messrs. Scott and Mays unlawfully terminated them despite their outstanding work performance. In fact, Ms. Osorio alleges that she was fired shortly after she refused to give in to Scott's and Mays' repeated demands that she rescind an email that she sent to Human Resources complaining about the unlawful conduct.

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