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Ex-WXYZ Reporter Tara Edwards Settles Sexual Harassment Suit Involving Anchor

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Ex-WXYZ reporter Tara Edwards has reached an out-of-court settlement in her \$100-million lawsuit that alleged she was "constructively discharged" from the station after repeatedly complaining about being sexually harassed by then-anchor Malcom Maddox. Terms of the agreement were not disclosed.

In March 2018, hours after filing the suit in federal court against the station and its parent company Scripps Media, Maddox was suspended, and a short time later, terminated.

Edwards' suit alleged a pattern of harassment and a lax response by management. The case was officially dismissed on Thursday, according to court records.

A constructive discharge means that an employee resigns as a result of the employer creating a hostile work environment.

Since it's not considered truly voluntary, it is, in effect regarded as a termination. She worked at the station from June 2011 to December 2016.

Edward's lawyers Michael N. Hanna and Geoffrey N. Fieger declined to comment on the case. Thomas J. Davis, who represented the station and the parent company, Scripps Media, Inc., said he had no comment and hung up immediately after. Attempts to reach Edwards and Maddox for comment were unsuccessful.

In a statement after filing the suit in 2018, she said:

From the beginning, all I ever wanted was for my name to be cleared. All I ever wanted was for Mr. [Malcom] Maddox to admit the vile, vicious and nasty rumors were not true. The rumors continue to be prevalent at WXYZ to this day.



1Tara Edwards

The lawsuit alleged that Maddox's "harassing behavior was pervasive and occurred on a regular basis." It also alleged that the station promoted Maddox after Edwards complained that the anchor repeatedly sexual harassed her and spread false rumors about her.

It specifically alleged that Maddox:

Made multiple efforts to kiss Edwards on the face and mouth at work.

Sent written correspondence to Edwards where he called her "little girl" and told her that she has not "met anyone like (Maddox) and that extends further than you can possibly imagine."

Frequently asked Edwards to engage in unwanted and unsolicited sexual acts that she found to be deviant and perverse. The sexual propositions included asking: (a) if he could spit in Ms. Edwards's mouth during sexual activity; and (b) if he could urinate on Ms. Edwards during sexual activity.

Sent Edwards written correspondence that expressed his desire to engage in sexual activity with her, stating he would "rock [Edwards'] fucking world" and asked her if she was "ready for the physical challenge" of having sex with him.

Forced Edwards to view sexually explicit pictures and videos, including: (a) showing Edwards a video of his girlfriend "popping grapes" out of her vagina, and showing Edwards a nude picture of a female colleague she worked with at WXYZ while Edwards and Maddox were anchoring the weekend morning news.

Repeatedly proposed to send Edwards pictures of his penis so she could "judge it on a scale of 1 to 10." After Plaintiff rejected the propositions to accept delivery of pictures of his penis, Maddox asked Edwards to look at a "work email" on his cell phone that turned out to be a picture of his penis.

The suit states that Maddox continued to target Edwards, a University of Michigan graduate, with harassing behavior after repeated rejections of his advances.

"On approximately January 23, 2015, Plaintiff was informed by coworkers that Mr. Maddox had been spreading false and perverse sexual rumors about her "for years," the suit states.

The false rumors, the suit alleged, included Maddox's telling co-workers that he was having an affair with Edwards and was engaging in deviant sex acts with her.

On Jan. 28, 2015, she filed a complaint with the station. An internal investigation found that other female employees were also subject to sexual harassment from Maddox.

The suit states that the station confirmed the sexual harassment, but decided to only discipline, and not fire him. Afterwards, Maddox was promoted to morning anchor while Edwards was moved to the day shift.

Afterwards, the suit alleged Maddox continued to harass female employees.



2Malcom Maddox and Tara Edwards

"After the complaint and investigation, Mr. Maddox continued to spread rumors of a sexual nature and attack the character of Ms. Edwards to WXYZ-TV employees and staff," the suit alleged.

On December 31, 2016, she was "constructively discharged."

Edwards' LinkedIn page lists here as a self-employed communications manager in the greater Detroit area.