

CITY OF NEW YORK
COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS

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In the Matter of the Complaint of:

VERONICA MCILRAITH,

Complainant,

Verified Complaint

-against-

Case No. _____

WEGMAN PARTNERS, LLC, COLBY WEGMAN, and
SCOTT LEGG,

Respondents.

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Complainant Veronica McIlraith (“Ms. McIlraith”), by and through her attorneys Emery Celli Brinckerhoff & Abady LLP, files this Verified Complaint against Respondents Wegman Partners, LLC, Colby Wegman, and Scott Legg, and alleges the following:

PRELIMINARY STATEMENT

1. This is a sexual harassment case. For two and a half years at the legal recruiting firm Wegman Partners, Complainant Veronica McIlraith was subjected to an astounding barrage of groping and sexually explicit and derogatory comments, texts, emails, and signs by her boss, Wegman’s Chairman of Partner Recruiting, Scott Legg. Just a few examples of the nearly constant sexual harassment Ms. McIlraith endured include: Mr. Legg groped her breasts, forced her to touch him, said he wanted to “suck on her boobies,” humped and licked her office door, and asked her to “contribute” to a drawing of an ejaculating penis, which Mr. Legg then hung in the office, where it remained for months. It was still hanging there when CEO Colby Wegman visited the New York office this summer—but he did not even comment on it, and it was left hanging there.

2. When Ms. McILraith refused to submit to Mr. Legg's sexual harassment, he became violent. He called her a "bitch," threw furniture at her office, took work and commissions away from her, and threatened to discipline and fire her.

3. Mr. Legg regularly appeared to be drunk and high on cocaine in the office. Sometimes he passed out in the office hallway; other times he lashed out at Ms. McILraith.

4. Ms. McILraith was scared of Mr. Legg's violent behavior and desperate to keep her job. Mr. Legg had made it clear that he was personal friends with CEO Colby Wegman, he was the company's highest-earner, and he had the power to hire and fire her as well as decrease her commissions.

5. When Ms. McILraith finally reported the sexual harassment to CEO Colby Wegman, he sided with Mr. Legg and forced Ms. McILraith out of the company.

THE PARTIES

6. Complainant Veronica McILraith received her law degree from Touro College in 2010 and was hired at Wegman Partners as a Managing Director in 2014. She resides in New York City. At all times relevant to the allegations here, Ms. McILraith was employed in Respondent Wegman Partners' New York City office.

7. Respondent Wegman Partners, LLC is legal recruiting company with an office at 350 Fifth Avenue, Suite 7500, New York, New York 10118, incorporated in Texas as a limited liability company, and with its headquarters at 1700 Pacific Avenue, Suite 4900, Dallas, Texas 75201.

8. Respondent Colby Wegman is the Chief Executive Officer and owner of Wegman Partners, with an office at 350 Fifth Avenue, Suite 7500, New York, New York 10118, and an office at 1700 Pacific Avenue, Suite 4900, Dallas, Texas 75201.

9. Respondent Scott Legg is the Chairman of Partner Recruiting at Wegman Partners. At all times relevant to the allegations here, Mr. Legg was employed in Respondent Wegman Partners' New York City office at 350 Fifth Avenue, Suite 7500, New York, New York 10118.

FACTUAL STATEMENT

10. Wegman Partners is a legal recruiting firm that describes itself on its website as “a leading national full-service legal search firm, handling associate, partner, group, contract and support staff placements with top international AmLaw 200 and midsize law firm clients as well as in-house placements with Fortune 500 corporations across numerous industries and sectors.”

11. Ms. McIlraith was hired as a Managing Director at Wegman Partners at the end of 2013.

12. Mr. Legg joined the company around the same time.

13. Ms. McIlraith was told that Mr. Legg's approval was required in order for her to be hired.

14. She started work at Wegman's New York City office in January 2014.

15. Ms. McIlraith excelled at her job. For example, in September 2017, she was ranked in the top five company earners and rewarded with a bonus vacation. In March 2016, she was ranked in the top ten earners and was also rewarded with a company trip.

Mr. Legg Exerts His Power over Ms. McILraith

16. Mr. Legg made it clear from the beginning that he was Ms. McILraith's superior, even though, at the start, they nominally had the same title. He told her he had an "inside track" with CEO Colby Wegman because of the high deliverables he brought to the company and because of his friendship with Mr. Wegman. He also said he was in talks to become equity partners with Mr. Wegman, that he had the power to hire and fire Ms. McILraith and the other New York City office employees, and that he could discipline her if he was displeased with her job performance. In 2016, Mr. Legg assumed the title of "Chairman of Partner Recruiting."

17. Mr. Legg also promised Ms. McILraith that if she worked with him, he would reward her with exclusive searches that would significantly increase her bottom line, which was heavily driven by commissions. He made it clear that any disagreement with him would drive down her commissions and her income.

Mr. Legg Subjects Ms. McILraith to a Barrage of Sexual Harassment

18. Almost immediately, Mr. Legg began inviting Ms. McILraith out to lunch on a daily basis. During these lunches, Mr. Legg would drink heavily and sit inappropriately close to Ms. McILraith. Ms. McILraith was deeply uncomfortable but felt obliged to attend these lunches.

19. Over time, Mr. Legg escalated his harassment.

20. On a regular basis, both in person and via text, Mr. Legg called Ms. McILraith "babe," "baby," "honey," or "hon."

21. Mr. Legg wrote to Ms. McILraith: "I love you."

22. Mr. Legg's harassment was physical too.

23. Mr. Legg frequently appeared to be inebriated and high on cocaine at the office.

24. At times, he has passed out in the office.



25. At other times, his apparent drug and alcohol abuse made his behavior even more violent, erratic, and terrifying to Ms. McILraith.

26. On July 21, 2015, Mr. Legg aggressively grabbed at Ms. McILraith's breasts in the office kitchen and tried to open her sweater. Ms. McILraith ran in to her office, jarred and scared by the violent and unexpected attack.

27. On July 29, 2015, Mr. Legg became enraged when Ms. McILraith refused to go to lunch with him and called her a "bitch." He talked about jerking off in front of her and of forcing her to jerk him off. He yelled about having his "dick sucked" and pressing his head into women's "tits."

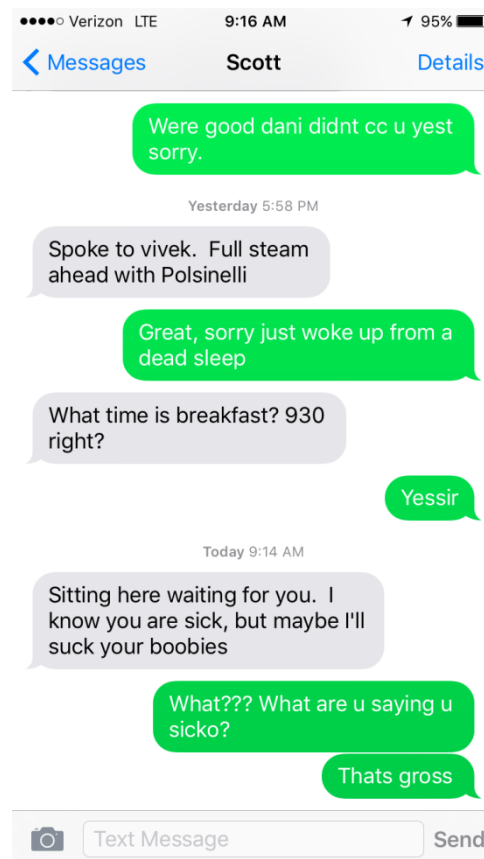
28. On August 10, 2015, Mr. Legg humped Ms. McILraith's office door, licked it and, showed her his tongue.

29. On August 11, 2015, Mr. Legg stood outside Ms. McILraith's office and pretended to "jerk off" using his umbrella.

30. On August 12, 2015, Mr. Legg yelled to Ms. McILraith, who has the office next door to his, that he was "rubbing his clit" and that a male employee was underneath his desk "blowing" him. Ms. McILraith was disgusted and worried her clients on the phone could hear these comments.

31. On August 26, 2015, Mr. Legg told Ms. McILraith that the way to convince a partner to take an interview was to "play with his balls."

32. On November 3, 2015, Mr. Legg texted Ms. McILraith that he was waiting for her at a client meeting and "maybe I'll suck on your boobies."



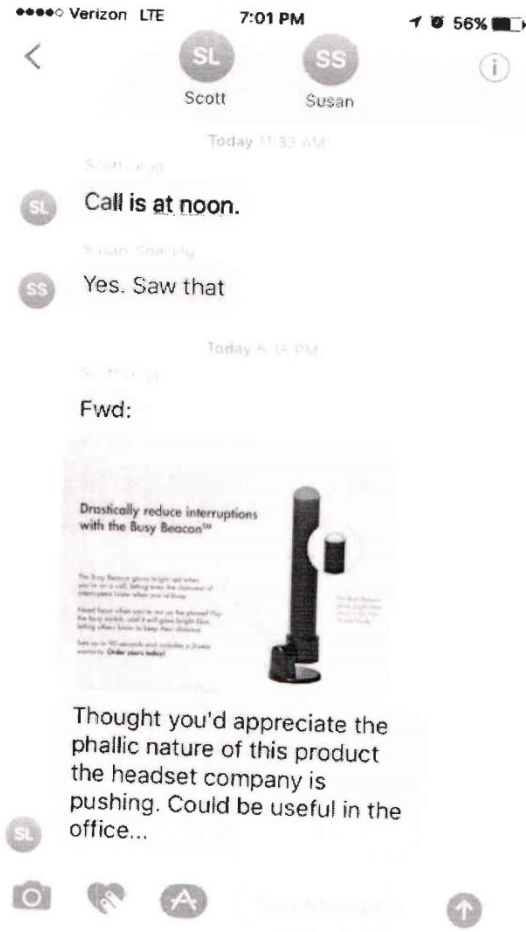
33. Since the summer of 2016, Ms. McILraith has been the only female employee in the New York City office. Prior to that, she was forced to hear Mr. Legg refer to her female co-worker as a “fat bitch” who was “disgusting” to him. On one occasion, Mr. Legg screamed so violently at this other woman that Ms. McILraith hid under her desk because she was so scared.

34. In the summer of 2016, Ms. McILraith began refusing Mr. Legg’s insistent invitations to attend boozy lunches with him. This enraged Mr. Legg. He began to call her incessantly on her cell phone after hours, and he escalated his campaign of harassment.

35. On September 20, 2016, Mr. Legg asked Ms. McILraith if she got a “pap smear” when she refused to go to lunch because she had an appointment.

36. On October 5, 2016, Mr. Legg came back from another lunch, apparently drunk, and accused Ms. McILraith of not being his “best friend” anymore and said she had “changed.” He demanded that she touch the side of his pants, which he had ripped. When she refused, he grabbed her hand and forcibly pressed it against him.

37. On December 7, 2016, Mr. Legg emailed Ms. McILraith and another female employee (who works outside the New York office) with a photo of a headset and wrote: “Thought you’d appreciate the phallic nature of this product...could be useful in the office.”



38. On December 12, 2016, Mr. Legg became irate when Ms. McILraith refused to join him for drinks during the work day, even after he promised he would share new searches with her if she came, and told her he had “had it with this attitude.” After drinking, he came back to the office to scream at her because she “would have nothing without him,” or words to that effect.

39. On January 6, 2017, Mr. Legg barged into Ms. McILraith’s office to invite her to lunch. He had white powder on his nose and appeared to be high on cocaine. He called Ms. McILraith “babe” and “honey” at least half a dozen times.

40. On February 27, 2017, Mr. Legg was angry with Ms. McILraith after she expressed disappointment that he showed up late for a client call. He told her to “go fuck

herself” and said he was “tired of her lip.” He then told her she was fired and should leave. Ms. McILraith reported this incident to Mr. Wegman, and Mr. Legg later sent her an apology email in which he blamed her for “being negative” and told her “your problem with me needs to stop. If you would just be open and communicative with me, like you used to be, we wouldn’t be fighting.”

41. On March 15, 2017, Mr. Legg came back from lunch drunk and began screaming at Ms. McILraith for having her office door shut. He told her she had to open the door or he would punch it.

42. On March 31, 2017, Mr. Legg came up to Ms. McILraith’s office door and asked if she wanted to see a picture. He then showed her a picture of a hand-drawn ejaculating penis. He asked if she wanted to “contribute” to the drawing. She told him it was disgusting and asked him to take it away. Instead, he taped it up on his office door. That picture was still hanging there when Mr. Wegman visited the office in August 2017. Ms. McILraith had to walk by it every day for months.



43. On another recent occasion, Mr. Legg stuck a sign up on his glass office wall (facing out into the hallway) that said “Suck my balls!!!” That sign remained hanging in the office for over four months.



44. On May 3, 2017, Mr. Legg emailed Ms. McIlraith to complain about the “change” in her behavior and her lack of “camaraderie.” He threatened her: “Please think hard about your goals and aspirations going forward and I will gladly help you achieve them, but if you continue to close us out, it will remain awkward.”

45. On May 15, 2017, Ms. McIlraith heard Mr. Legg start yelling in his office that he “wouldn’t be happy today unless someone got beat up and he saw blood.” He then screamed: “I don’t care about that bitch.” Ms. McIlraith was the only woman in the office and believed he was speaking about her. Her concerns mounted when Mr. Legg picked up a heavy office chair and threw it at her office door. Ms. McIlraith was terrified.

46. On another occasion, Mr. Legg threw his chair against the wall separating his office from Ms. McILraith's; the impact was so violent it caused the pictures hanging on Ms. McILraith's wall to fall and break.

47. On May 17, 2017, Mr. Legg again became enraged with Ms. McILraith because she refused to go to lunch with him. He threw an office chair at her closed door and then began humping her glass office door while making sexual noises. Later that day, Mr. Legg began screaming about "sucking dick" and "body slamming" someone. A co-worker told Ms. McILraith she should close her door for her own safety.

48. On June 6, 2017, Mr. Legg was singing "rap" in his office about "bitches and snitches." He increased his volume when Ms. McILraith walked by his office to get to the kitchen, targeting her directly with his offensive lyrics.

49. On June 23, 2017, Mr. Legg paced up and down in front of Ms. McILraith's door, screaming "come and get me in my anal, anal, anal, anal."

50. Ms. McILraith documented many of these instances of harassment in contemporaneous notes, in the form of emails she sent to herself on the day of each incident (with date and time stamp).

51. On September 7, 2017, Mr. Legg came into Ms. McILraith's office. He was slurring his words and appeared to be drunk. He told her she would no longer be part of the cold calls sourced by Jeff Barken, their most valuable caller who helped them identify clients. This decision would significantly decrease Ms. McILraith's commissions and income. When she asked if her performance was the reason for this demotion, Mr. Legg said her work product was "great" (and in fact Ms. McILraith had just been named a top five earner in the company). Mr.

Legg explained he was taking the caller away for “personal reasons” such as Ms. McILraith not going out to lunch with him and closing her office door.

Ms. McILraith Reports the Harassment to CEO Colby Wegman; He Responds by Forcing Her Out

52. Ms. McILraith reported the September 7th incident to CEO Colby Wegman and explained that she believed Mr. Legg was retaliating against her for her refusal to submit to the campaign of sexual harassment he had inflicted on her for two years.

53. Ms. McILraith shared the details of her harassment with Mr. Wegman.

54. After a so-called investigation into Ms. McILraith’s allegations, Mr. Wegman and Wegman Partners announced that Mr. Legg had been suspended for five days—which would have no effect on his earnings, which are based solely on commissions—and would be sent to sexual harassment training. Mr. Wegman and Wegman Partners then demanded that Ms. McILraith return to work just a few feet away from Mr. Legg under dramatically less favorable working conditions, including no cold caller to source candidates and clients for her and without the files (and associated commissions) she had been working on before she raised her allegations of sexual harassment, resulting in the loss of hundreds of thousands of dollars in commissions.

55. Ms. McILraith is terrified of Mr. Legg, who was violent and threatening with her even before she complained of sexual harassment. Mr. Legg, Mr. Wegman, and Wegman Partners made it clear that they would only retaliate against Ms. McILraith and make it impossible for her to earn a living.

56. The working conditions Ms. McILraith was forced to endure at Wegman Partners were intolerable. No reasonable person could have returned to work there after what she went through. Wegman’s demands that she return to work just a few feet away from Mr. Legg, and

accept a loss of the commissions she had in the pipeline, were openly retaliatory and calculated to force Ms. McILraith out of her job.

Ms. McILraith Has Been Emotionally and Financially Damaged

57. Ms. McILraith had a panic attack just thinking about going back to that office.

58. This two-and-a-half year barrage of harassment and aggression has seriously damaged Ms. McILraith emotionally. She is fearful, anxious, and traumatized. The contemporaneous notes she began keeping after Mr. Legg tried to grab her breasts (comprised of emails she sent herself, with date and time stamp) document that she felt “scared,” “jarred,” “nervous,” and “humiliated.”

59. On May 15, 2017, for example, she wrote: “I feel threatened like he is going to hit me...this is so so scary ...shaking as I am writing this.”

60. On June 12, 2017, she wrote: “as always the only women in this office it is scary – I just have to think of how I wold [sic] protect myself or how quickly I would dial 911 for help if Scott ever jumped me...”

61. Ms. McILraith was previously prescribed anxiety medication, making her more vulnerable to this abuse, and she has had to increase the amount of anxiety medication she is taking.

62. She has panic attacks and has difficulty breathing.

63. Working with Mr. Legg had already cost Ms. McILraith commissions and negatively affected her income. While Mr. Legg held out the enticement of lucrative partnerships as a way of subjugating Ms. McILraith, he ultimately lashed out and retaliated against Ms. McILraith when she refused to submit to a sexual relationship with him. For example, Mr. Legg removed valuable callers from her, refused to allow her to speak to partners

when he was not present (and he was frequently absent without explanation), forced her to share her commissions with him even when she did all the work on the file, and prevented her from making calls by screaming obscenities and lewd comments so loudly she feared clients would hear him and by harassing and threatening her to the point of forcing her to leave the office. On September 7, Mr. Legg removed Ms. McILraith's most valuable caller from her.

64. Then, in retaliation for complaining about Mr. Legg's harassment, Wegman forced Ms. McILraith out of her job, so she has no income at all and no foreseeable prospects of obtaining a new job.

CONCLUSION

65. Respondents' conduct, described above, constitutes unlawful discrimination against Complainant because of her gender, sexual harassment in the workplace, and a hostile work environment, in violation of N.Y.C. Admin. Code § 8-107(1). Ms. McILraith was discriminated against on the basis of her gender: she was the only woman in Wegman's New York City office and none of the other male employees were subjected to this sort of treatment by Mr. Legg. In addition, the groping, the many sexist and derogatory remarks Mr. Legg made to Ms. McILraith, as well as the violent manner in which he reacted to her refusal to go drinking with him or submit to his sexual harassment, constitute unlawful sexual harassment and created a hostile work environment.

66. Respondent Mr. Legg's retaliation against Ms. McILraith over the years (including removing Ms. McILraith's most valuable caller, denying her partners and calls, and trying to fire her for not acquiescing to sexual harassment) and Respondent Mr. Wegman's and Wegman Partners' retaliation in forcing Ms. McILraith out of her job after she reported Mr. Legg's discrimination and harassment all constitute unlawful retaliation, in violation of N.Y.C. Admin. Code § 8-107(7).

67. Wegman Partners is liable under the NYCHRL for allowing Mr. Legg to sexually harass and discriminate against his female subordinate, Ms. McILraith. In addition, the sexual harassment was so overt and so pervasive, that Wegman Partners knew or should have known of it—yet took no steps to protect Ms. McILraith. Wegman Partners is also liable for retaliating against Ms. McILraith and forcing her out of her job after she reported the sexual harassment to Mr. Wegman and his attorney.

68. Mr. Legg and Mr. Wegman are also personally liable under the NYCHRL for their individual actions—Mr. Legg for his harassment and discrimination, and Mr. Wegman for his acquiescence in Mr. Legg’s conduct and failure to protect Ms. McILraith from it. N.Y.C. Admin. Code § 8-107(13).

69. As a result of Respondents’ discrimination against Complainant on the basis of her gender, Complainant is entitled to compensatory damages and to attorneys’ fees and costs under N.Y.C. Admin. Code § 8-120(a).

70. Respondents’ actions in violation of the New York City Human Rights Law were intentional, done with malice, and/or showed deliberate, willful, wanton, and reckless indifference to Complainant’s civil rights, for which she is entitled to an award of punitive damages.

71. Complainant has not filed any other civil or administrative action alleging an unlawful discriminatory practice with respect to the allegations of discrimination which are the subject of this complaint.

Dated: October 25, 2017
New York, New York

Respectfully submitted,

EMERY CELLI BRINCKERHOFF
& ABADY LLP

By:



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Attorneys for Complainant Veronica McIlraith

VERIFICATION

STATE OF NEW YORK)
) ss.:
COUNTY OF NEW YORK)

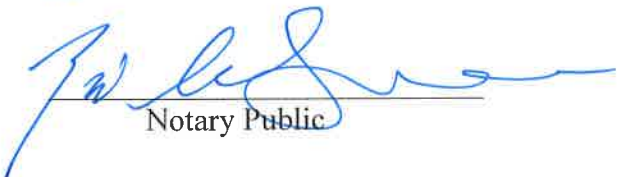
Veronica McIlraith, being sworn states:

I am the complainant in the within action: I have read the foregoing Verified Complaint and know the contents thereof: the same is true to my own knowledge, except as to the matters therein stated to be alleged on information and belief, and as to those matters I believe it to be true.



Veronica McIlraith

Sworn to before me this
25th day of October, 2017



Notary Public

ZOE A. SALZMAN
NOTARY PUBLIC-STATE OF NEW YORK
No. 02SA6225344
Qualified in New York County
My Commission Expires July 19, 2018