



  
*In The News*  
**HARASSMENT DISPUTE**  
**By Tony Rizzo and Richard Espinoza**  
**From the Kansas City Star**

**A sexual harassment and discrimination dispute involving TV newsman Stan Cramer and one of his former producers has been resolved.**




**The producer, Lisa Wade McCormick, and station KCTV Channel 5 last week reached an agreement after McCormick filed federal and state complaints alleging she was the victim of sexual harassment and discrimination by the "Call for Action" reporter and his station.**




**Neither McCormick nor her lawyer nor a spokeswoman for Meredith Corp., which owns KCTV, would discuss the agreement. Cramer could not be reached for comment.**




**But the allegations were detailed in the complaints filed in late December with the Kansas Human Rights Commission and the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.**



**McCormick's complaint with the Kansas Human Rights Commission alleged that she was discriminated against because of her gender, that there was a hostile work environment for women – specifically pregnant women – and that she was unjustly punished after she became pregnant.**



**Over 11 years at the station, McCormick said in the complaint, Cramer made "repeated comments" of sexual nature. "Look at the headlights on that woman," Cramer once said, the complaint alleged. The complaint also alleges that Cramer once grabbed McCormick's buttocks.**



**She also alleged that she was unjustly punished by station management after she became pregnant and went on maternity leave last year.**

**In the complaint, she said she was not allowed to return to work part-time after her daughter was born, even though station management initially had been receptive to the idea.**

Another female producer had been allowed to come back to work part-time. In 1998, when that producer went on early maternity leave, McCormick's document alleges that Cramer told her, "Lisa you know what that means, you can't get pregnant."

McCormick's complaint alleged that Cramer also told her that her husband had better be wearing a condom. In addition, the complaint alleged, station manager John Rose said, "This means you and Dave can't have sex."

The other former producer mentioned to comment to *The Kansas City Star*, saying only she was "treated very fairly" by Meredith in how her pregnancy was handled.

All such complaints by law must be filed with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission before discrimination lawsuit can be filed. In July the EEOC issued what is known as a right-to-sue letter, which gave McCormick the green light to file a lawsuit, and ended its investigation into her allegations.

The commission issues right-to-sue letters regardless of whether investigators find merit to a complaint. McCormick had 90 days to file. No lawsuit had been filed when her lawyer, Brendan Donelon, told *The Star* last week that agreement had been reached but that he could not discuss it or the complaint.

Attempts last week and this week to reach Cramer by phone at his office in Fairway and through co-workers were unsuccessful. The station said he was on vacation, and his voice mail message said he would return later this month. No one answered the door at his home Wednesday.

Kathi Woods, spokesperson for Meredith Corp., which owns KCTV, declined to comment. Woods said it was against company policy for her to comment on the situation because it is a personnel matter. She declined to say whether there was an agreement or even if the company was seeking a resolution.

"It's out of courtesy to all the parties involved," Woods said. She said she was speaking on behalf of a lawyer for Meredith, Cramer's co-workers and Rose, all to whom *The Star* had reached or tried to reach by telephone.

In July, after the EEOC issued the right-to-sue letter, Woods

said the company was pleased that the commission did so without making a finding that the allegations had merit.

McCormick alleged in her complaint with the Kansas Human Rights Commission that in the job performance review she received in March 1999 the company was "openly critical of how my pregnancy and its related illness negatively impacted 'Call for Action.'"

A copy of the review was attached to her complaint. Under the category for factors that favorably or adversely influenced the evaluation, it said that "illnesses and pregnancies have affected the overall output of "Call for Action."

Mike Sanders, a former assistant news director and "Call for Action" producer, told *The Star* earlier this year that McCormick confided in him at the time about the alleged grabbing incident. Sanders said he urged her to report the incident to management and said that station management talked to him about her allegations. According to Sanders, another female employee earlier had made a similar accusation against Cramer, and that incident also was reported to management.

That woman, who no longer lives in the Kansas City area, was contacted by *The Star* and confirmed that she brought an incident to management's attention, but she declined to discuss the situation. She asked that her name not be used. Sanders said he also took part in management discussions of that incident.

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