

Transgender B. Scott Claims Gender Discrimination, Sues BET for \$2.5M

Transgender celebrity B. Scott has filed a multimillion-dollar lawsuit against Black Entertainment Television (BET) Networks and its parent company, Viacom, for discrimination.

Identified as Brandon Sessoms in the lawsuit, Scott alleges the television network discriminated against him while he was working as a style stage correspondent for the BET Awards pre-show on June 30 by forcing him to dress more masculine.

According to the suit, Scott is an “openly gay TV and Internet personality, advice columnist and entrepreneur [who] identifies his gender identity as transgender. B. Scott’s gender identity is separate and distinct from his sexual orientation.”

Scott was wearing flowing pants with a matching tunic and high heels at the start of the show—an outfit he claims was approved by producers. But he says after the first segment, they forced him to ditch the feminine image.

“After his first segment, B. Scott was literally yanked backstage and told that he ‘wasn’t acceptable,’” the lawsuit alleges. “B. Scott was told to mute the makeup, pull back his hair and he was forced to remove his clothing and take off his heels; thereby completely changing his gender identity and expression. They forced him to change into solely men’s clothing different from the androgynous style of dress he’s used to, which he was uncomfortable with.”

Though he did change into a blue blazer, slacks and loafers for the second segment of the pre-show, Scott claims he was still replaced by another host. He is seeking \$2.5 million in

damages and an apology from the network.

“Let’s be clear—I’m suing BET and Viacom for a true public apology and to be fairly remunerated for the time lost, humiliation and emotional distress this entire situation has put me through,” he said in a statement.

BET and Viacom have not responded to the lawsuit, but the network did issue an apology on July 2.

“BET Networks embraces global diversity in all its forms and seeks to maintain an inclusive workforce and a culture that values all perspectives and backgrounds,” the statement read. “The incident with B. Scott was a singular one with a series of unfortunate miscommunications from both parties. We regret any unintentional offense to B. Scott and anyone within the LGBT community and we seek to continue embracing all gender expressions.”

Scott, however, has rejected the apology.

“While I want nothing more than to put this incident behind me and move on with my life,” Scott said in a press release, “I still wholeheartedly believe that I’m entitled to a true public apology. BET’s non-apology statement added more insult to injury. What happened to me was not a ‘miscommunication’ nor was it ‘unintentional.’ It was wrong.”