



Andrea Garcia <agarcia@norridge80.net>

FOIA Request - 5 ILCS 140/1

Michael Ayele <waacl13@gmail.com>
To: agarcia@norridge80.net
Cc: "Michael Ayele (W)" <waacl13@gmail.com>

Wed, Apr 29, 2026 at 3:39 AM

W (AACL) Date.: Wednesday, April 29, 2026
Michael A. Ayele
P.O.Box 20438
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
E-mail: waacl13@gmail.com ; waacl1313@gmail.com ; waacl42913@gmail.com

Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Request

Hello,

This is Michael A. Ayele sending this message, though I now go by W (and I prefer to be referred to as such). I am writing this letter for the purpose of filing a FOIA request with Norridge School District 80. The bases for this non-commercial records request are [1] the decision of the United States

government to designate the month of April as "*Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM)*"^[i] and [2] the December 19, 2018 Boston Globe article written by Eliza Dushku about her employment with CBS.^[ii]

I) Requested Records

What I am requesting for prompt disclosure are records in your possession detailing your discussions about [1] Denim Day as an event that (i) is very much intricately linked with Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM); (ii) is held on the last Wednesday of the month of April; (iii) has historically served to shed a spotlight on women who have encountered chauvinism, misogyny and sexism; (iv) has historically served to shed a spotlight on women who were blamed for provoking incidents of sexual harassment, sexual assault and/or rape they have fallen victim to; (v) has historically served to shed a spotlight on women who have had their complaints of sexual harassment, sexual assault and/or rape relegated to "*misunderstandings*;" [2] the manner in which your school district has commemorated Denim Day/SAAM beginning April 2009; [3] Eliza Dushku as an internationally renowned woman who had on (or around) December 19, 2018 recognized that (i) she had signed an employment contract with CBS to feature as a main character in the TV series called "*Bull*;" (ii) she was sexually harassed by Michael Weatherly shortly after beginning to work at CBS on the TV series known as "*Bull*;" (iii) the sexual harassment she experienced at CBS was captured on video; (iv) the sexual harassment she experienced at CBS was relegated to a "*misunderstanding*" which was attributed to her "*humor deficit*;" (v) she is blacklisted from working in Hollywood because she filed a complaint of employment discrimination that has had implications for Title VII of the 1964 and 1991 Civil Rights Act; [4] Michael A. Ayele (a.k.a.) W as a Black Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) Degree graduate of Westminster College (Fulton, Missouri) who (i) has spent 7 (seven) Denim Days/Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM) in the territory of the United States of America (U.S.A) between January 2010 and July 2016; (ii) was contacted by his alma mater in the days leading up to the last Wednesday of the month of April (between 2010 and 2013) to be advised that he should wear Denim clothing in order to show solidarity with women who have experienced sexual violence; (iii) has publicly worn Denim jeans on the last Wednesday of the month of April (between 2010 and 2015) in order to show solidarity with women who have experienced sexual violence; (iv) has witnessed his written publications on matters pertaining to Denim Day/SAAM being subjected to frenzy before they were filtered and distorted by internet search

engines (ISE) such as AOL, Bing/MSN, Google and Yahoo; [5] the decision of ISE such as AOL, Bing/MSN, Google and Yahoo to filter and distort Michael A. Ayele (a.k.a) W written publications by generating unwelcome and unapproved queries such as "*Michael Ayele Denim Day*," "*Michael Ayele Sexual Assault Awareness Month*," "*Michael Ayele Eliza Dushku*," "*Michael Ayele Title VII*," "*Michael Ayele academic background*," "*Michael Ayele FERPA*," "*Michael Ayele VAWA*." [iii]

II) Request for a Fee Waiver and Expedited Processing

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Expedited processing for this request is justified because:

- 1) When designating the month of April 2016 as "*Sexual Assault Awareness Month*," President Barack Obama had recognized that in America's core, there is a "*basic belief in the inherent dignity of every person. Yet, too many women and men of all ages suffer the outrage that is sexual assault, and too often, this crime is not condemned as loudly as it should be. Together, we must stand up and speak out to change the culture that questions the actions of victims, rather than those of their attackers.*"
- 2) Denim Day is an event that (i) is very much intricately linked with Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM); (ii) is held on the last Wednesday of the month of April; (iii) has historically served to shed a spotlight on women who have encountered chauvinism, misogyny and sexism; (iv) has historically served to shed a spotlight on women who were blamed for provoking incidents of sexual harassment, sexual assault and/or rape they have fallen victim to; (v) has historically served to shed a spotlight on women who have had their complaints of sexual harassment, sexual assault and/or rape relegated to "*misunderstandings*."
- 3) The requested records will enable the public to ascertain if your school district has previously commemorated Denim Day/Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM) by taking actions that were in solidarity with women who have fallen victim to sexual violence.
- 4) The requested records will enable the public to ascertain if the employees of your school district were previously encouraged to wear denim clothing on the last Wednesday of the month of April in order to publicly show their condemnation of sexual violence that targets women (because of their gender).
- 5) The requested records will enable the public to ascertain if the students of your school district were previously encouraged to wear denim clothing on the last Wednesday of the month of April in order to publicly show their condemnation of the sexual violence that targets women (because of their gender).
- 6) Michael A. Ayele (a.k.a.) W is a Black Bachelor of Arts (B.A) Degree graduate of Westminster College (Fulton, Missouri) who has spent 7 (seven) Denim Days/SAAM in the territory of the United States of America (U.S.A) between January 2010 and July 2016.
- 7) Michael A. Ayele (a.k.a.) W is a Black B.A. Degree graduate of Westminster College (Fulton, Missouri) who was contacted by his alma mater in the days leading up to the last Wednesday of the month of April (between 2010 and 2013) to be advised that he should wear denim clothing in order to show solidarity with women who have experienced sexual violence.
- 8) Michael A. Ayele (a.k.a.) W is a Black B.A. Degree graduate of Westminster College (Fulton, Missouri) who was contacted by his alma mater in the days leading up to the last Wednesday of the month of April (between 2010 and 2013) to be advised that he should wear denim clothing in order to show solidarity with women who were blamed for provoking incidents of sexual harassment, sexual assault and/or rape they were the victim of.
- 9) Michael A. Ayele (a.k.a.) W is a Black B.A. Degree graduate of Westminster College (Fulton, Missouri) who was contacted by his alma mater in the days leading up to the last Wednesday of the month of April (between 2010 and 2013) to be advised that he should wear denim clothing in order to show solidarity with women who have had their complaints of sexual harassment, sexual assault and/or rape relegated to "*misunderstandings*."
- 10) Michael A. Ayele (a.k.a.) W is a Black B.A. Degree graduate of Westminster College (Fulton, Missouri) who has publicly worn denim jeans on the last Wednesday of the month of April (between 2010 and 2015) in order to show that he condemns violence against girls and women irrespective of their racial backgrounds, their national origins, their religious affiliations, their disability status and/or their age groups.
- 11) Michael A. Ayele (a.k.a.) W is a Black B.A. Degree graduate of Westminster College (Fulton, Missouri) who unequivocally condemns violence committed against girls and women irrespective

of their racial backgrounds, their sexual orientations, their national origins, their religious affiliations, their disability status and/or their age groups.

12) Michael A. Ayele (a.k.a.) W is a Black B.A. Degree graduate of Westminster College (Fulton, Missouri) who was a little bit shocked upon reading Eliza Dushku's December 19, 2018 article wherein she detailed what happened to her during her employment with CBS.

13) Michael A. Ayele (a.k.a.) W is a Black B.A. Degree graduate of Westminster College (Fulton, Missouri) who believes that Eliza Dushku was sexually harassed during her employment with CBS.

14) Michael A. Ayele (a.k.a.) W is a Black B.A. Degree graduate of Westminster College (Fulton, Missouri) who condemns the sexual harassment Eliza Dushku suffered during her employment with CBS.

The public has a compelling and legitimate interest in this information because:

1) Eliza Dushku is an internationally renowned woman who had on (or around) December 19, 2018 recognized that (i) she had signed an employment contract with CBS to feature as a main character in the TV series called "Bull;" (ii) she was sexually harassed by Michael Weatherly shortly after beginning to work at CBS on the TV series known as "Bull;" (iii) the sexual harassment she experienced at CBS was captured on video; (iv) the sexual harassment she experienced at CBS was relegated to a "misunderstanding" which was attributed to her "humor deficit;" (v) she is blacklisted from working in Hollywood because she filed a complaint of employment discrimination that has had implications for Title VII of the 1964 and 1991 Civil Rights Act.

2) The requested records will enable the public to ascertain if your school district has previously held discussions about the sexism Eliza Dushku experienced while she was employed at CBS.

3) The requested records will shed light about the manner in which internet search engines (ISE) such as AOL, Bing/MSN, Google and Yahoo have filtered and distorted Michael A. Ayele (a.k.a.) W's correspondence with the United States government about the employment history of Eliza Dushku at CBS.

4) The requested records will shed light about the manner in which internet search engines (ISE) such as AOL, Bing/MSN, Google and Yahoo have filtered and distorted Michael A. Ayele (a.k.a.) W's correspondence with the United States government about SAAM/Denim Day.

In my judgment, the facts presented in this request for a fee waiver and expedited processing will not bolster public confidence in the activities, the engagements and the priorities of internet search engines (ISE) such as AOL, Bing/MSN, Google and Yahoo because they have previously filtered and distorted Michael A. Ayele (a.k.a.) W's correspondence with the United States government on the commemoration of Denim Day / Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM). Unfortunately, I regret to inform you that the decision of ISE to filter and distort Michael A. Ayele (a.k.a.) W's correspondence with the U.S government about the commemoration of Denim Day/SAAM [1] was not an isolated incident, but part of a repeated pattern; [2] has served to obfuscate Michael A. Ayele (a.k.a.) W's unconditional condemnation of the sexual violence women are subjected to in academic and professional settings; [3] has served to obscure Michael A. Ayele (a.k.a.) W's correspondence with the United States government about the employment history of Eliza Dushku with CBS; [4] has served to exacerbate racism and discrimination online, causing direct harm to the name, the image and the likeness of Michael A. Ayele (a.k.a.) W.

On my end, as a Black B.A. Degree graduate of Westminster College (Fulton, Missouri), I believe that Eliza Dushku's experience at CBS [1] is very revealing of the sexism women suffer in silence in many workplace environments; [2] is very revealing of the tactics women deploy to overcome misogyny; [3] is very revealing of the extreme lengths women go to not to file a formal complaint of sexual harassment pursuant to Title VII of the 1964 and 1991 Civil Rights Act (even when they experience chauvinism, misogyny and sexism); [4] underscores how women could be blacklisted from working in their profession for filing a complaint of employment discrimination that has implications for Title VII of the 1964 and 1991 Civil Rights Act; [5] underscores how women could be blacklisted from working in their profession for not wanting to be sexually harassed at the workplace; [iv] [6] underscores how incidents of sexual harassment are trivialized, reframed or dismissed altogether (even when women do file a formal complaint pursuant to Title VII of the 1964 and 1991 Civil Rights Act); [7] underscores

how the culture of victim-blaming remains relentless (in the 21st Century) despite good-faith efforts (from American society and government) to put a stop to it.

The core issues presented in this records request are as follows. 1) Have you had conversations about the decision of President Barack Obama to designate the month of April 2016 as "*Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM)*" by recognizing that America frequently doesn't condemn sexual assault as loudly as it should? If yes, will you promptly disclose those records? 2) Have you had conversations about the decision of President Barack Obama to designate the month of April 2016 as SAAM by recognizing that "*together, we must stand up and speak out to change the culture that questions the actions of victims, rather than those of their attackers?*" If yes, will you promptly disclose those records? 3) Have you had conversations about Denim Day as an event that is very much intricately linked with SAAM? If yes, will you promptly disclose those records? 4) Have you had conversations about Denim Day as an event that is held on the last Wednesday of the month of April? If yes, will you promptly disclose those records? 5) Have you had conversations about Denim Day as an event that has historically served to shed a spotlight on women who have encountered chauvinism, misogyny and sexism? If yes, will you promptly disclose those records? 6) Have you had conversations about Denim Day as an event that has historically served to shed a spotlight on women who were blamed for provoking incidents of sexual harassment, sexual assault and/or rape they have fallen victim to? If yes, will you promptly disclose those records? 7) Have you had conversations about Denim Day as an event that has historically served to shed a spotlight on women who have had their complaints of sexual harassment, sexual assault and/or rape relegated to "*misunderstandings?*" If yes, will you promptly disclose those records? 8) Has your school district commemorated Denim Day/SAAM beginning April 2009? If yes, will you promptly disclose those records? 9) Have you had conversations about Eliza Dushku as an internationally renowned woman who had on (or around) December 19, 2018 recognized that she had signed an employment contract with CBS to feature as a main character in the TV series called "*Bull?*" If yes, will you promptly disclose those records? 10) Have you had conversations about Eliza Dushku as an internationally renowned woman who had on (or around) December 19, 2018 recognized that she was sexually harassed by Michael Weatherly shortly after beginning to work at CBS on the TV series known as "*Bull?*" If yes, will you promptly disclose those records? 11) Have you had conversations about Eliza Dushku as an internationally renowned woman who had on (or around) December 19, 2018 recognized that the sexual harassment she experienced at CBS was captured on video? If yes, will you promptly disclose those records? 12) Have you had conversations about Eliza Dushku as an internationally renowned woman who had on (or around) December 19, 2018 recognized that the sexual harassment she experienced at CBS was relegated to a "*misunderstanding*" which was attributed to her "*humor deficit?*" If yes, will you promptly disclose those records? 13) Have you had conversations about Eliza Dushku as an internationally renowned woman who had on (or around) December 19, 2018 recognized that she was blacklisted from working in Hollywood because she filed a complaint of employment discrimination that has had implications for Title VII of the 1964 and 1991 Civil Rights Act? If yes, will you promptly disclose those records? 14) Have you had conversations about Michael A. Ayele (a.k.a.) W as a Black Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) Degree graduate of Westminster College (Fulton, Missouri) who has spent 7 (seven) Denim Days/SAAM in the territory of the United States of America (U.S.A) between January 2010 and July 2016? If yes, will you promptly disclose those records? 15) Have you had conversations about Michael A. Ayele (a.k.a.) W as a Black B.A. Degree graduate of Westminster College (Fulton, Missouri) who was contacted by his alma mater in the days leading up to the last Wednesday of the month of April (between 2010 and 2013) to be advised that he should wear denim clothing in order to show solidarity with women who have experienced sexual violence? If yes, will you promptly disclose those records? 16) Have you had conversations about Michael A. Ayele (a.k.a.) W as a Black B.A. Degree graduate of Westminster College (Fulton, Missouri) who has worn denim jeans on the last Wednesday on the month of April (between 2010 and 2015) in order to show solidarity with women who have experienced sexual violence? If yes, will you promptly disclose those records? 17) Have you had conversations about Michael A. Ayele (a.k.a.) W as a Black B.A. Degree graduate of Westminster College (Fulton, Missouri) who has witnessed his written publications on matters pertaining to Denim Day/SAAM being subjected to frenzy before they were filtered and distorted by internet search engines (ISE) such as AOL, Bing/MSN, Google and Yahoo? If yes, will you promptly disclose those records? 18) Have you had conversations about Michael A. Ayele (a.k.a.) W as a Black B.A. Degree graduate of Westminster College (Fulton, Missouri) who has never in the past contacted employees/legal representatives of the AOL, Bing/MSN, Google and Yahoo internet search engine (ISE) to demand that they generate cues such as "*Michael Ayele Denim Day,*" "*Michael Ayele Sexual Assault Awareness Month,*" "*Michael Ayele Eliza Dushku,*" "*Michael Ayele Title VII,*" "*Michael Ayele academic background,*" "*Michael Ayele FERPA,*" "*Michael Ayele VAWA?*" If yes, will you promptly disclose those records? 19) Have you had conversations about the decision of ISE such as AOL, Bing/MSN, Google and Yahoo to filter and distort Michael A. Ayele (a.k.a.) W written publications by

generating unwelcome and unapproved queries such as "Michael Ayele Denim Day," "Michael Ayele Sexual Assault Awareness Month," "Michael Ayele Eliza Dushku," "Michael Ayele Title VII," "Michael Ayele academic background," "Michael Ayele FERPA," "Michael Ayele VAWA?" If yes, will you promptly disclose those records?

Thank you for your attention to this matter. Be well. Take care. Keep yourselves at arms distance.

Michael A. Ayele (a.k.a.) W
Anti-Racist Human Rights Activist
Audio-Visual Media Analyst
Anti-Propaganda Journalist

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Work Cited

[i] ***At our country's core is a basic belief in the inherent dignity of every person. Yet, too many women and men of all ages suffer the outrage that is sexual assault, and too often, this crime is not condemned as loudly as it should be. Together, we must stand up and speak out to change the culture that questions the actions of victims, rather than those of their attackers.*** As their relatives, friends, neighbors, and fellow Americans, it's on us to support victims and survivors by providing them with the care they need, bringing perpetrators to justice, and ensuring our institutions are held responsible and do not look the other way. This month, we reaffirm our commitment to shift the attitudes that allow sexual assault to go unanswered and unpunished, and we redouble our efforts to prevent this human rights violation from happening in the first place.

Preventing sexual assault begins with everyone getting involved in promoting healthy relationships and encouraging respect for the equality of others. (...) Anyone can be a leader in the fight to prevent and end sexual assault. As employers, educators, parents, and friends, all Americans have an obligation to uphold the basic principle that every individual should be free from violence and fear. ***During National Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month, we recommit to embracing each of our individual responsibilities to keep our communities safe from this crime and to stand with survivors and victims of sexual assault.***

NOW, THEREFORE, I, BARACK OBAMA, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim April 2016 as National Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month. I urge all Americans to support survivors of sexual assault and work together to prevent these crimes in their communities.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this thirty-first day of March, in the year of our Lord two thousand sixteen, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and fortieth. Presidential Proclamation - - National Sexual Awareness and Prevention Month, 2016.: <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2016/03/31/presidential-proclamation-national-sexual-assault-awareness-and>

[ii] ***The narrative propagated by CBS, actor Michael Weatherly, and writer-producer Glenn Gordon Caron is deceptive and in no way fits with how they treated me on the set of the television show "Bull" and retaliated against me for simply asking to do my job without relentless sexual harassment. This is not a "he-said/she-said" case. Weatherly's behavior was captured on CBS's own videotape recordings.***

I feel compelled to chronicle what actually happened after The New York Times published a story about how CBS handled my allegations. I declined to be interviewed for that piece because I wanted to honor the terms of my settlement with the network. I was under the impression that Weatherly and Caron would also not respond per our settlement. Instead, both commented to the Times in what amounted to more deflection, denial, and spin.

In explaining his bad behavior, Weatherly, who plays Dr. Bull, claimed I didn't get his attempt at humor. That's how a perpetrator rationalizes when he is caught. For the record, I grew up in Boston with three older brothers and have generally been considered a tomboy. I made a name for myself playing a badass vampire slayer turned tough LA cheerleader; I have worked with numerous leading men, including Robert De Niro, Leonardo DiCaprio, even CBS's own David Boreanaz. I can handle a locker room. I have been on Howard Stern and was hired by Kevin Smith for a film where I wore a black leather cat suit and played a member of an international diamond-thief-gang-ring. I do not want to hear that I have a "humor deficit" or can't take a joke. I did not overreact. I took a job and, because I did not want to be harassed, I was fired. (...)

Weatherly harassed me from early on. The tapes show his offer to take me to his "rape van, filled with all sorts of lubricants and long phallic things." There was also his constant name-calling; playing provocative songs (like "Barracuda") on his iPhone when I approached my set marks; and his remark about having a threesome. He made the threesome remark to me about himself and me in a room full of people. Minutes later, a crew member sidled up next to me and, with a smirk, said in a low voice, "I'm with Bull. I wanna have a threesome with you too." For weeks, Weatherly was recorded making sexual comments, and was recorded mimicking penis jousting with a male costar — this directly on the heels of the "threesome" proposal — and another time referring to me repeatedly as "legs." He regularly commented on my "ravishing" beauty, following up with audible groans, oohing and aahing. As the tapes show, he liked to boast about his sperm and vasectomy reversals ("I want you to know, Eliza, I have powerful swimmers"). Weatherly had a habit of exaggerated eye-balling and leering at me; once, he leaned into my body and inhaled, smelling me in a dramatic swoon. As was caught on tape, after I flubbed a line, he shouted in my face, "I will take you over my knee and spank you like a little girl."

One day, when my now husband, Peter Palandjian, visited the set, Weatherly made us all watch as he pretended to urinate on an indoor office plant, then spun around pretending to shake himself off and pull up his zipper. **The tapes show Weatherly routinely exclaimed "yellow card" after distasteful remarks. I learned from crew members that, because there had been previous harassment training on "Bull," Weatherly's delight in yelling "yellow card" was his way of mocking the very harassment training that was meant to keep him in line.**

Weatherly also bragged about his friendship with CBS chief executive Les Moonves. He regaled me with stories about using Moonves's plane, how they vacationed together, and what great friends they were. Weatherly wielded this special friendship as an amulet and, as I can see now, as a threat.

Weatherly did all this. His conduct was unwelcome and directed at me. Watching the recordings in the settlement process, it is easy to see how uncomfortable, speechless, and frozen he made me feel. For Weatherly's part, it looks like a deeply insecure power play, about a need to dominate and demean. In no way was it playful, nor was it joking with two willing participants. It was not "Cary Grant ad-libbed lines," an incredulous Weatherly excuse which, even if true, asks us to believe that Hollywood behaviors from 70 years ago might be acceptable today. What is hardest to share is the way he made me feel for 10 to 12 hours per day for weeks. This was classic workplace harassment that became workplace bullying. I was made to feel dread nearly all the time I was in his presence. And this dread continues to come up whenever I think of him and that experience.

There was daily undeniably demeaning conduct that is unacceptable in an absolute sense. **Everyone should be allowed to work without harassment. Weatherly sexually harassed and bullied me day-in and day-out and would have gotten away with it had he not been caught on tape, and had the CBS lawyers not inadvertently shared the tapes with my counsel, Barbara Robb. Reflecting on the whole ordeal, it often makes me think with sadness of the majority of victims who do not have the benefit of the fortunate evidence — the tapes that I had.** (...)

Weatherly never apologized to me. Instead, I was fired shortly after speaking with him. After weeks of enduring Weatherly's harassment, I resolved to deal with it directly. I aimed to be my diplomatic best. This was not easy for me, since there were plenty of other things I would like to have said to him.

Framing my request as a plea for "help" in setting a different tone on the set, I asked him to "be my ally" and to "help ease the sexualized set comments." Weatherly responded with, "Eliza, no one respects women more than I do," citing his many sisters and his professed history of being "too respectful of women."

After I left his trailer, I went straight back to my own trailer and wrote down everything I could remember about the conversation in a text to my manager, adding, "I hope he actually received it well & doesn't run back to the studio telling them to fire me lol." Then, as I came to learn months later in the settlement process, Weatherly texted CBS Television President David Stapf about 40 minutes after our conversation and asked for what amounted to my being written off the show. Specifically, Weatherly complained that I had a "humor deficit."

Retaliation is illegal, not to mention unfair and painful. After I addressed it, Weatherly doubled down and ratcheted up his retaliation. *Following our conversation and up until the season wrapped weeks later, he barely spoke to me, making it clear he was icing me out. He made every remaining day on the set somehow more awkward and oppressive.*

How did it end? With a final act of bullying.

After I addressed matters with Weatherly, he circulated a "memo" to the crew instructing not to comment on my appearance or beauty. I do not know if it was a written memo or a general verbal edict, but everyone called it "the memo." Weatherly's message was clear to all: Eliza Dushku was offended by comments on her looks. (For the record, I love a good compliment).

As it turned out, the "memo" was a prop for Weatherly's final act of retaliation against me. At the wrap party held on the last day of the season, Weatherly insisted that I stay for the champagne toast. It was odd to me for several reasons: Weatherly knew I was sober, and he had not spoken to me this warmly for weeks. Nevertheless, I also wanted to say goodbyes to friends and pay my respects to the crew. Weatherly emceed the toast. So when he called me up in front of the entire cast and crew to pick the winning party raffle tickets, Weatherly was actually going out of his way to humiliate me and said something along the lines of: "I need a beautiful woman to come pull this ticket." He laid it on thick. "A truly beautiful woman . . . hmmm, who could that be?" He was performing, pretending to search the room. I immediately clocked what was happening, my breath tightened. "Eliza! Yes, the most beautiful woman of all. Yes, Eliza, you have to come pull the raffle ticket!" he instructed, dripping with sarcasm and in direct violation of his own edict not to comment on my physical appearance. No matter that I've acted in more than 30 films and starred in two network series, Weatherly had to let everyone know he was the boss, that he had won and no one would come on that set and reject what he thought should be his unfettered right to do and say whatever he wanted. There are crew members on record as witnesses to corroborate what for me was one of the most cruel, most aggressive humiliations I have ever experienced. It was I who was mortified.

As for Caron, the "Bull" showrunner, he was undaunted to do Weatherly's bidding. The fact is that Caron wrote me off the show within 48 hours of my complaints about Weatherly. According to what top production brass at CBS told my agent, Caron had gotten rid of me without the knowledge or consent of that CBS team. Caron personally fired me as I was filming on set one afternoon. It is highly unusual to get fired in the middle of a shooting. I immediately phoned my manager and agent, who in turn phoned the high-ups at CBS. The CBS execs were baffled. They said that they didn't believe that Caron had the authority to fire me this way and suggested that it could not be true. What's more, as was documented in several e-mails and texts, they and the production company, Amblin Television, were reportedly loving my work and called what I was doing for the show "fantastic" and that they "love this dynamic."

My talent representatives spoke to Caron about my firing months later. Caron defended Weatherly, explaining he had simply exhibited "frat" behavior and added, "What does [Eliza] expect, she was in Maxim." On the subject of my legal rights, Caron said to my manager, "If Eliza wants to be out of the business by suing CBS, she can be out of the business."

The boys' club remains in full force at CBS. *The bullying continued. In the settlement process, CBS used as defense a photo of me in a bathing suit, pulled from my own Instagram, as if this suggested I deserved or was not offended by the sexual harassment I experienced.*

CBS ultimately paid me \$9.5 million earlier this year to settle the allegations — an amount that represented a portion of what I would have earned had I finished my potential six-year contract. But this wasn't just about money; I wanted a culture change. A significant settlement condition was my requirement that CBS designate an individual trained in sexual harassment compliance to monitor Weatherly and the show in general. CBS did not want to do this, but I wouldn't settle without this condition. Another condition I insisted on was that I be allowed to meet with Steven Spielberg, whose Amblin Television coproduces "Bull," so I could talk with him about what occurred on his set. I have not yet had my meeting with Spielberg, but I cannot help but wonder where the legendary Hollywood director was throughout all of this. I have been a lifelong fan and assumed that if anyone could make changes, it would be Spielberg. Watching the Golden Globes and seeing Spielberg front-and-center wearing a "Time's Up" pin shortly after my settlement made me especially eager to meet with him.

The condition CBS required of me was that I not speak about what happened. I really struggled with this and still do. Some online "posters" have called it hush money. Headlines have called it a "secret settlement." How was I to get paid? I have worked in this industry for close to 30 years. I faced a wrongful termination, the prospect of a three to-five year lawsuit, and million-dollar legal fees for a war with a massive corporation. And where would that war have been fought? According to the fine print in my contract with CBS, I was required to submit to a "confidential" arbitration, where all "proceedings will be closed to the public and confidential, and all records relating thereto will be permanently sealed." No judge, no jury, and no chance of anyone finding out what really happened (or so they hoped).

In the end, I found uneasy solace in the important conditions I imposed on CBS, and that I would get paid for at least some of my contract. I am still trying to make sense of how this could happen, especially in these times. The last thing I want at this point in my life is to be in the news. I am recently married and very happily finishing my college degree at home in Boston. But I do feel it is my duty to respond honestly and thoroughly to CBS, Michael Weatherly, and Glenn Gordon Caron's latest revisionist accounts. Eliza Dushku: I worked at CBS. I didn't want to be sexually harassed. I was fired. The Boston Globe.: <https://www.bostonglobe.com/opinion/2018/12/19/eliza-dushku-responds-what-happened-cbs-took-job-and-because-objected-being-sexually-harassed-was-fired/OCh7h0pwg4Aq7xfwOUasyO/story.html>

[iii] Bing/MSN Unwelcome and Unapproved Query "Michael Ayele Denim Day." <https://www.bing.com/search?q=Michael+Ayele+Denim+Day>

Bing/MSN Unwelcome and Unapproved Query "Michael Ayele Sexual Assault Awareness Month." <https://www.bing.com/search?q=Michael+Ayele+Sexual+Assault+Awareness+Month>

Bing/MSN Unwelcome and Unapproved Query "Michael Ayele Eliza Dushku." <https://www.bing.com/search?q=Michael%20Ayele%20Eliza%20Dushku&qs=n&form=QBRE&sp=-1&lq=0&pq=michael%20ayele%20denim%20day&sc=14-23&sk=&cvid=69163B3B435646ECA5FF1E24787724A9&ajf=60>

Bing/MSN Unwelcome and Unapproved Query "Michael Ayele Title VII." <https://www.bing.com/search?q=michael+ayele+title+vii>

Bing/MSN Unwelcome and Unapproved Query "Michael Ayele FERPA." <https://www.bing.com/search?q=Michael+Ayele+FERPA>

Bing/MSN Unwelcome and Unapproved Query "Michael Ayele VAWA." <https://www.bing.com/search?q=Michael+Ayele+VAWA>

[iv] ***I appreciate the opportunity to speak to you today about this important issue and will share my experience as a victim and survivor of sexual harassment in the workplace and as someone who was fired and silenced when I attempted to address it.***

In 2017, I was aggressively pursued by CBS to become a co-lead on a show called "Bull." I was told that the role would be a 6-year commitment to play a smart, strong leading lady, a confident high-powered lawyer meant to counterbalance the existing male lead, and that the role had been written specifically with me in mind.

However, in my first week on my new job, I found myself the brunt of crude, sexualized, and lewd verbal assaults. I suffered near constant sexual harassment from my co-star. This was beyond anything I had experienced in my 30-year career.

My male co-star, who was also one of the show's producers, would frequently refer to me as "Legs." He would smell me and leeringly look me up and down.

Off-script, in front of about one hundred crew members and cast members, he once said that he would take me to his "rape van" and "use lube and long phallic things" on me and take me over his knee and spank me like a little girl. Another time he told me that his sperm were "powerful swimmers."

These are just a few examples. These were not lines in the script. They were incessant and demeaning and directed at me in the middle of what was supposed to be a professional workplace.

Per my history, I tried to be professional and just do my job, but was relentlessly sexualized, crudely mocked, and laughed at. I began dreading going to work each day and often rode home in silence, on the verge of tears, feeling this confusing shame over not having been able to stick up for myself more. I feared that if I pushed back or reacted strongly, my job could be at risk or my professional reputation could be harmed. (...)

Over the years I'd become accustomed to the usual banter that occurs on a set. This was very different. The multiyear contract I agreed to was a big deal, and my drive to succeed was strong. I had received rave reviews from the showrunner, who is the person in charge of the shows, and others at CBS. I wanted to make the show work, and I loved the role that had been created for me.

I spoke with my manager, and we decided that I would try to address the intolerable sexual harassment I was being forced to endure. I had built a professional reputation and should have been able to speak directly with my co-star as an equal. I specifically asked him to be my ally on set and tone down some of the sexualized comments directed at me, especially because he set the tone for the workplace.

Admittedly, I was nervous, but I shared with him how he made me feel on set and asked if he'd work with me to rectify this. He responded in feigned shock, "No one is more respectful of women than me. I grew up with sisters."

What I found out later was that 40 minutes after this conversation, he texted the head of CBS Studios that I had a "humor deficit" and he didn't want me on the show. The CBS studio head replied that I was great and made the show better.

I was fired the next day.

The showrunner told me straight-up that after the next episode I would not be returning. He even suggested that I ask CBS and Steven Spielberg, whose company, Amblin, co-produced "Bull," for my own show because he thought my work was so impressive.

Now, I've worked as an actress since I was a child and signed countless contracts negotiated on my behalf, but never understood that there were mandatory arbitration clauses that

would be used to keep what had happened to me a secret and would protect CBS and the sexual harassment perpetrator who had blatantly retaliated against me for trying to stop the harassment in my workplace. I was shocked to learn that I had signed away my rights to a public forum before taking a job. Who would ever think up such a clause? Who are these clauses meant to favor and protect? It suddenly became clear: Not me.

I began to understand how very limited my options were to try to address the prohibited sexual harassment and illegal retaliation I had experienced.

In response to a letter from my counsel, CBS handed over hundreds of hours of tape which included video of the actual harassment. It was captured verbatim on their tapes. No one other than my legal advisers and CBS has ever seen or will ever see those tapes. I was trapped by the binding arbitration clause I had unknowingly signed.

For the next year, I found myself pitted against one of the most powerful media corporations in the world, CBS, with its unlimited resources, which was controlled by the men who used the arbitration clause to protect themselves, their profitable show, and to silence me.

To this day, whenever my career, my life's work, is referenced, my accomplishments as an actor are ignored. I've been reduced to being Eliza Dushku, the actress who was paid off for "allegedly" being sexually harassed on a TV series.

As I hope you can understand, this was not the outcome I desired, nor ever expected. Because of binding arbitration, there will never be real justice for me and for countless other victims of sexual harassment and assault.

Lastly, there's an irony that I fully understand: I'm getting to break that silence today. Countless others who are bound by arbitration are not so fortunate.

I offer my strength and solidarity to all the other brave women who will speak today. We can help end this. Accountability and transparency aren't partisan issues. Thank you for hearing me. Eliza Dushku Opening Statement to Congress House Committee on the Judiciary.:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0hmxRa8E3G0>