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STATEMENT OF LAUREN ODES

When I was first told that I was “too hot” and that my breasts were too large I was shocked. I thought that I was dressed appropriately every day for my job as a production assistant working in the office of a wholesale garment business. I didn’t understand what my supervisor meant. “Too hot” for what?

I knew that I was working in the fashion business at a company that manufactured intimate apparel, e.g. bras, corsets, thongs with a heart and other sexy undergarments. They even sold boy shorts for girls that said “hot” on the back. Given their business product I simply did not understand why I would be told that I was “too hot”? Especially because I was very covered up in the attire that I was wearing.

I was appalled when my supervisor suggested that I tape down my breasts and wear my boyfriends oversized t-shirt and sweat pants. When

I first started working there I asked what the dress code was and I was told just to look around and see what everyone else was wearing. I did. The dress varied from very casual athletic wear to business dress.

When my supervisor suggested that I tape down my breasts I asked “Are you kidding me?” The supervisor said “Just cover up a little more.”

When it escalated to the point of her walking me over to a closet and suggesting that I put on a bright red bathrobe and then sit at my desk and wear it all day I felt completely humiliated. She put the bathrobe on me and tied the belt and I returned to my desk wearing it. I felt ridiculous and embarrassed.

Others in the office were laughing and asking me why I was wearing the bathrobe and I told them what I was told. I sat there in the bathrobe for awhile and then I decided I would prefer to go out and buy an outfit rather than sitting there in the bathrobe feeling humiliated.

I asked if I could go out to buy a large sweater down to my ankles, which I could wear instead of the red bathrobe. I was told that I could. However, while I was out shopping I received a call that I was terminated.

This whole experience has been horrifying to me. I have a Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration from Laboratory Institute of Merchandising in New York City. I studied for four years to earn this degree and I have worked in retail since I was 15.

I love fashion and I always will, but I don't believe that I or any woman should be treated as I was.

That is why I contacted Ms. Allred. It is because I knew that it was wrong and I wanted to do something about it so it doesn't happen to other women.

We should not be judged by the size of our breasts or the shape of our body. I understand that there are Orthodox Jewish men who may have their views about how a woman should dress and how much she should be covered but I am Jewish as well, and I do not feel that any employer has the right to impose their religious beliefs on me when I was working in a business that is not a Synagogue but instead is selling thongs with hearts placed in the female genital area and boy shorts for women that say “hot” in the buttocks area.

I have asked the EEOC to investigate and I hope they will protect my rights and the rights of other women.

Gloria Allred
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Representing Lauren Odes
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