

Meta Sued Over Surveillance and Gag Order Silencing Whistleblower Sarah Wynn-Williams

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A motion for a preliminary injunction asks a federal court to lift the gag immediately.

SAN FRANCISCO, CA, June 25, 2026 – Whistleblower Sarah Wynn-Williams, the former Facebook global public-policy director and author of bestselling memoir *Careless People: A Cautionary Tale of Power, Greed, and Lost Idealism*, today filed suit against Meta Platforms, Inc. in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California. She asked the court to enjoin a retaliatory private arbitration proceeding Meta brought against Ms. Wynn-Williams and vacate an arbitration “Interim Award” barring her from speaking about the company or promoting her bestselling memoir in any way, which Meta has exploited to seek severe financial penalties against her anytime she speaks or appears in public. She is represented by Selendy Gay PLLC and Katz Banks Kumin LLP.

Ms. Wynn-Williams alleges that, rather than refute her account of corporate misconduct on its merits—including her account of the harassment she endured at Facebook, the company’s misconduct in China and Myanmar, and its indifference to the known harms its products inflict on young people—Meta initiated private arbitration without her knowledge and obtained a sweeping preemptive gag order even though there has been no adjudication of any wrongdoing on her part. She alleges this is an unconstitutional prior restraint on her First Amendment rights that no court could lawfully issue, and Meta is exploiting its overbroad and vague terms to surveil and threaten Ms. Wynn-Williams with sanctions anytime she speaks or appears in public. This has silenced Ms. Wynn-Williams, including recently at the Hay Festival, a prominent gathering in the United Kingdom where she had been invited to speak on a panel but instead was compelled to remain silent during the discussion.

Meta has lashed out even at Ms. Wynn-Williams’s silent appearance, recently seeking an additional hearing in the arbitration to add further speech-repressing sanctions and financial penalties. Meanwhile, Meta has publicized its gag order and attacked Ms. Wynn-Williams in the press, all while she remains unable to respond due to Meta’s disparagement of her due to the gag order. Furthermore, Meta has engaged in a campaign of surveillance monitoring and photographing Ms. Wynn-Williams. Meta has recently sought to escalate its coercive surveillance of Ms. Wynn-Williams demanding through the arbitration that Ms. Wynn-Williams should disclose to Meta her future public appearances so they can continue to monitor and photograph where she goes and what she says.

“Meta claims to be a champion of free expression. Its actions tell us the opposite is true,” said **Corey Stoughton of Selendy Gay**. “A multibillion-dollar company with power greater than that of many nation-states is exploiting the legal system to censor a single individual who sought only to tell the truth and is brave enough to fight back.”

Seven years ago, Meta publicly announced it would no longer force employees into arbitration over harassment claims, calling the change “the right thing to do.” The complaint alleges that Meta nonetheless forced Ms. Wynn-Williams into arbitration and enforced a non-disparagement clause she felt compelled to sign after Meta terminated her employment in retaliation for her complaints of sexual harassment by Meta executives. Meta’s actions were an about-face with respect to its recent [public claims](#) to champion free expression, including ending its third-party fact-checking program on January 7, 2025. Joel Kaplan, President of Global Affairs at Meta, said in announcing the changes, “On platforms where billions of people can have a voice, all the good, bad and ugly is on display. But that’s free expression.”

“At its core, this case is about Meta’s punitive approach to whistleblowers. Meta should not be allowed to use forced arbitration and NDA agreements to silence conscientious employees who risk their careers to speak out about company abuses that affect public health and safety,” said **Debra S. Katz of Katz Banks Kumin**. “Ms. Wynn-Williams sought only to tell the truth about the company’s actions, and about the

sexual harassment she experienced at work, truths that Meta has never denied. Now, every current and former Meta employee who signed a forced arbitration agreement is watching to see whether Meta will succeed in using such an agreement to silence and punish whistleblowers. We are hopeful that the court will put a stop to this retaliatory overreach.”

In addition to other relief sought, the complaint asks the court to vacate the Interim Award as an unlawful prior restraint, to declare the non-disparagement and forced-arbitration provisions of Ms. Wynn-Williams’ severance agreement unenforceable, and to grant relief under California law for what the complaint describes as Meta’s unlawful efforts to silence her. Through the accompanying motion for a preliminary injunction, Ms. Wynn-Williams requests that the court bar enforcement of the gag order while the case is litigated, to allow her to speak without waiting for a final ruling.

Because of the arbitration order at issue in this case, Ms. Wynn-Williams cannot comment; inquiries should be directed to counsel.

The [complaint](#) and [related filings](#) are available here.

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Selendy Gay PLLC is the premier law firm for complex, high-stakes commercial litigation, including trials, appeals, arbitrations, and investigations. We represent clients across industries in their most consequential financial disputes— thoughtfully deploying our 100+ lawyers with seasoned trial, appellate, and investigations experience, strategic insight, and business savvy to every engagement. We show up battle-ready, allowing us to be aggressive when boldness is called for, and to obtain highly favorable resolutions that vindicate our clients’ interests.

About Katz Banks Kumin LLP

The attorneys of Katz Banks Kumin LLP are nationally recognized leaders in whistleblower, civil rights, and employment law. The firm handles cases nationwide with offices in Washington, D.C., San Francisco, New York, and Philadelphia.

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