Ex-Twitter execs push for $200M severance as Elon Musk runs X into ground

“Discovery on those topics is inevitable, and there is no reason to further delay,” the executives argued.

The executives have requested that the court open discovery at a hearing scheduled for November 15 to prevent further delays that they fear could harm their severance claims.

Neither X nor a lawyer for the former Twitter executives, David Anderson, could immediately be reached for comment.

X’s fight to avoid severance payments

In their complaint, the former Twitter executives—including Agrawal as well as former Chief Financial Officer Ned Segal, former Chief Legal Officer Vijaya Gadde, and former general counsel Sean Edgett—alleged that Musk planned to deny their severance to make them pay for extra costs that they approved that clinched the Twitter deal.

They claimed that Musk told his official biographer, Walter Isaacson, that he would “hunt every single one of” them “till the day they die,” vowing “a lifetime of revenge.” Musk supposedly even “bragged” to Isaacson about “specifically how he planned to cheat Twitter’s executives out of their severance benefits in order to save himself $200 million.”

Under their severance agreements, the executives could only be

denied benefits if terminated for “cause” under specific conditions, they said, none of which allegedly applied to their abrupt firings the second the merger agreement was signed.

“‘Cause’ under the severance plans is limited to extremely narrow circumstances, such as being convicted of a felony or committing ‘gross negligence’ or ‘willful misconduct,'” their complaint noted.

Musk attempted to “manufacture” “ever-changing theories of cause,” they claimed, partly by claiming that “success” fees paid to the law firm that defeated Musk’s suit attempting to go back on the deal constituted “gross negligence” or “willful misconduct.”

According to Musk’s motion to dismiss, the former executives tried to “saddle Twitter, and by extension the many investors who acquired it, with exorbitant legal expenses by forcing approximately $100 million in gratuitous payments to certain law firms in the final hours before the Twitter acquisition closed.” Musk had a huge problem with this, the motion to dismiss said, because the fees were paid despite his objections.

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