**AAMCO’S FIRST BLACK CORPORATE EMPLOYEE SUES COMPANY & CEO FOR RACE DISCRIMINATION, RETALIATION**

***Lawyers: Race Discrimination and “Campaign of Retaliation” Targeted Black Employee Who JeromeAAMCO Featured In Marketing to Promote Its Diversity After George Floyd’s Murder.***

**PHILADELPHIA, PA///SEPTEMBER 14, 2022///**The first-ever Black executive at AAMCO Transmissions, LLC filed a major new civil-rights action against the company and two of its executives. The former employee, Jerome Staley of the greater Philadelphia area, alleges multiple instances of race discrimination and a campaign of retaliation after he shared his concerns with AAMCO leadership.

The [complaint](https://www.peifferwolf.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/9.14.2022-Staley-v.-AAMCO-Complaint.pdf) was filed against AAMCO Transmissions, LLC, its chief executive James Gregory, and its former director of franchise development Kimberly Robinson in the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania for claims including race discrimination and retaliation for opposing race discrimination.

AAMCO operates over 600 franchise stores in the United States. It is the world's largest franchisor of transmission specialists and car-repair shops and is a subsidiary of Icahn Automotive, which is owned by Carl Icahn.

In August 2018, AAMCO hired Jerome Staley as its regional manager for the southeast region. Staley excelled in his role, and AAMCO promoted him to vice president of operations for the east region. Staley was the first Black executive-level employee at AAMCO. Eager to emphasize its new diversity in the months after the murder of George Floyd and subsequent protests, AAMCO featured Staley prominently in its marketing materials, including [using him as a spokesman to share fuel economy tips on TV news stations](https://www.cbs58.com/news/tips-for-saving-on-fuel-for-your-summer-road-trips). Staley ranked first in his division for store sales and had outstanding performance metrics. But he was paid $40,000 less per year than his white peers.

When Staley brought the pay disparity to AAMCO’s attention and requested equal compensation, AAMCO refused. Mr. Gregory told Staley that he was “disappointed” in Staley for complaining about the pay disparity and told him, “You make enough.” AAMCO then retaliated against Staley by denying him a performance-based quarterly bonus to which he was contractually entitled.

After AAMCO refused to give Staley a salary equal to his white counterparts and refused to pay his earned bonus, Staley resigned. He later applied to become an AAMCO franchisee. Other former AAMCO executives – even those who were fired – had been approved to become franchisees. But AAMCO wrongfully denied his franchisee application, prohibiting him from jointly operating a store with two Black franchisees, Alfred and Angelia Garnett.

Suspecting that AAMCO denied his franchisee application because of his complaints of race-based pay discrimination, both Staley and Garnett inquired with Kimberly Robinson, AAMCO’s then-director of franchise development. Robinson said the denial “was because of how you left,” referring to his complaints of racial discrimination before he resigned.

Jerome Staley, plaintiff and AAMCO Transmissions, LLC employee said: **“I’m still in disbelief. While I was working my tail off for AAMCO, it was using me to make itself look diverse and refusing to pay me what my white colleagues earned. Then AAMCO tried to silence me through retaliation, not only against me but against the only Black franchisees in the southeast region. This pattern of blatant racism has to stop.”**

Ashlie Case Sletvold, partner at Peiffer Wolf Carr Kane Conway & Wise, said: **“AAMCO’s racist pay practices are unacceptable. While promoting itself as a paragon of corporate diversity, AAMCO chose to drastically underpay its only Black executive and retaliate against him for expecting equal compensation. American corporations can’t just talk the talk on diversity, equity, and inclusion.”**

Joseph C. Peiffer, managing partner, Peiffer Wolf Carr Kane & Conway, said: **“AAMCO used Jerome Staley to join the chorus of brands releasing hollow solidarity statements in the wake of George Floyd’s murder. While marketing to profit from the Black Lives Matter movement, AAMCO was engaging in systemic racism and retaliating against its Black employee and Black franchise owners.”**

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**ABOUT PEIFFER WOLF CARR KANE CONWAY & WISE**

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