



## Saturday Star

### HAIR-RAISING SPAT IN SWANKY DUNKELD SALON

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Fur has flown in a Dunkeld, Joburg, hair salon. A pregnant hairstylist claims she was unfairly dismissed and harassed by the owners of Bettina's Hair Boutique.

The harassment, claims seven-months- pregnant Namitha Peter, came in the form of a search order which her former employers were granted by the Johannesburg High Court. They claimed she was in unlawful possession of client record cards, which they say are the heart of their business.

Peter strongly denies the allegations and is considering suing them for defamation.

She was fired on June 30, she says, after an altercation with another staff member at the salon in Dunkeld Square shopping centre.

**'I was so shocked, I couldn't believe it'**

Owner Bettina Raffalsky was out of the country at the time. When she returned, a meeting was held but nothing was resolved because the other worker had disputed her story. Peter, who said she could not believe her colleague's lies, stormed off.

When she returned the next day, she was fired - she claims without a warning and without a disciplinary hearing.

"I was so shocked, I couldn't believe it. I took my own client record-cards. They said I should take them."

Last week, Wolfgang Raffalsky, president of the Plastics Federation of South Africa, represented his wife's salon at the Hairdressing Bargaining Council conciliation hearing, which failed to resolve the unfair dismissal dispute. Immediately thereafter Wolfgang made an urgent application to the High Court for an ex parte order to search Peter's premises as well as those of **her legal adviser, Advocate Don Leffler, and his business premises in Midrand.**

On that day, Peter says she gave back 34 of the client record-cards, which the Raffalskys say belong to the salon.

"I just want them to pay my salary, then they can take [the rest] back with pleasure."

Peter says she has requested the Hairdressing Bargaining Council to refer her unfair dismissal dispute to arbitration. She has also filed complaints with the council and the department of labor because she wasn't paid her June salary, her notice pay or for her accrued annual leave.

"I was never given a contract of employment, nor was I given a certificate of service or IRP5

when I was summarily dismissed by Wolfgang Raffalsky and his wife Bettina.

"I was victimised both because I had made a grievance complaint and was shortly due to go on maternity leave," she says.

Immediately after her unfair dismissal, Peter was accused of unlawfully competing with Bettina's salon because she had advised some of her clients that she was going to be working from new premises at a nearby competitor of the hair boutique.

"How can I be accused of competing unlawfully with Bettina when she unfairly dismissed me, thereby forcing me to seek an alternative income just eight weeks before I was due to go on maternity leave?"

Contacted by the Saturday Star, Wolfgang Raffalsky said all of Peter's claims were lies.

"The only truth she has probably told you is that she is pregnant. She is making a meal of that. We believed the other worker because [Peter] was very bossy and didn't get along with the other employees.

"But [the Saturday Star] will probably run a headline saying "Pregnant Indian woman fired by whiteys". We are not going to take this lying down - she took the customer cards, and that is the heart of this business."

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