

Five female anchors file age and gender discrimination lawsuit against NY1, a prominent New York station

 [cnn.com/2019/06/19/media/ny1-gender-discrimination-lawsuit/index.html](https://www.cnn.com/2019/06/19/media/ny1-gender-discrimination-lawsuit/index.html)

Five female anchors at NY1, a reputable local station in New York, filed a lawsuit on Wednesday against the news organization, alleging systematic age and gender discrimination.

The lawsuit characterized NY1 management as having made recent programming decisions that strongly favored younger female and male talent at the expense of older, more experienced women.

It requested an injunction to prevent "further unlawful conduct," an order forcing NY1 to put the women "in the positions they would have occupied" if not for "discriminatory and retaliatory treatment," and compensation for "mental anguish, humiliation, embarrassment, stress and anxiety, emotional pain and suffering, and emotional distress."

The lawsuit was filed by Roma Torre, 61, who was the first on-air talent hired by NY1 and one of the station's most recognizable faces. She was joined in the lawsuit by Jeanine Ramirez, 49, Kristen Shaughnessy, 50, Vivian Lee, 44, and Amanda Farinacci, 40. The five women collectively have more than 100 years of experience at NY1.

"New Yorkers deserve to have the most talented journalists deliver the news," Douglas Wigdor, the attorney who represents the women, said in a statement. "Sadly, after dedicating over 100 years of award-winning journalism to NY1, our five clients have clearly been told that their careers are over, as NY1 seems to believe that younger faces, when it comes to women, are a 'better look' for the bottom line."

First row: Amanda Farinacci and Vivian Lee. Second row: Roma Torre, Jeanine Ramirez, and Kristen Shaughnessy.

Wigdor, a prominent attorney who successfully sued Fox News in part on issues relating to gender, added that he will work to "hold NY1 accountable" for what he alleged were "blatant ageist and sexist views." He said he intended "to send a message across all media that this epidemic of discrimination toward older women must come to an end."

Maureen Huff, a spokesperson for Charter, which owns NY1, said in a statement that the company takes the allegations seriously and that it has "not found any merit to them" as it works to complete a "thorough review."

"NY1 is a respectful and fair workplace and we're committed to providing a work environment in which all our employees are valued and empowered," Huff said.

The lawsuit outlined several areas in which it said NY1 favored younger female and male talent, while simultaneously casting aside more experienced women, including NY1's newly revamped daily schedule; fill-in anchoring practices; and promotional opportunities.

The lawsuit specifically contrasted the treatment Torre has received at NY1, compared to Patrick Kiernan, the station's most recognizable personality.

It noted that Kiernan, 50, was made the star of a newly formatted morning show, which came "complete with a multi-million dollar state-of-the-art studio." Meanwhile, Torre has seen her on-air time drop and broadcasts her show from a studio which is "completely inferior."

"While mornings are understandably the most watched mid-week show, the level of attention and support provided to Mr. Kiernan was over-the-top compared to Ms. Torre, who was left to languish in an older, far less equipped studio, with much less support," the lawsuit said.

Huff, the Charter spokesperson, told CNN Business that Kiernan was not available for comment. But, she said in a statement that the company "spent millions of dollars to elevate all of the sets" in 2017, and that they were "redesigned by the same team."

Huff also acknowledged that Torre's on-air time has dropped, but said that was because "we've added more live content at different hours." She added that "the content production hasn't decreased."

The lawsuit noted that NY1 celebrated Kiernan's 20-year anniversary in 2017 as a morning anchor with "dedicated on-air segments, website tributes and montages, an in-house party, advertisements on city buses and three food trucks that traveled throughout the city with Mr. Kiernan on board and TV cameras in tow."

In contrast, it said that when Torre celebrated her 25th anniversary in 2017, she was "completely disregarded for any anniversary celebration."

In response, Huff said in her statement, "As is typical with any network, we have emphasized the most popular programming, our 'Mornings on 1' show. Roma was one of the first anchors who had a solo spot. Since then, we've promoted her and her time slot by making ads that feature her, as well as numerous other women over the age of 40."