

Amazon hit by five more lawsuits from employees who allege race and gender discrimination

 [vox.com/recode/2021/5/19/22444177/amazon-five-more-lawsuits-employees-allege-race-and-gender-discrimination-charlotte-newman](https://www.vox.com/recode/2021/5/19/22444177/amazon-five-more-lawsuits-employees-allege-race-and-gender-discrimination-charlotte-newman)

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Five women allege that managers retaliated against them for complaining internally about harassment or discrimination.

Five women who have worked at Amazon in corporate roles or in warehouse management filed separate discrimination and retaliation lawsuits against the tech giant on Wednesday afternoon, according to complaints filed in various US district courts.

The women are of various races and range in age from their early 20s to mid-60s, but all allege that they were retaliated against by white managers for complaining internally about race, gender, or sexual harassment or discrimination that they experienced. Two of the women are Black, one is Latina, one is Asian American, and one is white. Three of the women still work at Amazon and two are former employees. All five cases were brought by the same New York City law firm that is representing [a Black Amazon Web Services manager who sued Amazon and several executives](#) in a discrimination and sexual harassment and assault case in March.

“Women and employees of color at all levels of Amazon have had their complaints of harassment and discrimination brushed under the rug,” Wigdor LLP partners Lawrence M. Pearson and Jeanne M. Christensen said in a statement. “Amazon can no longer dismiss abusive behavior and retaliation by white managers as mere anecdotes. These are systemic problems, entrenched deep within the company and perpetuated by a human resources organization that treats employees who raise concerns as a problem.”

An Amazon spokesperson didn’t immediately respond to a request for comment.

Are you a current or former Amazon employee and have thoughts on this topic? Please email Jason Del Rey at jason@recode.net or jasondelrey@protonmail.com. His phone number and Signal number are available upon request by email.

In one of the five suits filed on Wednesday, a 40-year-old Latina warehouse manager named Diana Cuervo alleges that a white male boss named Christopher Stoia repeatedly made racist remarks directly to her face.

Some of the alleged comments from Stoia included, “Latins suck,” “How is a Latin like you working here?” and, “You are a Latina woman, I need to be careful every time I talk to you.”

Cuervo says she was fired weeks after reporting her boss's behavior to human resources, and only a few days after she reported a gas leak at her Amazon facility despite her boss's alleged attempt to downplay the situation and demand that she keep quiet.

Stoia did not immediately respond to a message seeking comment.

In another suit, a 64-year-old Black human resources partner named Pearl Thomas alleges that her boss in Amazon Web Services HR, Keith DurJava, referred to her by using the “n-word” after apparently believing she had disconnected from a video call. She claims in the lawsuit that another manager told her and another Black woman employee at a different time, “You don’t want to be an angry Black woman.” Shortly after formally complaining about her boss's alleged racist comments, she was placed on a performance review plan, the complaint alleges.

DurJava did not immediately respond to an email requesting comment.

The lawsuits come three months after [Recode published an investigation](#) that highlighted current and former corporate employees' allegations that Amazon has a racial bias problem that particularly disadvantages Black workers. Recode's story also revealed alleged racial disparities in Amazon performance reviews ratings, promotion rates, and the company's corporate leveling system.

A few days after publication of the investigation, an Amazon Web Services senior manager named Charlotte Newman filed a lawsuit against Amazon and several current and former executives over claims of race and gender discrimination, as well as sexual harassment and assault. Newman said at the time that Recode's investigation was one of the reasons she decided to speak out about her experience.

“I strongly believe that Amazon should be harnessing the light of diverse leadership rather than dimming the light of Black employees and other employees of color,” [Newman said at the time](#). “For years I had been sort of suffering in silence, [but] I’m sure there are a lot of people who now feel more empowered to add their voices to the story, and hopefully there’s some real change that occurs.”

In the wake of the Recode investigation and Newman's lawsuit, it appears that more employees have been emboldened to tell their stories about the obstacles they say they have faced as women and people of color at Amazon.

Next week, Amazon shareholders will vote on a proposal from a New York pension fund calling for an independent audit “to assess the company's policies and practices on civil rights, equity, diversity, and inclusion.” The Amazon board of directors has urged shareholders to vote down the proposal.

