

New York Times CEO Mark Thompson faces discrimination lawsuit

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Top executives at The New York Times have been sued for creating "a culture of discrimination" at the company based on age, race and gender -- an accusation the paper flatly dismisses as "scurrilous and unjustified."

The multimillion-dollar lawsuit, which was filed on behalf of two older black female employees and [obtained by The Guardian](#), states that chief executive Mark Thompson and chief operating officer Meredith Levien created "an environment rife with discrimination" since taking over in 2012.

"Unbeknownst to the world at large, not only does the Times have an ideal customer (young, white, wealthy), but also an ideal staffer (young, white, unencumbered with a family) to draw that purported ideal customer," the lawsuit states. "In furtherance of these discriminatory goals, the Times has created a workplace rife with disparities."

The plaintiffs -- a 62-year-old Ernestine Grant and 61-year-old Marjorie Walker -- say that "age, sex and race discrimination became the modus operandi at the Times."

Eileen Murphy, the Times' senior vice president for corporate communications, dismissed the accusations outright.

"This lawsuit contains a series of recycled, scurrilous and unjustified attacks on both Mark Thompson and Meredith Levien. It also completely distorts the realities of the work environment at The New York Times," Murphy told CNNMoney. "We strongly disagree with any claim that The Times, Mr. Thompson or Ms. Levien have discriminated against any individual or group of employees. The suit is entirely without merit and we intend to fight it vigorously in court."

This is not the first time Thompson has faced discrimination lawsuits. In 2011, as head of the BBC, he was successfully sued for age discrimination. At the time, Thompson acknowledged that there were "too few older women broadcasting on the BBC."

Grant and Walker's charges range from the broad to the specific: They argue that when older employees of color took buyouts or were fired, they were replaced by "younger, white individuals." They also claim that "younger white individuals" are paid more than older people of color. They even argue that these "younger white" employees were granted early leave from the office on "summer Fridays," while they were not.

The lawsuit was filed in U.S. district court in Manhattan, N.Y.

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