

Five Women Ex-Anchors Call for Human Rights Probe of NY1 Over Retaliation Claims

 thedailybeast.com/five-women-ex-anchors-call-for-human-rights-probe-of-ny1-over-retaliation-claims

February 9, 2021

Five former NY1 anchors and reporters may have settled their age and gender discrimination lawsuit against the New York City-focused cable outlet late last year. But on Monday, the women filed a new complaint—this time with the city’s human rights commission—alleging further retaliation.

Roma Torre, Amanda Farinacci, Vivian Lee, Jeanine Ramirez, and Kristen Shaughnessy sued NY1 in 2019, alleging that managers had forced them off the air in favor of younger, less experienced talent. “We feel we are being railroaded out of the place,” said Torre, one of the network’s longest-serving anchors, at the time. The group additionally alleged that after filing the complaint, their bosses and several colleagues retaliated against them by actively isolating and marginalizing the women. The network settled the complaint in December, requiring the five women to leave NY1 and sign non-disclosure agreements.

On Monday, the women—who collectively have more than 100 years of on-camera experience combined—filed a brand-new complaint with the New York City Commission on Human Rights (NYCCHR), alleging that NY1’s ownership Charter Communications has continued to retaliate against them by renegeing on an alleged agreement to submit some of their work for Emmy Award nominations.

“Charter has since reversed course and is now refusing to do so,” the complaint stated. “Emmy awards are among the most prestigious recognitions a television journalist can receive for her work, and such recognitions are of enormous benefit to one’s career and marketability. Notably, all Complainants are now looking for alternate employment and an Emmy nomination would help in that search. By refusing to submit them for Emmy awards, Charter is materially harming Complainants and retaliating against them.”

The complaint further alleged: “There is simply no justification for this other than to ensure that Charter could get further vengeance against these brave women who stood up for themselves.”

The Emmy submissions deadline is February 15, and, as the women noted in the complaint, they are unable to submit their own work for consideration. The nominations must come from Charter Communications, whose leadership has thus far refused to do so. (The Emmys did not immediately respond to a request for comment on their submissions process.)

The women asked the NYCCHR—which is in charge of enforcing the city’s human-rights codes and prosecuting violations—to open “an investigation into [Charter’s] discriminatory and retaliatory conduct, that Charter cease and desist from any further discriminatory or retaliatory conduct, that any and all remedial measures to be taken to ensure Charter’s compliance with the anti-discrimination and anti-retaliation obligations” of the city’s human-rights laws.

Due to their non-disclosure agreements, Torre, Farinacci, Lee, Ramirez, and Shaughnessy could not provide comment on the new complaint. Their attorneys, Doug Wigdor and David E. Gottlieb told The Daily Beast: “NY1’s decision to snub our clients from Emmy nominations they earned is a spiteful and clearly retaliatory act and we are hopeful that the New York City Commission on Human Rights will not let them get away with it.”

“We reached a confidential resolution at the end of last year and as a result, have mutually agreed to part ways,” a Charter spokesperson said in a statement. “While the women no longer work at NY1, we do not prohibit former employees from submitting their work for Emmy consideration.”

“The NYC Commission on Human Rights does not comment on the status of open investigations,” a spokesperson told The Daily Beast. But should the NYCCHR take up an investigation into Charter Communications and NY1, it would not be the first time it has probed a cable channel for alleged violations. The Daily Beast previously reported that in December 2018, the administrative body had launched an investigation into potential abuses in Fox News’ workplace culture after a wave of discrimination and harassmentlawsuits were filed against the cable-news outlet.