

Ex-NY1 women anchors allege former employer refuses to nominate them for prestigious Emmys

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By Larry McShane

It's Round 2 in the contentious fight between NY1 and five female former anchors on the 24-hour news channel.

The ex-NY1 employees, barely six weeks after settling a bitter discrimination lawsuit with their employer, charged the company Tuesday with punitively refusing to submit their on-air work for this year's Emmy consideration.

The last round in the 19-month legal war came Tuesday when journalists Roma Torre, Kristen Shaughnessy, Jeanine Ramirez, Vivian Lee and Amanda Farinacci filed a complaint with the city Commission on Human Rights over the alleged snub by Charter Communications Inc.

"This is a blatant attempt to further retaliate against Complainants for their decision to file claims against Charter and publicly and openly advocate for their right to be free from discrimination," lawyers for the quintet alleged in the new 12-page filing.

"Charter refuses to let (the plaintiffs) move on with any semblance of dignity and respect," the filing continued. "Charter continues to show disdain for the Complainants based on their decision to pursue litigation against the company and due to the repeated public rebuke created by that litigation."

Torre was the news channel's first hire when NY1 debuted in 1992.

The two sides reached a confidential agreement on New Year's Eve, a seeming resolution to the bitter battle that dates to June 2019. The five plaintiffs all agreed to depart the local news channel as part of the deal, resolving the Manhattan Federal Court lawsuit alleging the women were marginalized in favor of younger and less-experienced female colleagues.

The new complaint charged the station had "reversed course" on its agreement to submit the plaintiffs' on-air work for the prestigious television awards. The five women amassed more than a century's worth of on-air experience before filing their court challenge, and three of their female colleagues subsequently filed their own lawsuits against the station.

Charter, in a statement responding to the complaint, noted "we do not prohibit former employees from submitting their work for Emmy consideration." The deadline for submission is Feb. 15, and the five ex-employees allege they have no access to the footage

needed to support their applications.

The complaint further noted that all five women were currently looking for new jobs “and an Emmy nomination would help in that search.”

Shaughnessy, at the time of the lawsuit, alleged that NY1 was moving from its trademark local-friendly coverage to a slicker, more superficial approach. The court filing alleged the change in approach came in 2017 after Charter-Spectrum absorbed NY1’s then-parent company Time Warner in a \$65 billion mega-merger.

“We are confident that the New York City Commission on Human Rights will aggressively pursue NY1 for its retaliatory and vindictive conduct in denying our clients the honor of submitting them for the Emmy nominations they so deserve,” said the quintet’s attorneys Douglas Wigdor and David Gottlieb.