

Amazon faces five new discrimination lawsuits

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Among the charges: A Black HR leader alleges that her supervisor called her the N-word.

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Amazon is facing five separate lawsuits from three current and two former employees alleging discrimination and retaliation.

The first lawsuit, filed by senior human resources specialist Tiffany Gordwin, alleges retaliation and discrimination. Gordwin, a Black woman, claims she has been passed over for promotions and retaliated against for speaking out by racial bias.

Another by Diana Cuervo, a former delivery operations area manager, alleges racial and ethnic harassment from her white, male supervisor. In the lawsuit, Cuervo said her manager made comments like, "Latins suck" and "You are a Latina woman, I need to be careful every time I talk to you." Additionally, Cuervo said she was wrongfully fired after filing a complaint about the harassment and discrimination.

Cindy Warner, who worked at Amazon Web Services until she says she was wrongfully terminated, alleges she was hired at an inappropriately low level, or "develed," upon joining Amazon. Similar to Charlotte Newman, the Amazon senior manager who is suing the company for discrimination and harassment, similarly accused the company of hiring her at a lower level. In Warner's case, she also claims she experienced verbal abuse and gender discrimination. She alleges white male managers called her a "bitch," "idiot" and a "nobody." The suit goes on to claim that Amazon unlawfully fired her about three weeks after the company found out she planned to pursue a lawsuit.

Emily Sousa, an area manager, alleges that a male manager compared her to an adult film actress during her first week at Amazon. Sousa, an Asian American woman, also claims she was sexually and racially harassed by a different male manager. The suit states Sousa reported the manager to human resources but the person in question was not reprimanded.

The fifth lawsuit comes from Pearl Thomas, a Black human resources partner, who alleges her direct supervisor called her the N-word. When Thomas reported the incident to "HR for HR," the representative allegedly dismissed her complaints, saying her manager "must not have known you were still on the phone," the suit states. The suit also alleges Amazon retaliated against her after she officially filed a complaint about the racial hostility she experienced. Following her complaint, Amazon placed her on a performance improvement plan.

Protocol has reached out to Amazon, which did not immediately respond, and will update this story if we hear back.

"Women and employees of color at all levels of Amazon have had their complaints of harassment and discrimination brushed under the rug and met with retaliation for years," Wigdor LLP partners Lawrence Pearson and Jeanne 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 the problem. This must be addressed immediately. Until then, we look forward to vigorously litigating our clients' discrimination and retaliation claims against Amazon."