

TikTok Hit With Gender Discrimination Lawsuit by Former Executive

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TikTok is facing a gender discrimination lawsuit from a top female executive who says she was fired because the social media giant required “docility and meekness” from women.

In a lawsuit filed Thursday (Feb. 8) in Manhattan federal court, **Katie Ellen Puris** claims she was wrongfully terminated as the head of the company’s global business marketing team — a role that she says made her one of TikTok’s “most senior female executives in the United States.”

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Her lawyers claim she was fired after she began to meet regularly with **Lidong Zhang**, the chairman of TikTok parent ByteDance, because he and other executives “determined that Ms. Puris lacked the docility and meekness specifically required of female employees.”

“Zhang had a stereotypical view of the way women should behave and Ms. Puris, an accomplished executive who celebrated and advocated for her team’s successes, did not fit that stereotypical gender mold,” Puris’ lawyers write.

Puris claims she also experienced age discrimination, with TikTok making it clear that “they preferred young, less experienced employees who they believed to be more innovative and pliable.” She says she also experienced sexual harassment at an off-site TikTok event, and that the company did nothing when she reported it.

“At every step, Ms. Puris reported the discriminatory treatment and sexual harassment she faced — to her managers, Human Resources and Employee Relations — and the Company, taking its directives from the office in China, failed to take any corrective action,” her lawyers write.

The new lawsuit was filed by the law firm Wigdor, which has also launched a slew of major sexual abuse cases against music industry executives and artists, including a high-profile complaint against Sean “Diddy” Combs.

In a statement, Wigdor attorneys **Marjorie Mesidor** and **Monica Hincken** said: “TikTok’s actions against Ms. Puris are illegal and we look forward to vindicating her rights.”

A TikTok spokesperson did not immediately return a request for comment.

In technical terms, Puris accuses TikTok of violating both federal discrimination laws — including Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, the Family Medical Leave Act and the Age Discrimination in Employment Act — and New York state and New York City statutes.

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