

TikTok Hit With Gender Discrimination Lawsuit From Former Marketing Executive

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TikTok is facing a gender discrimination lawsuit from a former top marketing executive who argues she was fired because the social media platform desired “docility and meekness” from female staffers.

The lawsuit, which was obtained by TheWrap, was filed on Thursday in Manhattan federal court. The plaintiff is Katie Ellen Puris, who was the global head of brand and creative at TikTok.

Puris claims she faced multiple forms of discrimination while working for TikTok and was “ultimately unlawfully terminated,” according to a court filing.

The lawsuit says Puris was fired after she began to meet regularly with Lidong Zhang, who is the chairman of TikTok’s parent company, ByteDance. He and other executives “determined that Ms. Puris lacked the docility and meekness specifically required of female employees.”



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“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,” the suit continues.

Puris’ attorneys also argue that she reported the alleged “discriminatory treatment and sexual harassment.” However, the company failed to take any action to ensure her safety. Puris alleges to have experienced sexual harassment at an off-site TikTok event.

“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 attorneys write.

Additionally, Puris argues that she also experienced age discrimination, with the social media platform desiring “young, less experienced employees who they believed to be more innovative and pliable.”

TheWrap has reached out to TikTok for comment on the lawsuit.

Pamela Chelin contributed to this report.



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