

Miami Reporter Files Discrimination Suit Against CBS, Miami Affiliate

ALEX PICKETT September 14, 2018

MIAMI, Fla. (CN) – A longtime investigative reporter for a CBS owned affiliate accuses the broadcasting company of fostering a “culture of toxic misogyny” in a federal lawsuit filed Friday.

Michele Gillen, whose career at the affiliate spans more than 20 years, joins a growing chorus of sexual harassment and discrimination claims by female staff.

According to the [complaint](#) filed in federal court in Miami, Gillen faced repeated instances of age and sex discrimination by management and younger male reporters alike.

“Over time the atmosphere at the station has deteriorated into a hostile den of intimidation and disrespect, where even unaffected newsroom employees have commented about the publicly humiliating and degrading treatment of women over 40,” the 22-page complaint states. “Male reporters have felt at liberty to degrade women in the news room by kicking over and stamping on work documents, pulling papers from their hands and instructing female staff not to speak.”

Gillen began reporting for CBS owned Miami affiliate WFOR-TV in 1997, following a brief stint at a station in Los Angeles. Over the years, she amassed dozens of awards for her reporting and became the chief investigative reporter.

But she said she increasingly faced hostility and discrimination from her news director and other managers.

She claims she was regularly taken off desirable news projects, which were given to younger male reporters. Gillen said managers purposely limited her air time and sometimes dubbed over her completed stories with a younger reporter’s voice.

Her repeated complaints to the company’s human resources department went unanswered, according to the complaint. One HR representative told her she couldn’t claim discrimination because her news director was female.

Gillen claims she paid out-of-pocket for camera people and editors while the other two investigative reporters at WFOR-TV, who were younger males, received unlimited resources.

Following one of her complaints in 2014, Gillen says management took her off a popular public affairs show. Then in September 2016, the station’s general manager eliminated her position, according to the complaint.

Gillen is represented by Louise Caro of Napoli Shkolnik in Coconut Grove.

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Representatives of CBS and WFOR-TV did not immediately respond to requests for comment Friday afternoon.

CBS has faced growing criticism in recent months over similar claims.

In May, three women filed a lawsuit against former “CBS This Morning” anchor Charlie Rose for alleged sexual harassment. He was fired by CBS last year.

This week, Jeff Fager, the executive producer of “60 Minutes,” stepped down amid sexual harassment allegations. That revelation came just days after CEO Leslie Moonves resigned after multiple women accused him of sexual misconduct.

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