

LEGAL AND PRIVACY

## Tiffany sued by former employee for alleged religious discrimination

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*Tiffany & Co.'s Valentine's Day gift guide*

By STAFF REPORTS

A former director of marketing at jeweler Tiffany & Co. is bringing a lawsuit against her ex-employer, claiming religious discrimination.

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According to the suit, Kristin Rightnour, a Catholic, was put on probation, disciplinary action and then fired following a discussion with coworkers about Easter, in which she allegedly made an anti-Semitic remark. According to the [New York Daily News](#), Ms. Rightnour is seeking unspecified damages, with her lawyers saying she was treated unfairly due to her religion.

Under fire

Ms. Rightnour and two colleagues, one of whom is Jewish, were talking about their plans for the upcoming Easter holiday in April 2014. The marketing executive says she and the third coworker, another Catholic, were asked about mass and specifically the crucifixion story.

After the conversation, the suit argues that that coworker did not voice any unease about the subject matter. However, a few months later, in August 2014, Ms. Rightnour was told by human resources that an employee had complained about the discussion, claiming that during the conversation, the plaintiff had said, "The Jewish people killed Jesus."

Ms. Rightnour denies having said that phrase, but did acknowledge that many Catholics hold that belief. She was put on probation for a year, which the suit says was based on the defendant's idea that she, as a self-identified "devout Catholic," shared these beliefs.

When Ms. Rightnour complained about being put on probation in December of that year, the suit claims that the company gave her a lackluster review in response. She put in a complaint through the United States Equal Opportunity Employment Commission, a move which she says got her overlooked for a promotion.

Tiffany fired Ms. Rightnour in August 2015.



### *Tiffany's blue box*

The jeweler is not the only brand to see legal action from employees.

British fashion house Alexander McQueen and its parent company Kering have had a lawsuit brought against them by two store employees.

The plaintiffs, Christopher Policard and Duane Davis, filed a suit in a New York court that claims the brand has "engaged in systematic racism" against its African-American employees. Consumers are increasingly looking at the practices of the brands they buy into, in which even an alleged wrongdoing may sway their sentiment ([see story](#)).

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