

Barclays Center hit with \$5M suit claiming discrimination against disabled

Anthony Peterkin, who is blind in one eye, says he was called ‘Cyclops’ and the ‘one-eyed guy’ by managers; plaintiff Erick Silverman says a manager mocked his cerebral palsy.

BY [JOHN MARZULLI](#)

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[ANDREW THEODORAKIS/NEW YORK DAILY NEWS](#) Five food service employees claim they were discriminated against based on their race or disability at the Calvin Klein Courtside Club.

A partially blind cook who toiled in Barclays Center's luxurious Calvin Klein Courtside Club claims he was banished to the media section "out of sight" of well-heeled customers because he is disabled, a lawsuit alleges.

The shocking claim is contained in a \$5 million lawsuit filed Monday in Brooklyn Federal Court by five food service employees at the arena alleging they were discriminated against based on race or disability.

Anthony Peterkin, who is blind in one eye, was ridiculed by a pair of managers calling him "Cyclops" and the "one-eyed guy," according to the suit.

Another plaintiff, Erick Silverman, suffers from cerebral palsy and rhinophyma — a rare disorder causing the nose to become abnormally large and bulbous — and his deformity was mocked by a manager "placing a piece of bread on his nose and attempting to mimic Silverman's voice," the suit says. The manager also mocked how Silverman's hand shook uncontrollably, the suit states.

Both men were cooks in the CK kitchen where they whipped up chow for the elite ticketholders. Late last year a Barclays Center consultant allegedly hatched a plan to relocate employees with disabilities "to ensure that they remain out of the sight of customers" and specifically mentioned that she did not want Peterkin or Silverman to be "in sight," the suit states. Peterkin was assigned in January to work alone in the less prestigious media and family section which the suit describes as an overheated room lacking ventilation.

The suit says the disabled workers were pushed into the Barclay's Center family section, which it describes as an overheated room lacking ventilation.

"It's horrendously cruel and humiliating," their lawyer, Walker Harman, told the Daily News. "There's nothing about an enlarged nose or having been blinded that interferes with their ability to do their job."

Harman said the treatment of the disabled employees is related to the hostile work environment created by the managers' — who are employed by concessionaire Levy Restaurants — frequent use of racial slurs in referring to black employees.

Barnett Valerie, a supervisor in the CK kitchen, claims he was transferred to the arena's 40/40 Club after complaining about name-calling and treatment of the disabled.

A spokesman for Barclays Center, Barry Baum, said they have not yet seen the suit, but take "allegations of this kind very seriously."

"We have a zero tolerance policy for any type of discriminatory behavior in the workplace. It is against everything that Barclays Center stands for. We will immediately and thoroughly investigate the allegations made," he said.

A spokesmen for the Chicago-based Levy Restaurants had no immediate comment.

Read more: <http://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/barclay-center-hit-5m-discrimination-suit-article-1.1882801#ixzz3D23qh5X7>