

Bloomberg's lawsuits

Two sue mayor's old media firm for discrimination



By KEITH J. KELLY

TWO longtime employees of Bloomberg L.P., who were hired when **Michael Bloomberg** still ran the media and financial services empire, claim they have been victims of disability discrimination by the executives Mayor Mike left to run the company.

Both of the employees, who underwent serious medical procedures, are barely over 40 years old, but they are also claiming age discrimination.

Combined, the suits are seeking more than \$6 million.

James Kingsland was hired by Mike Bloomberg personally, before the mayor entered politics.

Kingsland was a morning drive-time anchor from the time he was hired away from rival CNBC in 1992 until he became a news editor in late 2001.

He's seeking \$375,000 in compensatory damages and at least \$3 million in punitive damages, in a suit that also alleges retaliatory conduct by Bloomberg executive **Michael Clancy**.

Kingsland's suit, filed in the New York State Supreme Court on Monday, claims that during his first 11 years, he was a model employee, earning consistent pay raises and performance-based bonuses. In late 2001, he was promoted to morning editor. But the suit claims that Kingsland's health "did not keep pace with his career." On or about March 2002, he was diagnosed with nephrotic syndrome, a chronic disease that led to near total kidney failure.

Still, he was promoted in 2003 to afternoon news director, in charge of about 25 reporters and editors. He was credited with producing the coverage of both the Democratic and Republican conventions.

From August to September 2004, the suit says that the kid-

ney condition worsened and doctors concluded that unless he received a transplant he would die. In October 2004, he took medical leave with the belief that a brother would be a kidney donor.

But less than a week before the surgery, a medical glitch prevented the brother from serving as a donor. Kingsland was devastated.

With Kingsland's health deteriorating rapidly in early 2005, his wife **Melissa** was approved as a donor, and in March her kidney was successfully transplanted.

Kingsland was 41 and felt lucky to be alive. He said that although



KINGSLAND

the disease had damaged his heart, eyes and stomach, he wanted to return to work and did so in May 2005.

The suit says that he encountered a new boss, **Michael Clancy**, who cut Kingsland's hours and duties and eventually assigned Kingsland to the "relatively menial task" of copy editor for Bloomberg TV.

He earned more than \$100,000 a year in salary in his old job, and hauled in another \$60,000 to \$70,000 a year in bonus money.

The bonus money evaporated with the new job and a negative job review that Kingsland claims was retaliation for complaints he had lodged about his treatment at the news agency.

Kingsland said he doubts he would have had the problems if **Mike Bloomberg** were still on the job. "I was always well treated by Mike. He was a great guy." A second suit was filed in Federal District Court in Manhattan on behalf of **Garitt A. "Tony" Kono Jr.**, a producer for "Bloomberg Tomorrow Tonight." He began working for the company in 1993 and advanced through the ranks in its radio division. The suit says that in both 2002-2003 and in 2003-2004, Kono's work was described in extremely favorable terms.

At around the time he was promoted to BTT producer, the suit says he began to experience excruciating pain in his right foot and ankle due to a torn lig-

ament in the arch.

By October 2003, he said he needed major surgery. Even before he left, he said management began advertising for a new producer. The company at the time insisted it was a "bureaucratic mistake" and executives assured him his job would be there when he returned.

He underwent surgery on July 1, 2004, and by July 8 his job was once again being advertised on the company Web site, the suit claims. Executives assured him once again that his job as a producer was safe.

When he returned to the job in September 2004, Kono said that someone else had taken over the producer job, and he began functioning as a "booker" for the new producer.

When he complained, Kono said he received a "scathing letter of reprimand" from two superiors, **Michael Clancy** and **Anthony Michaels**, who are named as defendants in the suit along with other Bloomberg executives, including **Marty Schenker**, **Carolynn Fedor** and **Suzanne Lazarchick**.

Kono is seeking \$600,000 in compensatory damages and \$2 million in punitive damages.

A spokeswoman for Bloomberg L.P. said the company was not aware of the suits as of yesterday and had no comment at press time.

If print is dead, how come **Martha Stewart** thinks it will help save her empire?

The ratings-challenged "Apprentice" show is being cancelled by NBC, but the media world has been buzzing for some time now that **Martha** was trying to cook up a new magazine in her kitchen.

Development editor **Tom Prince**, a one-time top editor of rival **Real Simple** at Time Inc., had been heading up the prototype project.

Yesterday, AdAge.com was reporting that the new lifestyle magazine aimed at first-time homebuyers will be called "Blueprint" and launch in May.

A spokeswoman for **Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia** had only this to say: "We believe there is an opportunity in the thirtysomething lifestyle category, and that MSLO has something unique to offer, but cannot comment on specifics."

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TEEN SCREAM: It's not a Time Inc. story. Chris Whittle/Splash News

Mag kills 'Nazi' story

By KEITH J. KELLY
and DAN MANGAN

Teen People spiked a story it planned to run on teen twin hate-mongering singers, after learning a magazine staffer had cut a deal to avoid using the words "Nazi," "supremacist" and "hate" in the article.

Insiders at parent company Time Inc. said yesterday that Teen People, under Managing Editor **Lori Majewski**, had promised not to include the terms in a Q and A article about **Lamb and Lynx Gaede** — the singing teens who are favorites of white supremacist rallies and of **David Duke**, the one-time grand wizard of the Ku Klux Klan.

In a statement, Time Inc. said "a junior employee" made unauthorized promises to the twins' mother. "Such an agreement is in violation of Time Inc. editorial policy and, as a result, we are killing the story and pursuing a formal inquiry."

A profile on ABC's "Prime-time" had triggered a firestorm

of controversy because the home-schooled youths sported Nazi T-shirts, gave **Seig Heil** salutes and sang songs urging the separation of races.

The Post broke the story that Teen People had snagged the hard-to-get interview with a tacit deal after the twins had gone into hiding.

Politicians and Holocaust survivors on Monday turned up at Time Inc.'s Rockefeller Center doorstep to protest the magazine's plans to run the story.

At first, Teen People said it would run the story, but make clear that racism was abhorrent.

"The only reason they got the story was because of the agreement," the girls' attorney, **Ed Steele**, told The Post.

The controversy is shaping up as a huge test for incoming Time Inc. Editor in Chief **John Huey** and People Managing Editor **Martha Nelson**, who was given jurisdiction over Teen People earlier this year.

A sweet tooth for fine, embezzled things

By LAURA ITALIANO

She just might have the nicest teeth on the cell-block.

The 68-year-old director of a nonprofit organization for magazine designers was charged in Manhattan yesterday with embezzling \$156,402 — allegedly spending most of it on vacations and dental veneers.

Bride **Whelan**, of Union Square, is charged with pocketing the money while employed at her \$60,000-a-year job as executive director of the Society of Publication Designers.

Manhattan prosecutors say she stole the money by opening unauthorized corporate credit cards in

her own name and in the name of some of her family members, including two of her children.

Much of the loot has already been spent, largely on personal luxuries, prosecutors said.

Among her alleged indulgences on the society's dime are dozens of airline tickets for herself and her children, totaling \$17,000. Whelan spent \$5,112 on dental veneers, prosecutors said.

Whelan also took three cruises worth \$6,600, spent a \$1,600 weekend at a Four Seasons Hotel, and dropped \$2,598 at Macy's for a fur coat.

Whelan's attorney, **Steve Kaplan**, said, "We think ultimately the evidence will prove she didn't steal any money."