

## Woman behind venture firm lawsuit to testify for second day

March 10 2015, bySudhin Thanawala

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Jurors in a sex discrimination trial against one of Silicon Valley's most prestigious venture capital firms will hear a second day of testimony from the woman behind the high-profile gender bias lawsuit.

Plaintiff Ellen Pao will testify Tuesday after appearing calm and composed as she took the witness stand for the first time Monday in the case against Kleiner Perkins Caufield & Byers.

In her first day of testimony, Pao testified that a male colleague was "relentless" in his pursuit of her and cut her out of email chains and meetings when she broke off their affair.

The [lawsuit](#) has spotlighted gender imbalance at elite Silicon Valley investment companies that are stacked with some of the nation's most accomplished graduates—multiple-degree holders from schools such as Harvard and Stanford who are competing aggressively to back the next Google or Amazon.

But women are grossly underrepresented in the venture capital and technology sectors.

Pao is seeking \$16 million in damages after claiming she was passed over for a promotion because she is a [woman](#) and then fired in 2012 after she complained.

Kleiner Perkins has denied wrongdoing and says Pao didn't get along

with her colleagues and performed poorly after she became a junior partner around 2010.

In her testimony, Pao said she was given a poetry book by a senior partner in 2007 that featured drawings of naked women and poems on topics such as the longings of an older man for younger women. The partner also invited her to dinner one weekend while noting his wife would be out of town, she said.

"I thought it was strange, and it made me uncomfortable," she said.

Pao acknowledged having the affair with a male colleague, but said she broke it off when she learned he had lied that his wife had left him.

She said the colleague later retaliated by shutting her out of emails and meetings.

"He was relentless and eventually told me that his wife had left him," Pao told [jurors](#), explaining why she got into the relationship with him.

When she raised the retaliation issue with management, a senior partner explained how he had met his wife at another company while he was married, and perhaps Pao could have the same outcome with her colleague, she testified.

She said she repeatedly complained that the colleague was retaliating against her, but "Kleiner Perkins continued to do nothing."

Pao said it was humiliating not to be invited to an all-male dinner at Vice President Al Gore's apartment and have to explain to executives she ran into that she wouldn't be attending. Pao lived in the same building as Gore.

In another example of bias, she said she felt "very uncomfortable" about a conversation men were having about pornography aboard a private plane. The men were not Kleiner employees, but had been invited by a senior Kleiner manager, who Pao's attorneys say was present but did nothing to stop the conversation.

Kleiner Perkins' attorneys have tried to portray Pao as a chronic complainer who demanded credit for work done by a team, clashed with her colleagues, and twisted facts and circumstances.

Her attorneys tried Monday to dispute that portrayal and establish their client's credibility and likeability with the jury.

During her testimony, Pao said she had a disagreement with a female colleague, but they improved their communication after spending more time together outside the office, as Kleiner Perkins management had suggested.

Steve Hirschfeld, an investigator hired by the firm to look into Pao's bias complaint, testified Monday that she told him that her relationship with the male colleague was not consensual—a contention Hirschfeld did not find truthful.

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