



Deutsche Bank VP says fired in retaliation for bias case

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By Jonathan Stempel

NEW YORK, Sept 19 (Reuters) - A Deutsche Bank AG vice president said she was fired this month in retaliation for her gender bias lawsuit and subsequent complaints accusing the German bank of trying to retard her career.

Kelley Voelker, who turns 46 on Monday, said she learned of her firing two weeks ago, after having been told on Aug. 21 that no one in her hedge fund group would lose their jobs in connection with the bank's global cost-cutting plan.

Deutsche Bank had in July announced 1,900 job cuts, but on Sept. 11 said that number would grow. Voelker's last day at her New York office was Sept. 12, her lawyer said.

Voelker first sued Deutsche Bank last September. She claimed to have never been promoted since joining the bank in 1998, and that the bank had tried to demote her after she took maternity leave, which she called being "mommy-tracked."

The allegations over the firing were raised in an amended complaint filed Wednesday in Manhattan federal court. Voelker's case is one of many alleging gender bias on Wall Street.

"While we take all allegations of discrimination and retaliation very seriously, we will continue to vigorously defend ourselves against the allegations in the lawsuit," Deutsche Bank spokesman Duncan King said.

Voelker originally claimed that after she returned from maternity leave in May 2010, Deutsche Bank directed bigger accounts to a male colleague, slashed her bonus and tried unsuccessfully to demote her to a marketing job.

According to the amended complaint, Deutsche Bank gave Voelker her first negative performance review soon after the original lawsuit was filed.

The bank also ignored her subsequent accomplishments and "fabricated performance deficiencies," one of which led to her removal from an important account, the amended complaint said.

"She was doing a fantastic job this year, even after filing the complaint, and had received numerous accolades from her clients," Voelker's lawyer Douglas Wigdor said in a phone interview. "There can be no legitimate basis for choosing her for termination as opposed to any of her peers."

The lawsuit seeks compensatory and punitive damages, among other remedies. Voelker said she also filed a discrimination case with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

The case is Voelker v. Deutsche Bank AG, U.S. District Court, Southern District of New York, No. 11-06362.=