

# Deutsche Worker Says She Was Axed Over 'Mommy-Track' Suit

By **Ben James**

Law360, New York (September 19, 2012, 5:07 PM ET) -- A former Deutsche Bank AG employee accusing the company of “mommy-tracking” female employees lodged an amended complaint in New York federal court Wednesday, alleging Deutsche Bank decided to terminate her in retaliation for her sex bias claims.

Kelley Voelker sued the bank a year ago in response to what she called systemic discrimination, claiming she was repeatedly refused promotions despite strong qualifications and had to deal with an atmosphere that was hostile and degrading toward women.

According to her second amended complaint filed Wednesday, Deutsche Bank retaliated against her in several ways, including the decision to terminate her that was purportedly as part of a reduction in force. Voelker's last day at Deutsche Bank was Sept. 12, according to her attorney Douglas Wigdor of Thompson Wigdor LLP.

“Deutsche Bank, rather than redressing the serious problems identified by the complaint, instead has chosen to blatantly retaliate against Ms. Voelker by firing her after a campaign of behavior by company management to sideline her and induce her resignation,” the amended complaint said.

Voelker appears to be the only worker in the company's 500-person global prime finance group who was targeted for termination, she says. Deutsche Bank is not only trying to pressure Voelker into resolving her claims on the company's terms, but deter other female employees from standing up for their rights, she argues.

Voelker's firing is only the most recent example of the company's bias and retaliation against the plaintiff and other women, according to the plaintiff.

Voelker says she was retaliated against and “mommy-tracked” for her decision to take maternity leave in 2009, and complained that the company tolerated managers' use of vulgar language, allowed supervisors to make openly derogatory remarks about pregnancy and gave supervisors a green light to entertain clients at strip clubs.

Voelker started working for Deutsche Bank in 1998. After she filed suit in September 2011, the company allegedly took retaliatory steps by giving her negative performance reviews, micromanaging her, removing her from important accounts and assignments, and ultimately terminating her.

The reasons for the “persistent” discrimination at the company are clear, according to the suit, which says that all of the Deutsche Bank management board members are white males, as are all 12 of the company's group executive committee members.

“This fosters an atmosphere where it seems appropriate to derail the careers of hard-worker mothers like Ms. Voelker while promoting the chauvinist ideals championed by Deutsche Bank for years,” the suit said.

The second amended complaint levels claims under state and local law stemming from the plaintiff's termination. The plaintiff has also lodged a termination-related charge with the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. Voelker plans to file another amended complaint to add Title VII claims if she gets a right to sue letter from the EEOC.

“While we take all allegations of discrimination and retaliation very seriously, we will continue to vigorously defend ourselves against these allegations,” Deutsche Bank spokesman Duncan King told Law360 on Wednesday.

Voelker is represented by Douglas Wigdor and Lawrence Pearson of Thompson Wigdor LLP.

Deutsche Bank is represented by Cliff Fonstein and Jeremi Chylinski of Seyfarth Shaw LLP.

The case is Voelker v. Deutsche Bank AG, case number 1:11-cv-06362, in the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York.