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8 DANIELLE (KESICH) DI BARI

**ELECTRONICALLY  
FILED**  
Superior Court of California,  
County of San Francisco

**08/03/2023**  
Clerk of the Court  
BY: JEFFREY FLORES  
Deputy Clerk

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SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA  
COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO

DANIELLE DI BARI, individually,

Plaintiff,

v.

WOODLINE PARTNERS LP, a Delaware  
Limited Partnership; KARL KROEKER, an  
individual; LEAH DESMOND, an individual;  
and DOES 1 through 50, inclusive,

Defendants.

Case No. \_\_\_\_\_ **CGC-23-608127**

**PLAINTIFF DANIELLE DI BARI'S  
COMPLAINT FOR SEXUAL  
HARASSMENT AND RELATED  
CLAIMS FOR DAMAGES AND  
INJUNCTIVE RELIEF FOR:**

- (1) HOSTILE WORK ENVIRONMENT  
SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN  
VIOLATION OF FEHA;**
- (2) DISCRIMINATION ON THE BASES  
OF SEX AND GENDER IN  
VIOLATION OF FEHA;**
- (3) RETALIATION IN VIOLATION OF  
FEHA; AND**
- (4) DEFAMATION**

**DEMAND FOR JURY TRIAL**

1 Plaintiff Danielle (Kesich) di Bari (“Plaintiff” or “Plaintiff di Bari”) alleges, based on personal  
2 knowledge and/or information and belief:

3 **SUMMARY**

4 Founded by three male investment bankers, Defendant Woodline Partners LP (“Woodline  
5 Partners”) is a Hedge Fund that created and maintains a misogynistic work environment where  
6 Executive Admins, *exclusively young women*, are expected to endure bawdy jokes, derogatory and  
7 demeaning comments, and other inappropriate conduct, while supporting the predominately male  
8 Portfolio Managers, Analysts, and Traders. Karl Kroeker, Co-Founder and Co-Chief Investment  
9 Officer wrote in an email that the young Executive Admins are important to the “brand” of the Hedge  
10 Fund because “many of us are nerds and need the uplifting pep of you ladies.”

11 Woodline Partners hired Plaintiff di Bari when she was 27 years old and fit the “brand” of what  
12 the male Co-Founders wanted in an Executive Admin (“EA”). So long as Plaintiff di Bari smiled,  
13 endured derogatory and demeaning comments regarding women (including but not limited to the  
14 statement that post-partum depression is not real, comments about her appearance, and comments  
15 about the appearance of other women), socialized with Kroeker and other male employees at company  
16 events outside the office, and provided “uplifting pep” in the office, she fit into the misogynistic  
17 environment that Woodline Partners maintained. Ms. di Bari challenged the status quo when she  
18 became a mother, raised concerns about harassment and discrimination based on sex/gender, and  
19 voiced her own needs as a new mother to accommodate her post-partum depression and anxiety.  
20 Plaintiff di Bari was looking forward to one of the more exciting times in her life as a new mother. In  
21 response, Woodline Partners fired her, without regard for who she was as a young woman, as a new  
22 mother, or her legal rights.

23 Plaintiff di Bari now brings this action because she suffered harassment and discrimination,  
24 raised concerns about that harassment and discrimination, and, as a result, experienced a retaliatory  
25 and discriminatory wrongful termination of her employment from Woodline Partners. Woodline  
26 Partners’ unlawful conduct has derailed Plaintiff di Bari’s career and caused her significant emotional  
27 and monetary harm. Plaintiff di Bari brings this action against all Defendants for noneconomic,  
28 economic and full compensatory damages, punitive damages under Civil Code section 3294, pre-

1 judgment interest under Code of Civil Procedure section 3291, costs and reasonable attorneys' fees  
2 under Government Code section 12965, injunctive relief, and other such relief as this Court deems  
3 appropriate.

4 **PARTIES**

5 1. Plaintiff di Bari is, and at all relevant times was, a resident of the County of Contra  
6 Costa, in the State of California.

7 2. Defendant Woodline Partners is, and at all times mentioned in this Complaint was,  
8 authorized to operate by the State of California and authorized and qualified to do business in the  
9 County of San Francisco. Woodline Partners' principal place of business and headquarters is located  
10 at 4 Embarcadero Center, Suite 3450, San Francisco, California 94111.

11 3. Defendant Karl Kroeker is a resident of the State of Florida.

12 4. Defendant Leah Desmond is, and all times mentioned in this Complaint was, a resident  
13 of the County of Contra Costa, in the State of California.

14 5. Defendants Does 1 to 50, inclusive, are sued under fictitious names pursuant to Code  
15 of Civil Procedure section 474. Plaintiff is informed and believes, and on that basis alleges, that each  
16 of the defendants sued under fictitious names is in some manner responsible for the wrongs and  
17 damages alleged below, and in so acting was functioning as the agent, servant, partner, and employee  
18 of the co-defendants, and in taking the actions mentioned below was acting within the course and  
19 scope of his or her authority as such agent, servant, partner, and employee, with the permission and  
20 consent of the co-defendants. The named Defendants and Doe Defendants are sometimes hereafter  
21 referred to, collectively and/or individually, as "Defendants."

22 6. All Defendants compelled, coerced, aided, and/or abetted the harassment,  
23 discrimination, and retaliation alleged in this Complaint, conduct that is prohibited under Government  
24 Code section 12940, *et seq.* All Defendants were responsible for the events and damages alleged  
25 herein, including on the following bases: (a) Defendants committed the acts alleged; (b) at all relevant  
26 times, one or more of the Defendants was the agent or employee, and/or acted under the control or  
27 supervision of one or more of the remaining Defendants and, in committing the acts alleged, acted  
28 within the course and scope of such agency and employment and/or is or are otherwise liable for

1 Plaintiff's damages; (c) at all relevant times, there existed a unity of ownership and interest between  
2 or among two or more of the Defendants such that any individuality and separateness between or  
3 among those Defendants has ceased, and Defendants are the alter egos of one another. Defendants  
4 exercised dominion and control over one another to such an extent that any individuality or  
5 separateness of Defendants does not, and at all times mentioned did not, exist. Adherence to the fiction  
6 of the separate existence of Defendants would permit abuse of the corporate privilege and would  
7 sanction fraud and promote injustice. Defendants' actions were taken by employees, supervisors,  
8 executives, officers, and directors during employment with all Defendants, were taken on behalf of all  
9 Defendants, and were engaged in, authorized, ratified, and approved of by all other Defendants.

10 7. Woodline Partners employed Plaintiff di Bari, as defined in the Fair Employment and  
11 Housing Act ("FEHA") at Government Code section 12926(d).

12 8. Woodline Partners also compelled, coerced, aided, and abetted the harassment,  
13 discrimination, and retaliation, conduct that is prohibited under Government Code section 12940, *et*  
14 *seq.*

15 9. Finally, at all relevant times mentioned herein, all Defendants acted as agents of all  
16 other Defendants in committing the acts alleged herein. Government Code section 12926(d).

17 **VENUE**

18 10. The actions at issue in this case occurred in significant part in the State of California in  
19 the County of San Francisco.

20 11. The office of Woodline Partners is located at 4 Embarcadero Center, Suite 3450, San  
21 Francisco, California 94111. Plaintiff di Bari worked a hybrid schedule for Woodline Partners, with  
22 some days where she was physically present in the County of San Francisco at the offices of Woodline  
23 Partners in San Francisco, and with some days where she worked remotely and was physically present  
24 in the County of Contra Costa. At the time that Woodline Partners terminated her employment,  
25 Woodline Partners had assigned Plaintiff di Bari a schedule where she worked three days per week at  
26 the office in San Francisco and two days per week remote. But for the unlawful employment practices  
27 alleged herein, Plaintiff di Bari would have continued working for Woodline Partners, at least in part,  
28 while physically present in the County of San Francisco. Venue is therefore proper in the County of

1 San Francisco because it is the county in which the unlawful employment practices occurred and in  
2 which Plaintiff di Bari would have continued working but for the unlawful practices.

3 12. Under the FEHA, this case can alternatively, at Plaintiff di Bari’s choice, be filed:

4 “[I]n any county in the state in which the unlawful practice is alleged to have been  
5 committed, in the county in which the records relevant to the practice are maintained  
6 and administered, or in the county in which the aggrieved person would have worked  
7 or would have had access to the public accommodation but for the alleged unlawful  
8 practice, but if the defendant is not found within any of these counties, an action may  
9 be brought within the county of the defendant’s residence or principal office.”

10 Government Code § 12965.

11 13. “[I]n the absence of an affirmative showing to the contrary, the presumption is that the  
12 county in which the title of the actions shows that the case is brought is, prima facie, the proper county  
13 for the commencement and trial of the action.” *Mission Imports, Inc. v. Superior Court*, 31 Cal. 3d  
14 921, 928 (1982). The FEHA venue statute thus “affords a wide choice of venue to persons who bring  
15 actions under the FEHA.” *Brown v. Superior Court*, 37 Cal. 3d 477, 486 (1984). “[T]he special  
16 provisions of the FEHA venue statute control in cases involving FEHA claims joined with non-FEHA  
17 claims arising from the same facts.” *Id.* at 487.

18 **FACTS COMMON TO ALL CAUSES OF ACTION**

19 14. Woodline Partners is a Hedge Fund (*i.e.*, an investment fund). Woodline Partners  
20 covers North America, European, and Asian markets. Woodline Partners invests funds for pensions,  
21 investment groups, and individuals. On information and belief, and as of March 29, 2023, Woodline  
22 Partners has approximately \$16.75 billion under its management.

23 15. Woodline Partners was co-founded by three men – Karl Kroeker (“Kroeker”), Matthew  
24 Hooker (“Hooker”), and Mike Rockefeller (“Rockefeller”). Kroeker is a man in his 50s. Hooker and  
25 Rockefeller are men in their 40s. At all relevant times, Kroeker was the Co-Chief Investment Officer  
26 of Woodline Partners, Hooker was the Chief Operating Officer of Woodline Partners, and Rockefeller  
27 was the Co-Chief Investment Officer of Woodline Partners.

28 16. Woodline Partners hired Plaintiff di Bari as an EA in April 2019. Plaintiff di Bari was  
one of the first approximately 20 employees at Woodline Partners. Woodline Partners initially  
assigned Plaintiff di Bari to support Hooker. In fall 2019, Plaintiff di Bari began to support the Asia

1 Investment Team, which consisted of approximately three Senior Portfolio Managers, two Analysts,  
2 and two Associates.

3 17. Plaintiff di Bari is young woman and a new mother. When Woodline Partners hired  
4 Plaintiff di Bari, she was 27 years old and one of three EAs – all young women. Since that time,  
5 Woodline Partners has grown to approximately 75 employees. Woodline Partners now has six EAs  
6 and two hybrid EA/Receptionist positions. One hundred percent (100%) of the employees that  
7 Woodline Partners has hired for the EA and hybrid EA positions were and are young women. Most  
8 of the EAs and hybrid EAs are between ages 23 and 33. The “oldest” EA is 37.

9 18. Since at least January 1, 2023, Leah Desmond (“Desmond”) has been the Admin  
10 Director for Woodline Partners.

11 19. Plaintiff di Bari was qualified for the EA role and demonstrated strong job performance  
12 throughout her tenure with Woodline Partners. Throughout her employment, Plaintiff di Bari earned  
13 positive performance appraisals and favorable feedback from the Chief Operating Officer and her  
14 Portfolio Managers, Analysts, and Associates, as well as Woodline Partners’ clients.

15 20. During her employment with Woodline Partners, Plaintiff di Bari married and became  
16 the mother of a young child. She was pregnant while employed by Woodline Partners, causing her to  
17 request and take a maternity leave from October 2022 through March 2023. Because of her pregnancy,  
18 and following her return from maternity leave, Plaintiff di Bari suffered from post-partum depression  
19 and anxiety, causing her to request a temporarily modified work schedule as a reasonable  
20 accommodation for her post-partum depression and anxiety. Under the care of a physician, she  
21 requested a temporary schedule of two days in the office and three remote days per week, rather than  
22 the assigned schedule of three days in the office and two remote days per week.

23 21. During her employment at Woodline Partners, Plaintiff di Bari engaged in protected  
24 activity by opposing and reporting conduct that she reasonably believed was unlawful, including but  
25 not limited to conduct that she reasonably believed was harassing and/or discriminatory, and by  
26 requesting a reasonable accommodation for her post-partum depression and anxiety.

27 22. Throughout her employment at Woodline Partners, Plaintiff di Bari faced recurrent  
28 harassment and mistreatment based on her sex and gender, conduct which she opposed and reported

1 to Woodline Partners. All such conduct offended Plaintiff di Bari, was unwelcome, and contributed  
2 to creating a hostile, intimidating, and oppressive, misogynistic work environment.

3 23. By way of illustration, Kroeker took Plaintiff di Bari and five other EAs (again, all  
4 young women) to a company happy hour at Sens Restaurant in San Francisco. At the happy hour, he  
5 said he wanted to pose a “hypothetical.” Kroeker asked: “Would you rather be in a relationship with  
6 a guy who cheated on you by having a one night stand that was passionate but purely physical, or a  
7 guy who cheated on you by having an emotional affair with a woman for eight months?” Kroeker, a  
8 Co-Founder and Co-Chief Investment Officer, then went around the table and asked each female EA,  
9 *i.e.*, his subordinates, to answer the question separately. This was one of many inappropriate  
10 “hypotheticals” that Kroeker asked to the EAs over the past three years.

11 24. On another occasion, in approximately October 2022, Kroeker sent Plaintiff di Bari an  
12 email, which stated that he had shown his female au pair a photo of Plaintiff di Bari, and the au pair  
13 thought Plaintiff di Bari was very pretty. Plaintiff di Bari was surprised to receive this email,  
14 unsolicited, from Kroeker. This unsolicited comment from Kroeker, a much older man, Co-Founder  
15 of Woodline Partners, and her superior, made her uncomfortable.

16 25. On another occasion, Kroeker took the group of young EAs out to a company dinner  
17 and then suggested they go together to a “dive bar” named Johnny Brown’s. At the bar, Kroeker  
18 repeatedly stated to Plaintiff di Bari that he thought the other women at the bar were unattractive  
19 compared to Plaintiff di Bari and the female EAs. This comment by her superior made Plaintiff di  
20 Bari uncomfortable.

21 26. In fall 2022, Woodline Partners transitioned from a fully remote work schedule to a  
22 hybrid office/remote schedule for EAs. Going forward, Woodline Partners required EAs to work in  
23 the office one day per week (on Wednesday), and work remotely four days per week. At a meeting  
24 on or about September 21, 2022, to discuss the new schedule, Plaintiff di Bari and the EAs were  
25 informed that Woodline Partners implemented the new in-office requirement because Mike  
26 Rockefeller, one of the male Co-Founders and the Co-Chief Investment Officer, likes to see the female  
27 EAs in the office because they make him happier. Rockefeller said the EAs (again, all young women)  
28 “bring happiness and liveliness into the office.” At that meeting, Plaintiff di Bari complained that this

1 misogynistic rationale was not fair to the female employees. She said: “Mike’s happiness is not my  
2 responsibility.”

3 27. From October 2022 through March 2023, Plaintiff di Bari took a maternity leave for  
4 the birth of her son.

5 28. In March 2023, when Plaintiff di Bari returned from maternity leave, she and the other  
6 EAs worked a hybrid schedule of one day per week in the office and four days per week remote. At  
7 all relevant times, Plaintiff di Bari was able to successfully perform the essential duties of her job as  
8 an EA while working remotely four days per week – as evidenced by the fact that she received constant  
9 praise and positive performance reviews while working a hybrid schedule of one day per week in the  
10 office and four days per week remote. By way of illustration, in an April 26, 2023 email, Hooker  
11 praised Plaintiff di Bari’s performance while she worked a schedule of *one* day per week in the office  
12 and four days per week remote:

13 [Y]our contributions have been significant to the success of Woodline. The Asia teams  
14 in particular must take an extra amount of diligence, preparation and organizational  
15 efforts given the time zone gap, language challenges, etc and since Day 1 you have  
made it look easy, which we know it is not. Thanks for everything!

16 29. On April 12, 2023, when Plaintiff di Bari arrived at the office, Desmond pulled her into  
17 a room. Desmond stated: “I want to let you know there is going to be a communication going out in  
18 the coming weeks about wanting everyone to be in the office three days per week.” Plaintiff di Bari  
19 started crying because she was worried about being in the office that many days per week, rather than  
20 working from home. Plaintiff di Bari had only been back from maternity leave for approximately one  
21 month and was experiencing post-partum depression and anxiety. At all relevant times following  
22 Plaintiff di Bari’s return from maternity leave, she was receiving treatment from a physician for post-  
23 partum depression and anxiety.

24 30. Plaintiff di Bari told Desmond, the Admin Director, about her post-partum depression  
25 and that it would be difficult to be physically in the office three days per week. Desmond, who was  
26 pregnant the year before, cautioned Plaintiff di Bari that she never talked about issues with her  
27 pregnancy *because Kroeker said he did not believe that post-partum depression was real*. Kroeker  
28 told Desmond that post-partum issues do not really exist for women. Plaintiff di Bari was appalled



1 that Kroeker would make such a demeaning and disparaging comment about the challenges women  
2 face post-childbirth. Plaintiff di Bari asked Desmond how Kroeker could possibly believe that post-  
3 partum depression was made up. Desmond responded: “I don’t know. I didn’t argue with him.”

4 31. On April 19, 2023, there was a meeting for all EAs in the office regarding the new  
5 hybrid schedule of three days per week in the office. Desmond said: “The guys are taking this  
6 seriously.” EAs needed to come into the office or Woodline Partners would replace them. Desmond  
7 then reiterated: “Come in or you will be replaced.” When Desmond referred to “the guys,” Plaintiff  
8 di Bari understood her to mean Kroeker, Hooker, and Rockefeller.

9 32. On April 26, 2023, Woodline Partners held another meeting to reiterate the new hybrid  
10 schedule for EAs. After that meeting, Plaintiff di Bari spoke with Charlton, one of the male Portfolio  
11 Managers that she assisted. Plaintiff di Bari notified Charlton about her post-partum issues and asked  
12 if he would be OK with her working remotely more than two days per week. Charlton responded: “I  
13 don’t have an issue with you not coming in for all three days. I’m going to be up in Martis Camp  
14 [near Lake Tahoe] throughout the summer.”

15 33. In May 2023, Kroeker took Plaintiff di Bari and the female EAs out to a company  
16 dinner at a restaurant named Akira Back. Kroeker said he wanted to propose another “hypothetical.”  
17 Knowing that Plaintiff di Bari had recently returned from maternity leave following her pregnancy  
18 and childbirth, Kroeker asked: “Would you rather have a man who goes to the bar to drink while you  
19 are in labor during childbirth, or would you rather have a man who wears a fake pair of breasts for a  
20 year to assist with breast feeding?” Kroeker then went around the table and asked Plaintiff di Bari and  
21 each of the EAs (again, his subordinates) to answer the question separately. Afterwards, Kroeker sent  
22 an email to Plaintiff di Bari and the female EAs that thanked them “for choosing the bar-man (husband  
23 who goes to the bar during delivery) vs. the milk-man (wears a fake chest with milk for a year to assist  
24 in feeding).”

25 34. In May 2023, a few weeks before Woodline Partners fired Plaintiff di Bari, Kroeker  
26 asked a stranger on the sidewalk to take a group picture of Kroeker with Plaintiff di Bari and the EAs  
27 (again, all young women). In the photo, Kroeker stood in the group of young, female EAs. After the  
28 stranger, an unknown male, returned the camera, and as Kroeker and the EAs huddled around the

1 camera to look at the picture, Kroeker asked: “What would you do if we got the phone back from that  
2 guy and all of the photos were just of Gaby’s breasts?” Gaby was one of the young, female EAs, and  
3 was pregnant. Plaintiff di Bari was mortified. She understood Kroeker’s comment to refer to the size  
4 of Gaby’s breasts due to her pregnancy. Plaintiff di Bari stood up to Kroeker and said: “You can’t say  
5 that.” Kroeker coyly responded: “Oh, am I not supposed to say that?”

6 35. On May 10, 2023, Desmond held another meeting with the EAs regarding the new  
7 hybrid work schedule for EAs. At that meeting, the female EAs discussed the summer travel plans of  
8 the men they assisted. For instance, the female EAs noted that Rockefeller, a Co-Founder and Co-  
9 Chief Investment Officer, would be on the East Coast all summer building a new house and not in the  
10 San Francisco office. Hooker, a Co-Founder and Chief Operating Officer, would be out of the office  
11 for half the summer.

12 36. Plaintiff di Bari stated that Charlton would be at his cabin at Martis Camp throughout  
13 the summer. Plaintiff di Bari then asked: “How does the three days per week mandate apply to us,  
14 when all of our guys are not going to be in the office?” Desmond responded: “It’s for EAs.” In other  
15 words, the new hybrid schedule that required three days per week in the office applied only to young,  
16 female EAs – not male employees.

17 37. Plaintiff di Bari then asked: “Aren’t there laws in California that would make it OK for  
18 some of us to not be in the office for all three days based on our situations?” Desmond, Woodline  
19 Partners’ Admin Director, responded: “I’m not aware of that.” Plaintiff di Bari voiced her concerns  
20 about this unequal treatment: “I don’t think it is fair for it to be required for the EA team to be in all  
21 summer, when our male PMs [Portfolio Managers] get to be off at their summer houses.” Desmond  
22 responded: “I don’t feel comfortable telling that to Matt Hooker or Karl Kroeker – you can tell them.”

23 38. After the meeting, other female EAs told Plaintiff di Bari that they were “proud” of her  
24 for speaking up about the unequal treatment. Plaintiff di Bari responded that she was concerned about  
25 retaliation because she had “stuck her neck out.” One EA told Plaintiff di Bari that she was also  
26 experiencing complications related to her pregnancy, and she was nervous to ask for an  
27 accommodation because she was afraid management at Woodline Partners would hold it against her.  
28 That EA told Plaintiff di Bari that she had not been aware of California laws that would make it OK

1 for her to ask for an accommodation until Plaintiff di Bari said something at the meeting. Plaintiff di  
2 Bari said she was “going out on a limb here,” because she had reached out to Erin Mullen (“Mullen”),  
3 Woodline Partners’ General Counsel and Chief Compliance Officer, to request a meeting to discuss  
4 her personal situation and ask for an accommodation regarding the new three-days per week in the  
5 office schedule for EAs.

6 39. Later that same day, on May 10, 2023, Plaintiff di Bari met with Mullen in Mullen’s  
7 office. At the meeting, Plaintiff di Bari said she wanted to discuss the new policy that required EAs  
8 to be in the office three days per week. Plaintiff di Bari told Mullen about the post-partum depression  
9 and anxiety she had experienced since the birth of her son. Plaintiff di Bari asked if it would be OK  
10 for her to work two days per week in the office, rather than three days per week in the office, for the  
11 next three to six months while she continued to receive treatment from a physician for her post-partum  
12 depression and anxiety.

13 40. Mullen said: “Yeah, I don’t see why that would be a problem. I’ll have to discuss it  
14 and figure out formally how to move forward with this.” Plaintiff di Bari left the meeting with Mullen  
15 believing that Woodline Partners would grant her request for a reasonable accommodation for her  
16 medical condition related to her pregnancy/childbirth so that she could temporarily work from home  
17 three days per week instead of two days per week.

18 41. On May 16, 2023, almost a week later, Mullen emailed Plaintiff di Bari a form entitled  
19 “Request for Information from Medical Provider.” Mullen said this was so that Woodline Partners  
20 could “consider your accommodation request.” Plaintiff di Bari was surprised by Mullen’s use of the  
21 word “consider,” because Mullen had previously seemed understanding about her post-partum issues  
22 and had said “I don’t think this will be a problem.”

23 42. Plaintiff di Bari subsequently met with her physician, a licensed Medical Doctor, to  
24 review and complete the form. The completed form, which Plaintiff di Bari’s physician signed,  
25 notified Woodline Partners that Plaintiff di Bari had a medical condition, that the expected duration of  
26 the condition was three to six months, and that she could perform the essential functions of her position  
27 with a modified schedule that allowed Plaintiff di Bari to *temporarily work in the office two days per*  
28 *week, rather than the new schedule of three days per week.* At the time of this request, Plaintiff di

1 Bari was successfully performing the duties of the EA position while working a schedule of one day  
2 per week in the office and four days per week remote.

3 43. On May 22, 2023, Plaintiff di Bari emailed the completed form to Mullen. On  
4 information and belief, Mullen and/or other individuals at Woodline Partners informed Kroeker,  
5 Hooker, and Rockefeller that Plaintiff di Bari was experiencing post-partum depression and anxiety  
6 and that was the basis for her request for a reasonable accommodation to work remotely three days  
7 per week instead of two days per week. By way of illustration, Desmond has a close personal  
8 relationship with Kroeker, in addition to their work relationship. On information and belief, Desmond  
9 told Kroeker that Plaintiff di Bari was experiencing post-partum depression and anxiety and that was  
10 the basis for her request for a reasonable accommodation to work remotely three days per week instead  
11 of two days per week.

12 44. On May 23, 2023, Plaintiff di Bari saw a meeting scheduled on her calendar entitled  
13 “catch up,” with no additional detail. The meeting was scheduled for Thursday, May 25, 2023, at  
14 10:00 a.m. Plaintiff di Bari switched over to the scheduling assistant for that calendar invite and saw  
15 that the participants in the meeting were not only Mullen, but also Hooker. Plaintiff di Bari was  
16 concerned that Hooker was going to be involved in the call. Plaintiff di Bari did not feel comfortable  
17 speaking with Hooker about her post-partum depression and anxiety. Plaintiff di Bari emailed Mullen  
18 and asked if there was a topic she should plan to discuss. Mullen responded by email: “We are going  
19 to talk about your accommodation request.”

20 45. On May 24, 2023, Desmond revoked Plaintiff di Bari’s rights to access the Adobe  
21 Admin Console. On information and belief, Desmond knew that Woodline Partners was going to fire  
22 Plaintiff di Bari the next day, which is why she revoked her access to Adobe.

23 46. On May 25, 2023, at 10:00 a.m., Plaintiff di Bari logged into a Zoom meeting with  
24 Hooker and Mullen. Plaintiff di Bari knew within the first 10 seconds it was not good. The tone was  
25 somber. Mullen said: “We consulted outside counsel. Based on your request to only come in the  
26 office two days per week instead of three, we are not going to be able to accommodate this request.”  
27 Plaintiff di Bari was shocked. Plaintiff di Bari said: “I’m simply asking for one extra day at home,  
28 and your solution is to fire me? How does that make sense?” Mullen responded: “We consulted with

1 outside counsel and this is what we believe is best.” Plaintiff di Bari could not believe what was  
2 happening. She had asked for a reasonable accommodation for her medical condition related to her  
3 pregnancy/childbirth – and Woodline Partners’ response was to fire her.

4 47. Plaintiff di Bari, still incredulous, said: “Matt, do you have anything to say to me?”  
5 Hooker had been silent. Hooker responded: “I don’t. We consulted with outside counsel and believe  
6 this is the best way forward.” Mullen said: “Your employment is terminated effective May 25, 2023.  
7 This is our decision.” The meeting was over by 10:08 a.m. Hooker and Mullen did not even say thank  
8 you to Plaintiff di Bari for her hard work over the past four years. They were incredibly cold. All  
9 four years of her hard work had been erased in an eight-minute Zoom meeting. Plaintiff di Bari stared  
10 at her screen in shock. Then she noticed that Woodline Partners had shut off her email access by 10:13  
11 a.m.

12 48. Shortly after the Zoom meeting, Plaintiff di Bari notified Taylor and Gaby, two other  
13 female EAs, that Woodline Partners had fired her. Taylor and Gaby were shocked and heartbroken.  
14 Taylor and Gaby had known that Plaintiff di Bari had met with Hooker and Mullen to discuss her  
15 request for a temporary schedule modification to accommodate her post-partum depression and  
16 anxiety. Plaintiff di Bari, Taylor, and Gaby arranged a three-way call to discuss what just happened.  
17 For privacy, Gaby took the call in a private room in the office of Woodline Partners and closed the  
18 door, and Taylor left the office of Woodline Partners to take the call in the lobby at Embarcadero  
19 Center. Desmond, the Admin Director, soon tracked down Gaby and Taylor, which forced them to  
20 end the call. Desmond knocked on the door of the office where Gaby was on the call and told her that  
21 she had to go meet with Hooker and Mullen. Desmond then called Taylor on her cell phone and told  
22 her that she had to return to the office to meet with Hooker and Mullen. Mullen told Gaby and Taylor:  
23 “We are not saying don’t be friends with her [Plaintiff di Bari], but do not discuss the details of what  
24 just happened.”

25 49. Woodline Partners’ stated reasons for termination are false and a pretext for the true  
26 reasons: discrimination based on Plaintiff di Bari’s sex, gender, and pregnancy-related disability and  
27 retaliation for her exercise of her rights under the FEHA and opposition to unlawful conduct, including  
28 discrimination and harassment based on sex, and to communicate a hostile message based on sex.

1 Moreover, Woodline Partners tried to hide its harassing and discriminatory treatment of Plaintiff di  
2 Bari by wrongfully instructing Gaby and Taylor, two other female EAs, that they could not discuss or  
3 disclose information with Plaintiff di Bari about unlawful acts in the workplace.

4 50. When Woodline Partners fired Plaintiff di Bari, it sent a hostile message loud and clear  
5 to the other female EAs, including at least one who was pregnant. If you challenge the misogynistic  
6 status quo or voice your own needs for pregnancy and childbirth-related conditions, Woodline Partners  
7 will fire you without regard for who you are as a woman, as a new mother, or your legal rights.

8 51. Even after Woodline Partners fired Plaintiff di Bari, Desmond, its Admin Director,  
9 continued to retaliate against Plaintiff di Bari by making false and defamatory statements to third  
10 parties regarding Plaintiff di Bari. In May or June 2023, following the termination of Plaintiff di Bari's  
11 employment, Desmond told Shelly Sloan, an individual who works and/or worked at Partner Fund  
12 Management, another Hedge Fund, that "Woodline fired Danielle for refusing to come into the office."

13 52. *Economic Damages:* As a consequence of Defendants' conduct, Plaintiff di Bari has  
14 suffered and will suffer harm, including lost past and future income and employment benefits, damage  
15 to her career, and lost wages, unpaid expenses, and penalties, as well as interest on unpaid wages at  
16 the legal rate from and after each payday on which those wages should have been paid, in a sum to be  
17 proven at trial.

18 53. *Noneconomic Damages:* As a consequence of Defendants' conduct, Plaintiff di Bari  
19 has suffered and will suffer psychological and emotional distress, humiliation, and mental and physical  
20 pain and anguish, in a sum to be proven at trial.

21 54. *Punitive Damages:* Defendants' conduct constitutes oppression, fraud, and/or malice  
22 under California Civil Code section 3294 and, thus, entitles Plaintiff to an award of exemplary and/or  
23 punitive damages.

24 a. *Malice:* Defendants' conduct was committed with malice within the meaning of  
25 California Civil Code section 3294, including that: (a) Defendants acted with intent to  
26 cause injury to Plaintiff di Bari and/or acted with reckless disregard for Plaintiff di  
27 Bari's injury, including by terminating Plaintiff di Bari's employment and/or taking  
28 other adverse job actions against Plaintiff di Bari because of her sex, gender, and

1 protected activities; and/or (b) Defendants' conduct was "despicable" and committed  
2 in willful and conscious disregard of Plaintiff di Bari's rights, health, and safety,  
3 including Plaintiff di Bari's right to be free of discrimination, harassment, and  
4 retaliation, and wrongful termination.

5 b. *Oppression*: In addition, and/or alternatively, Defendants' conduct was committed  
6 with oppression within the meaning of California Civil Code section 3294, including  
7 that Defendants' actions against Plaintiff di Bari because of her sex, gender, and  
8 protected activities were "despicable" and subjected Plaintiff di Bari to cruel and unjust  
9 hardship, in knowing disregard of Plaintiff di Bari's rights to a workplace free of  
10 discrimination, harassment, retaliation, and wrongful termination.

11 c. *Fraud*: In addition, and/or alternatively, Defendants' conduct, as alleged, was  
12 fraudulent within the meaning of California Civil Code section 3294, including that  
13 Defendants asserted false (pretextual) grounds for taking adverse employment actions  
14 against Plaintiff di Bari, thereby to cause Plaintiff di Bari hardship and deprive her of  
15 legal rights.

16 55. *Attorneys' Fees*: Plaintiff di Bari has incurred and continues to incur legal expenses  
17 and attorneys' fees.

18 56. *Injunctive relief*: Plaintiff di Bari seeks the institution of anti-harassment procedures,  
19 in addition to other injunctive relief per the Prayer below.

20 57. *Exhaustion of administrative remedies*: Before filing this action, Plaintiff di Bari  
21 exhausted her administrative remedies by filing a timely administrative complaint with the California  
22 Civil Rights Department and received a right-to-sue letter, which is attached as Exhibit A.

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1 **FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION**

2 **Hostile Work Environment Harassment on the Bases of Sex and Gender (Government Code §**  
3 **12900, *et seq.*)**

4 **Against Woodline Partners; Kroeker; and Does 1 through 50, Inclusive**

5 58. The allegations set forth in preceding paragraphs are re-alleged and incorporated herein  
6 by reference.

7 59. At all times herein mentioned, FEHA, Government Code section 12940, *et seq.*, was in  
8 full force and effect and was binding on Defendants. This statute requires Defendants to refrain from  
9 harassing any employee because of the employee's sex and gender.

10 60. At all times mentioned herein, FEHA, Government Code section 12940(j)(3), provided  
11 for personal liability for harassment: "An employee of an entity subject to this subdivision is  
12 personally liable for any harassment prohibited by this section that is perpetrated by the employee,  
13 regardless of whether the employer or covered entity knows or should have known of the conduct and  
14 fails to take immediate and appropriate corrective action."

15 61. Under FEHA, " 'harassment' because of sex includes sexual harassment, gender  
16 harassment, and harassment based on pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions. Sexually  
17 harassing conduct need not be motivated by sexual desire." Government Code § 12940(j)(4)(c).

18 62. "[T]he prohibition against sexual harassment includes protection from a broad range of  
19 conduct, ranging from expressly or impliedly conditioning employment benefits on submission to or  
20 tolerance of unwelcome sexual advances, to the creation of a work environment that is hostile or  
21 abusive on the basis of sex." *Lyle v. Warner Brothers Television Productions*, 38 Cal. 4th 264, 277  
22 (2006). A plaintiff alleging a hostile or abusive work environment based on sex or gender "need not  
23 show evidence of unwanted sexual advances." *Id.* at 278, *accord, Mogilefsky v. Superior Court*, 20  
24 Cal. App. 4th 1409, 1414-1415 (1993) ("a cause of action for sexual harassment on a hostile  
25 environment theory need not allege any sexual advances whatsoever.").

26 63. Further, under FEHA, claims of sexual harassment and sex discrimination can overlap.  
27 "Although discrimination and harassment are separate wrongs, they are sometimes closely  
28 interrelated, and even overlapping, particularly with regard to proof." *Roby v. McKesson Corp.*, 47



1 Cal. 4th 686, 707 (2009). For example, “in some cases the hostile message that constitutes the  
2 harassment is conveyed through official employment actions, and therefore evidence that would  
3 otherwise be associated with a discrimination claim can form the basis of a harassment claim.” *Id.* at  
4 708. “[I]n analyzing the sufficiency of evidence in support of a harassment claim, there is no basis for  
5 excluding evidence of biased personnel management actions so long as that evidence is relevant to  
6 prove the communication of a hostile message.” *Id.*

7 64. “A single incident of harassing conduct is sufficient to create a triable issue regarding  
8 the existence of a hostile work environment if the harassing conduct has unreasonably interfered with  
9 the plaintiff’s work performance or created an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working  
10 environment.” Government Code § 12923(b).

11 65. “The existence of a hostile work environment depends upon the totality of the  
12 circumstances and a discriminatory remark, even if not made directly in the context of an employment  
13 decision or uttered by a nondecisionmaker, may be relevant, circumstantial evidence of  
14 discrimination.” Government Code § 12923(c).

15 66. “The legal standard for sexual harassment should not vary by type of workplace. It is  
16 irrelevant that a particular occupation may have been characterized by a greater frequency of sexually  
17 related commentary or conduct in the past. In determining whether or not a hostile environment  
18 existed, courts should only consider the nature of the workplace when engaging in or witnessing  
19 prurient conduct and commentary is integral to the performance of the job duties.” Government Code  
20 § 12923(d).

21 67. “Harassment cases are rarely appropriate for disposition on summary judgment. In that  
22 regard, the Legislature affirms the decision in *Nazir v. United Airlines, Inc.* (2009) 178 Cal. App. 4th  
23 243 and its observation that hostile working environment cases involve issues “not determinable on  
24 paper.” Government Code § 12923(e).

25 68. “When the harasser is a supervisor, the employer is strictly liable for the supervisor’s  
26 actions.” *Roby v. McKesson Corp.*, 47 Cal. 4th 686, 707 (2009).

27 69. “[H]arassment by a high-level manager of an organization may be more injurious to  
28 the victim because of the prestige and authority that the manager enjoys.” *Roby v. McKesson Corp.*,

1 47 Cal.4th 686, 707 (2009). Kroeker was, at all relevant times, an employee of Woodline Partners, as  
2 well as its Co-Founder and Co-Chief Investment Officer.

3 70. Finally, “the continuing violation doctrine permits a plaintiff to recover for unlawful  
4 practices occurring outside the limitations period if the practices continued into that period.” *Jumaane*  
5 *v. City of Los Angeles*, 241 Cal. App. 4th 1390, 1402 (2015). Here, Defendants’ harassing conduct  
6 against Plaintiff di Bari based on her sex and gender, including but not limited to official employment  
7 actions and other mistreatment, was part of a continuing violation that did not acquire a degree of  
8 permanence until Plaintiff di Bari’s wrongful discharge.

9 71. Defendants harassed Plaintiff di Bari based upon her sex and gender by, without  
10 limitation, making derogatory and sexist comments about women and post-partum depression, sending  
11 emails with derogatory and sexist comments about women and childbirth, making comments about  
12 Plaintiff di Bari’s physical appearance and the physical appearance of other women, denying Plaintiff  
13 di Bari the opportunity to temporarily work from home two days per week instead of three days per  
14 week because of her sex and gender, deliberately failing to investigate her protected complaints about  
15 sex harassment and discrimination, and taking adverse employment actions against Plaintiff di Bari  
16 because of her sex and gender. Defendants’ recurrent harassment of Plaintiff di Bari culminated in  
17 the discriminatory and retaliatory termination of her employment under false pretenses used to cover  
18 up the true reasons for the adverse employment actions. All such conduct, including but not limited  
19 to official employment actions, was harassing because it was done in furtherance of a widespread  
20 pattern of bias and for the purpose of communicating a hostile message to plaintiff. *See Roby v.*  
21 *McKesson Corp.*, 47 Cal.4th 686 (2009).

22 72. By way of illustration, and without limitation, when Woodline Partners fired Plaintiff  
23 di Bari because of her sex and gender, it had the secondary effect of communicating a severe, hostile,  
24 and threatening message to the other female EAs, including but not limited to Taylor and Gaby, that  
25 Woodline Partners would fire a new mother with post-partum depression and anxiety rather than  
26 provide a modified schedule as a temporary accommodation for those childbirth-related issues.

27 ///

28 ///



1           79.     At all times herein mentioned, FEHA, Government Code section 12940, *et seq.*, was in  
2 full force and effect and was binding on Defendants. This statute requires defendants to refrain from  
3 discriminating against any employee because of the employee’s sex and gender.

4           80.     Under FEHA, “ ‘sex’ includes, but is not limited to, the following: (A) Pregnancy or  
5 medical conditions related to pregnancy; (B) Childbirth or medical conditions related to childbirth;  
6 (C) Breastfeeding or medical conditions related to breastfeeding.” Government Code § 12926(r)(1). “  
7 ‘Sex’ also includes, but is not limited to, a person’s gender.” Government Code § 12926(r)(2).  
8 Therefore, “[d]iscrimination based on the fact that a person is pregnant, has given birth, is  
9 breastfeeding, or has a related medical condition is a form of sex discrimination, prohibited by section  
10 12940(a).” *Lopez v. La Casa De Las Madres*, 89 Cal. App. 5th 365, 378 (2023). “And discrimination  
11 based on the fact that a person suffers from pregnancy-related depression is a form of disability  
12 discrimination, which is also prohibited by section 12940(a).” *Id.*

13           81.     Further, Government Code section 12945 provides: “In addition to the provisions that  
14 govern pregnancy, childbirth, or a related medical condition in Sections 12926 and 12940, each of the  
15 following shall be an unlawful employment practice, unless based upon a bona fide occupational  
16 qualification . . . For an employer to refuse to provide reasonable accommodation for an employee for  
17 a condition related to pregnancy, childbirth, or a related medical condition, if the employee so requests,  
18 with the advice of the employee’s health care provider.”

19           82.     Additionally, “pregnancy discrimination is a form of sex discrimination under article  
20 I, section 8 of the California Constitution.” *Badih v. Myers*, 36 Cal. App. 4th 1289, 1296 (1995).

21           83.     Defendants, through their employees (including but not limited to Kroeker, Hooker,  
22 Rockefeller, and Desmond), made comments to and about Plaintiff di Bari and female EAs that  
23 showed discriminatory motivations, intentions, and consciousness on the bases of her sex and gender.  
24 Plaintiff di Bari believes, and on that basis alleges, that Defendants’ real motivation was to discharge  
25 her and/or take other adverse employment actions because of her sex and gender.

26           84.     Plaintiff di Bari requested, as a reasonable accommodation for her post-partum  
27 depression and anxiety (*i.e.*, medical conditions relating to childbirth), and with the advice and written  
28 request of her physician, to modify her schedule to temporarily work in the office two days per week,

1 instead of Woodline Partners' new policy that female EAs had to work in the office three days per  
2 week. Plaintiff di Bari was qualified to perform the essential functions of her job as an EA while  
3 working a schedule of two days per week in the office. Only two weeks earlier, Hooker had effusively  
4 praised Plaintiff di Bari's job performance while she worked a schedule of *one* day per week in the  
5 office.

6 85. Plaintiff di Bari's sex and gender (including but not limited to her post-partum  
7 depression and anxiety) were substantial motivating reasons in Defendants' decision to terminate  
8 Plaintiff di Bari's employment and/or to take other adverse employment actions against Plaintiff di  
9 Bari.

10 86. As a proximate result of Defendants' willful, knowing, and intentional discrimination  
11 of Plaintiff di Bari, Plaintiff di Bari has sustained and continues to sustain substantial losses of earnings  
12 and other employment benefits.

13 87. As a proximate result of Defendants' willful, knowing, and intentional discrimination  
14 of Plaintiff di Bari, Plaintiff di Bari has suffered and continues to suffer humiliation, emotional  
15 distress, and mental and physical pain and anguish, all to her damage in a sum according to proof.

16 88. Plaintiff di Bari has incurred and continues to incur legal expenses and attorneys' fees.  
17 Pursuant to Government Code section 12965, Plaintiff di Bari is entitled to recover reasonable  
18 attorneys' fees and costs (including expert costs) in an amount according to proof.

19 89. Defendants' discrimination was committed intentionally, in a malicious, fraudulent,  
20 despicable, and/or oppressive manner, and this entitles Plaintiff di Bari to punitive damages against  
21 Defendants.

### 22 **THIRD CAUSE OF ACTION**

#### 23 **Retaliation for Engaging in Protected Activity (Government Code § 12900, *et seq.*)**

#### 24 **Against Woodline Partners; and Does 1 through 50, Inclusive**

25 90. The allegations set forth in preceding paragraphs are re-alleged and incorporated herein  
26 by reference.

27 91. At all times herein mentioned, FEHA, Government Code section 12940, *et seq.*, was in  
28 full force and effect and was binding on Defendants. This statute requires Defendants to refrain from

1 retaliating against any employee making complaints about or opposing discrimination, harassment, or  
2 retaliation, or otherwise engaging in activity protected by the FEHA and/or assisting and/or  
3 participating in an investigation, opposing Defendants' failure to provide rights, including rights to  
4 complain and to assist in a lawsuit, and/or the right to be free of retaliation, in violation of Government  
5 Code section 12940(h).

6 92. Further, at all relevant times herein mentioned, FEHA, Government Code section  
7 12945(4)(b) made it unlawful: "For an employer to interfere with, restrain, or deny the exercise of, or  
8 the attempt to exercise, any right provided under this section," relating to pregnancy, childbirth, or  
9 related medical conditions.

10 93. Further, at all times herein mentioned, FEHA, Government Code section 12940(m)(2)  
11 made it unlawful: "For an employer or other entity covered by this part to . . . retaliate or otherwise  
12 discriminate against a person requesting an accommodation under this subdivision, regardless of  
13 whether the request was granted."

14 94. Plaintiff di Bari's seeking to exercise rights guaranteed under FEHA and/or opposing  
15 Defendants' failure to provide such rights, including the right to be free of harassment and  
16 discrimination, and the right to request a reasonable accommodation for her childbirth-related medical  
17 condition, were substantial motivating reasons in Defendants' decision to fire Plaintiff di Bari and/or  
18 to take other adverse employment actions against Plaintiff di Bari.

19 95. As a proximate result of Defendants' willful, knowing, and intentional retaliation  
20 against Plaintiff di Bari, Plaintiff di Bari has sustained and continues to sustain substantial losses of  
21 earnings and other employment benefits.

22 96. As a proximate result of Defendants' willful, knowing, and intentional retaliation  
23 against Plaintiff di Bari, Plaintiff di Bari has suffered and continues to suffer humiliation, emotional  
24 distress, and mental and physical pain and anguish, all to her damage in a sum according to proof.

25 97. Plaintiff di Bari has incurred and continues to incur legal expenses and attorneys' fees.  
26 Pursuant to Government Code section 12965, Plaintiff di Bari is entitled to recover reasonable  
27 attorneys' fees and costs (including expert costs) in an amount according to proof.

1 98. Defendants’ retaliation was committed intentionally, in a malicious, fraudulent,  
2 despicable, and/or oppressive manner, and this entitles Plaintiff di Bari to punitive damages against  
3 Defendants.

4 **FOURTH CAUSE OF ACTION**

5 **Defamation at Common Law and Civil Code section 46**

6 **Against Desmond; and Does 1 through 50, Inclusive**

7 99. The allegations set forth in preceding paragraphs are re-alleged and incorporated herein  
8 by reference.

9 100. In telling and causing a third-party, non-employee that “Woodline fired Danielle  
10 because she refused to come into the office,” Desmond, the Admin Director for Woodline Partners,  
11 expressed purportedly factual statements about Plaintiff di Bari and implied that there was a factual  
12 basis to evaluate Plaintiff di Bari’s work style and professionalism.

13 101. On information and belief, Desmond communicated this specific statement about  
14 Plaintiff di Bari to Shelly Sloan, an individual who works and/or worked at Partner Fund Management,  
15 another Hedge Fund. Ms. Sloan has then repeated this false statement and therefore distributed it more  
16 broadly to other third parties.

17 102. On information and belief, Ms. Sloan understood this statement to refer to Plaintiff di  
18 Bari, and specifically, to mean that Plaintiff di Bari refused to come into the office for her employer  
19 and would be an ill-advised choice for any future employment.

20 103. The statement that Desmond made to Ms. Sloan regarding Plaintiff di Bari was false.  
21 In particular, and as described above, Plaintiff di Bari never “refused to come into the office.”  
22 Following her return from maternity leave, and even though she was experiencing post-partum  
23 depression and anxiety, Plaintiff di Bari successfully performed her job duties while working a hybrid  
24 schedule with one day per week in the office. When Woodline Partners implemented a hybrid work  
25 schedule that required female EAs to come into the office three days per week, Plaintiff di Bari  
26 requested a temporary schedule of two days per week in the office as a reasonable accommodation for  
27 her post-partum depression and anxiety. Woodline Partners, despite its legal duty, fired Plaintiff di  
28 Bari based on Plaintiff di Bari’s sex, gender, and childbirth-related disability and retaliation for her

1 exercise of her rights under the FEHA and opposition to unlawful conduct, including discrimination  
2 and harassment based on sex, and to communicate a hostile and threatening message to other female  
3 employees.

4 104. Desmond made the above-described defamatory statement with actual malice – *i.e.*,  
5 with knowledge of its falsity, or, alternatively, with a reckless disregard for its falsity.

6 105. Desmond made this statement without privilege or justification.

7 106. The above-described statement concerning Plaintiff di Bari directly injured her by  
8 diminishing her reputation in her profession, trade, and/or business, which has a natural tendency to  
9 lessen her profits.

10 107. The above-described statement conveys a defamatory meaning. It harms Plaintiff di  
11 Bari's reputation as to lower it.

12 108. It was Desmond's expectation that the defamatory statement would injury Plaintiff di  
13 Bari economically, including by lessening her profits.

14 109. As a result of the publication of this false and defamatory statement with actual malice,  
15 Plaintiff di Bari has suffered damages including but not limited to loss to reputation, lost  
16 compensation, lost profits, and increased costs.

17 110. Desmond also acted with oppression, fraud, or malice as defined by Civil Code section  
18 3294 and engaged in highly reprehensible and despicable conduct warranting exemplary damages.

19 **PRAYER**

20 Wherefore, Plaintiff di Bari prays for judgment against Defendants as follows:

- 21 1. For general and special damages, according to proof;
- 22 2. For exemplary damages, according to proof;
- 23 3. For pre-judgment and post-judgment interest on all damages awarded;
- 24 4. For reasonable attorneys' fees;
- 25 5. For costs of suit incurred;
- 26 6. For such other and further relief as the Court may deem just and proper;
- 27 7. For declaratory relief in the following manner: A preliminary and permanent injunction,  
28 and a public injunction, against Defendants and including Woodline Partners' officers,



1 owners, partners, agents, successors, employees, and representatives, and any and all  
2 persons acting in concert with them, from maintaining a hostile work environment on the  
3 basis of sex/gender and for failing to prevent such an environment. At a minimum, such  
4 relief shall include implementation of effective policies and mandatory training (including  
5 but not limited to training for Kroeker and Hooker) to prevent and correct sex/gender-based  
6 harassment and discrimination and a public declaration that Woodline Partners' sexist  
7 practices contravene California law and such practices will not continue and will not be  
8 tolerated.

9 Additionally, **Plaintiff di Bari demands trial of this matter by jury.** The amount demanded  
10 exceeds \$25,000.00 (Government Code § 72055).

11 Dated: August 3, 2023

**LEGGIERI LAW, P.C.**

12  
13 By:   
14 Michael G. Leggieri  
15 Attorneys for Plaintiff  
16 DANIELLE (KESICH) DI BARI  
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# **EXHIBIT A**



## Civil Rights Department

2218 Kausen Drive, Suite 100 | Elk Grove | CA | 95758  
800-884-1684 (voice) | 800-700-2320 (TTY) | California's Relay Service at 711  
calcivilrights.ca.gov | contact.center@calcivilrights.ca.gov

August 3, 2023

Michael Leggieri

,

RE: **Notice to Complainant's Attorney**  
CRD Matter Number: 202308-21503603  
Right to Sue: di Bari / Woodline Partners LP et al.

Dear Michael Leggieri:

Attached is a copy of your complaint of discrimination filed with the Civil Rights Department (CRD) pursuant to the California Fair Employment and Housing Act, Government Code section 12900 et seq. Also attached is a copy of your Notice of Case Closure and Right to Sue.

**Pursuant to Government Code section 12962, CRD will not serve these documents on the employer.** You must serve the complaint separately, to all named respondents. Please refer to the attached Notice of Case Closure and Right to Sue for information regarding filing a private lawsuit in the State of California. A courtesy "Notice of Filing of Discrimination Complaint" is attached for your convenience.

Be advised that the CRD does not review or edit the complaint form to ensure that it meets procedural or statutory requirements.

Sincerely,

Civil Rights Department



## Civil Rights Department

2218 Kausen Drive, Suite 100 | Elk Grove | CA | 95758  
800-884-1684 (voice) | 800-700-2320 (TTY) | California's Relay Service at 711  
calcivilrights.ca.gov | contact.center@calcivilrights.ca.gov

August 3, 2023

**RE: Notice of Filing of Discrimination Complaint**  
CRD Matter Number: 202308-21503603  
Right to Sue: di Bari / Woodline Partners LP et al.

To All Respondent(s):

Enclosed is a copy of a complaint of discrimination that has been filed with the Civil Rights Department (CRD) in accordance with Government Code section 12960. This constitutes service of the complaint pursuant to Government Code section 12962. The complainant has requested an authorization to file a lawsuit. A copy of the Notice of Case Closure and Right to Sue is enclosed for your records.

Please refer to the attached complaint for a list of all respondent(s) and their contact information.

No response to CRD is requested or required.

Sincerely,

Civil Rights Department



## Civil Rights Department

2218 Kausen Drive, Suite 100 | Elk Grove | CA | 95758  
800-884-1684 (voice) | 800-700-2320 (TTY) | California's Relay Service at 711  
calcivilrights.ca.gov | contact.center@calcivilrights.ca.gov

August 3, 2023

Danielle di Bari

RE: **Notice of Case Closure and Right to Sue**  
CRD Matter Number: 202308-21503603  
Right to Sue: di Bari / Woodline Partners LP et al.

Dear Danielle di Bari:

This letter informs you that the above-referenced complaint filed with the Civil Rights Department (CRD) has been closed effective August 3, 2023 because an immediate Right to Sue notice was requested.

This letter is also your Right to Sue notice. According to Government Code section 12965, subdivision (b), a civil action may be brought under the provisions of the Fair Employment and Housing Act against the person, employer, labor organization or employment agency named in the above-referenced complaint. The civil action must be filed within one year from the date of this letter.

To obtain a federal Right to Sue notice, you must contact the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) to file a complaint within 30 days of receipt of this CRD Notice of Case Closure or within 300 days of the alleged discriminatory act, whichever is earlier.

Sincerely,

Civil Rights Department

1 **COMPLAINT OF EMPLOYMENT DISCRIMINATION**  
2 **BEFORE THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA**  
3 **Civil Rights Department**  
4 **Under the California Fair Employment and Housing Act**  
5 **(Gov. Code, § 12900 et seq.)**

6 **In the Matter of the Complaint of**

7 Danielle di Bari

CRD No. 202308-21503603

8 Complainant,

9 vs.

10 Woodline Partners LP  
11 4 Embarcadero Center, Suite 3450  
12 San Francisco, CA 94111

13 Karl Kroeker  
14 [REDACTED]  
15 Delray Beach, FL 33446

16 Respondents

17 **1. Respondent Woodline Partners LP is an employer subject to suit under the California Fair**  
18 **Employment and Housing Act (FEHA) (Gov. Code, § 12900 et seq.).**

19 **2. Complainant is naming Karl Kroeker individual as Co-Respondent(s).**

20 **3. Complainant Danielle di Bari, resides in the City of , State of .**

21 **4. Complainant alleges that on or about May 25, 2023, respondent took the following**  
22 **adverse actions:**

23 **Complainant was harassed** because of complainant's sex/gender, sexual harassment-  
24 **hostile environment, pregnancy, childbirth, breast feeding, and/or related medical conditions.**

25 **Complainant was discriminated against** because of complainant's sex/gender,  
26 **pregnancy, childbirth, breast feeding, and/or related medical conditions, sexual harassment-**  
27 **hostile environment, disability (physical, intellectual/developmental, mental**  
28 **health/psychiatric) and as a result of the discrimination was terminated, denied any**  
**employment benefit or privilege, denied accommodation for pregnancy, denied**  
**accommodation for a disability.**

1 **Complainant experienced retaliation** because complainant reported or resisted any form  
2 of discrimination or harassment, requested or used a pregnancy-disability-related  
3 accommodation, requested or used a disability-related accommodation and as a result was  
4 terminated, denied accommodation for pregnancy, denied accommodation for a disability.

4 **Additional Complaint Details:** Founded by three male investment bankers, Woodline  
5 Partners LP (“Woodline Partners”) is a Hedge Fund that created and maintains a  
6 misogynistic work environment where Executive Admins, exclusively young women, are  
7 expected to endure bawdy jokes, derogatory and demeaning comments, and other  
8 inappropriate conduct, while supporting the predominately male Portfolio Managers,  
9 Analysts, and Traders. Karl Kroeker, Co-Founder and Co-Chief Investment Officer wrote in  
10 an email that the young Executive Admins are important to the “brand” of the Hedge Fund  
11 because “many of us are nerds and need the uplifting pep of you ladies.”  
12 Woodline Partners hired Ms. di Bari when she was 27 years old and fit the “brand” of what  
13 the male Co-Founders wanted in an Executive Admin. So long as Ms. di Bari smiled,  
14 endured derogatory and demeaning comments regarding women (including but not limited  
15 to the statement that post-partum depression is not real, comments about her appearance,  
16 and comments about the appearance of other women), socialized with Kroeker and other  
17 male employees at company events outside the office, and provided “uplifting pep” in the  
18 office, she fit into the misogynistic environment that Woodline Partners maintained. Ms. di  
19 Bari challenged the status quo when she became a mother, raised concerns about  
20 harassment and discrimination based on sex/gender, and voiced her own needs as a new  
21 mother to accommodate her post-partum depression and anxiety. Ms. di Bari was looking  
22 forward to one of the more exciting times in her life as a new mother. In response, Woodline  
23 Partners fired her, without regard for who she was as a young woman, as a new mother, or  
24 her legal rights.

1 VERIFICATION

2 I, **Michael G. Leggieri, Esq.**, am the **Attorney** in the above-entitled complaint. I have  
3 read the foregoing complaint and know the contents thereof. The matters alleged are  
4 based on information and belief, which I believe to be true.

5 On August 3, 2023, I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of  
6 California that the foregoing is true and correct.

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**Oakland, CA**