



Tinder’s Former Vice President of Marketing and Communications Sues Parent Companies Match Group, IAC/Interactive Corp., and Former CEO for Sexual Assault, Cover-up and Wrongful Termination

Elizabeth Graham, Director at Grant & Eisenhofer, represents Rosette Pambakian in lawsuit

LOS ANGELES (August 5, 2019) – Rosette Pambakian, a former senior executive at dating app Tinder and the woman responsible for the brand’s breakout success, has sued former Match Group and Tinder CEO Gregory Blatt for sexual assault, along with Match Group and IAC/Interactive Corp. for its cover-up and her wrongful termination for speaking out. The lawsuit was filed by leading plaintiffs’ law firm Grant & Eisenhofer.

Ms. Pambakian was one of the earliest hires and the longest standing female executive at Tinder. She spearheaded the app’s launch in 2012 and was essential to building the company from early startup into the world’s most popular dating app and multibillion-dollar technology enterprise. As Head of Marketing and Communications, she ran a department of more than 40 employees, as well as external agencies globally, and served as the face of the brand on panels and in the press until her retaliatory termination in 2018.

The lawsuit alleges that Ms. Pambakian was assaulted by former Match Group and Tinder CEO, Gregory Blatt, at Tinder’s holiday party at a hotel in Beverly Hills in December 2016, after he made aggressive sexual remarks to her earlier in the night. In an effort to avoid his advances, she quickly distanced herself, found two colleagues, and went upstairs with them to one of their hotel rooms. However, Mr. Blatt found her in the room and assaulted her, in the presence of her colleagues.

According to the complaint, a meaningful investigation of the assault, which was required under company policies and California law, never occurred and IAC and Match “failed to interview a key eyewitness and ignored damning facts, because they did not want to risk their bottom line. In fact, [Ms. Pambakian] was marginalized, subjected to additional harassing, offensive, and insulting behavior, put on administrative leave, publicly accused of consenting to [his] advances, and finally, wrongfully terminated...”

According to the lawsuit, IAC and Match tried to buy Ms. Pambakian’s silence following the assault by offering her a higher salary and more stock options on the condition that she sign a non-disclosure agreement. She declined.

The lawsuit alleges that the company covered up the incident to protect Mr. Blatt because, at the time of the incident, he was managing the process for valuing Tinder. A separate lawsuit filed last year brought by Tinder’s founders and early employees accused Mr. Blatt of helping direct a fraudulent scheme to undervalue Tinder in order to steal billions of dollars from the early employees who built the company, including Ms. Pambakian, ahead of its merger by Match.

Match and IAC used the lawsuit as an excuse to terminate Ms. Pambakian in December 2018 – without severance and stripping away millions of dollars in vested equity she had earned through years

of service to Tinder. The parent company also characterized the incident with Mr. Blatt as “consensual cuddling” just months before firing Ms. Pambakian in retaliation.

“Rosette was a critical executive at Tinder and instrumental in the company’s phenomenal success. She had hoped that speaking out about the assault and its blowback would lead to positive change within the company and its leadership,” said Grant & Eisenhofer director Elizabeth Graham, who is representing Ms. Pambakian. “Instead, Match and IAC launched a scorched-earth campaign against her. She has had time to reflect and to consider the impact these events have had on her - and her career - and realized that asserting her rights in court is the only way she will get justice.”

She added “Her lawsuit details a brazen sexual assault by the former Match Group and Tinder CEO in 2016, followed by an appalling lack of independent investigation and her wrongful and retaliatory termination for speaking out in 2018. Rosette is bringing this action not only to right the personal wrong against her, but to stand with the many women in the tech industry and beyond who have been blamed and shamed into submission or silence.”

According to the complaint, in 2017, journalists began asking about rumors of workplace improprieties by senior Match Group executives. Ms. Pambakian found herself in the impossible position of being forced to choose between sharing the truth of what had happened to her or protecting the company and the job she had loved—which meant shielding Mr. Blatt.

The lawsuit filed on August 5 in Los Angeles Superior Court names Mr. Blatt, Match, and IAC/Interactive Corp. as defendants, and claims negligence, gender violence, retaliation, and intentional infliction of emotional distress. The suit seeks a jury trial, and compensatory and punitive damages.

In addition to Ms. Graham, Ms. Pambakian is represented by Grant & Eisenhofer associate [Paige Alderson](#). The lawsuit is captioned *Rosette Pambakian v. Gregory Blatt, IAC/Interactive Corp and Match Group, Inc.*

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