Tinder’s former marketing chief sues Match over sexual assault and wrongful termination

Tinder’s former marketing chief is suing the app’s parent companies and former CEO over claims that the company wrongfully terminated her employment after she went public with sexual assault allegations. Rosette Pambakian claims in her lawsuit that former Tinder CEO Greg Blatt sexually assaulted her after a Tinder holiday party in 2016 in an employee’s hotel room, the cost of which the company covered.

Much of Pambakian’s story has already been detailed in a CNN interview from last August. She went public with the allegations at the same time a separate lawsuit was filed claiming that Tinder and its parent company, Match Group, purposely undervalued Tinder in an effort to avoid paying billions of dollars in equity to the startup team, including Pambakian.

Pambakian says IAC failed to properly investigate her claims
Tinder later fired Pambakian, along with other employees involved in the lawsuit, claiming they were “unable to fulfill their job responsibilities.” Match spokesperson Justine Sacco referred *The Verge* to previous comments on Pambakian’s allegations, saying the company conducted a “thorough investigation.”

The new lawsuit claims Blatt told Pambakian that he got “hard every time I look at you” and wanted to leave the holiday party with her. Pambakian says she worried he’d act on his

word so she fled to his assistant's room, along with another colleague. Blatt is then alleged to have texted his assistant asking where they all were and showed up at the room, where he assaulted Pambakian. The lawsuit claims that Blatt pulled Pambakian onto the hotel bed, groped her breasts and upper thighs, and kissed her shoulders, neck, and chest. Blatt eventually took a car home, according to the suit, after which point Pambakian and the two cited witnesses also left the hotel. Blatt later allegedly apologized to Pambakian, and she agreed to not speak of it again, out of fear of damaging her working relationship and reputation.

Pambakian says she reported the incident to Tinder founder Sean Rad, who was then Tinder's chairman. Rad allegedly attempted to escalate the situation by reporting it to executives at IAC, Match Group's owner, as well as the chief human resources officer at Match and Tinder. Pambakian eventually met with two top company lawyers to detail what happened, according to the suit. Blatt allegedly found out about the meeting and asked his assistant not to cooperate because it would ruin his life and family.

"[Match and IAC] engaged in a sham investigation conducted by biased executives."

The company later investigated the claims more formally, but didn't interview the only other witness in the hotel room, apart from Blatt's assistant, the lawsuit claims. Later, the company allegedly asked Pambakian to sign an NDA around the sexual assault claims in exchange for more pay after a *TechCrunch* reporter reached out asking her to confirm the sexual assault rumors. Pambakian didn't sign. Blatt later resigned, and Pambakian says it's because of her sexual assault claims. She says that even after his resignation, he checked in on her to ensure she didn't speak out.

"[Match and IAC] engaged in a sham investigation conducted by biased executives in an effort to conceal and discredit the sexual assault suffered by [Pambakian]," the lawsuit says.

“Only when faced with the fact that they could no longer keep the assault quiet, did the Company Defendants take any action.”

Pambakian later joined a lawsuit in August with Rad and others on the original Tinder team. Pambakian made these sexual assault claims public in the lawsuit, and Match responded at the time, saying it “conducted a careful and thorough investigation under the direction of independent Board members, concluded, among other things, that there was no violation of law or company policy, and took appropriate action.” Pambakian’s employment was terminated in December.

Pambakian had to drop out of the earlier lawsuit because she signed an arbitration agreement. She says that her termination means that she had to give up millions of dollars in equity. She is seeking compensatory damages to cover her emotional distress, as well as economic damages for her medical expenses, out of pocket expenses, lost earnings, and her earning capacity.

https://www.theverge.com/2019/8/5/20755316/tinder-rosette-pambakian-lawsuit-wrongful-termination-sexual-assault-greg-blatt