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An attorney for the Appellate Division, First Department's disciplinary committee alleges in a federal lawsuit that she was sexually harassed by two now-retired officials at the watchdog agency while a third retaliated against her for complaining. Nicole Corrado also suggests that after she lodged a complaint officials retaliated by targeting her attorney in an unrelated property matter. She claims that the committee launched an investigation into allegations of bribery and forgery against her attorney, and then suddenly dropped the matter when he abandoned her case. Additionally, Corrado claims she was punished for supporting a lawsuit brought against the court system by a colleague. *Corrado v. New York State Unified Court System, 12-cv-1748*, filed in the Eastern District on April 10, alleges violations of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Corrado, who has served as a principal attorney at the disciplinary committee since 2006, claims she endured years of harassment by her supervisor, Andral Bratton, and that the committee's chief investigator, Vincent Raniere, touched her inappropriately and forcibly kissed her on several occasions. According to the complaint, when Corrado reported the "pattern of sexual harassment" by Bratton and Raniere in 2008, the court system referred the matter to its inspector general. However, only the allegations against Bratton were investigated, the complaint claims. The complaint states that Bratton admitted during the Office of the Inspector General probe that he was "smitten" with Corrado and crossed "an emotional boundary." Bratton was transferred to another unit at the same salary and Corrado was simply told to "avoid" him, according to the complaint. Corrado alleges that while her sexual harassment complaint was pending, she retained an attorney to represent her in an unrelated action involving a property dispute. She claims the disciplinary committee instigated an investigation into that attorney— who is not named in her complaint— involving allegations of bribery and forgery. Corrado contends that after the attorney withdrew from her case and her claim was dismissed, all of the ethical charges against her lawyer were dropped. She claims that because of her attorney's abrupt withdrawal, her civil case was dismissed and she was "ultimately forced to settle her case for a fraction of its value." Bennitta Joseph of Borrelli & Associates in Great Neck, who is representing Corrado in the civil rights claim, declined to identify the allegedly intimidated attorney who represented her client in *Corrado v. East End Pool & Hot Tub*. Corrado also claims in her complaint that she was retaliated against for supporting the claim of a colleague who accused the agency of racial discrimination.

The complaint does not identify that employee, but Joseph confirmed in an interview that it was Christine Anderson, a former staff attorney who alleged she was wrongfully discharged in June 2007 on a pretext of insubordination after she revealed that the panel was protecting well-connected attorneys. A jury rejected her

claims, and the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit affirmed the verdict (NYLJ, Oct. 30, 2009). Corrado contends that after she agreed to corroborate Anderson's allegations of "racial discrimination and other improper conduct" by the disciplinary committee, Alan Friedberg, the committee's chief counsel, threatened her and gave her an unreasonable workload. Additionally, Corrado says Bratton threatened her. In light of Corrado's complaint, Anderson has asked the Second Circuit to reinstate her claim. Anderson contends in her petition that Corrado, who testified on her behalf at a deposition but not at trial, "was threatened and chilled into not testifying" at her trial, constituting a "manifest attack on our system of law and a clear denial of appellant's right to a fair trial." Corrado claims that because of the anxiety and stress from the harassment she endured at the disciplinary committee she took a two-year unpaid leave of absence between 2009 and 2011, returning only after Bratton, Raniere and Friedberg had left. According to the Office of Court Administration, all three took advantage of an early retirement incentive in the fall of 2010. "She feels like she has to do something," Joseph said. "She took a two-year leave of absence because the environment had become so toxic, and then once all the offending parties left, she came back." Raniere said the allegations are false. "I didn't do a damned thing," he said.

Friedberg declined to comment. Bratton could not be reached. David Bookstaver, a spokesman for the Office of Court Administration, declined to respond, noting that the court system does not comment on pending litigation.
John Caher can be contacted at jcaher@alm.com.

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