

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF OHIO
EASTERN DIVISION**

Shari S. Drerup	:	
907 Heyman Lane	:	
Alexandria, Louisiana 71303	:	
	:	
Plaintiff,	:	Case No. 2:19-CV-3499
	:	
v.	:	Judge
	:	
NetJets Aviation, Inc.	:	Magistrate Judge
4111 Bridgeway Avenue	:	
Columbus, Ohio 43219	:	
<i>Agent for Service of Process:</i>	:	
Corporation Service Company	:	
50 West Broad Street, Suite 1330	:	
Columbus, Ohio 43215	:	
	:	
and	:	
	:	
Jim McQueen	:	
Senior Director of Training	:	
c/o NetJets Aviation, Inc.	:	
4111 Bridgeway Avenue	:	
Columbus, Ohio 43219	:	
	:	
Defendants.	:	

COMPLAINT
(Jury Demand Endorsed Hereon)

Plaintiff Shari S. Drerup, by and through undersigned counsel, states the following as her Complaint claims arising under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, 42 U.S.C. § 2000e et seq., and Ohio’s anti-discrimination law, R.C. Chapter 4112, against Defendants NetJets Aviation, Inc. (“Defendant NetJets”) and Jim McQueen (“Defendant McQueen”):

JURISDICTION AND VENUE

1. This Court has subject matter jurisdiction over Count I pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1331 because the claim is set forth pursuant to the law of the United States of America.

2. The Court has supplemental jurisdiction over Counts II and III, Plaintiff's state law claims, pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1367, because the claims arise out of the same set of operative facts.
3. Venue is proper pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1391 as the events giving rise to the causes of action occurred in Franklin County, Ohio, within the Southern District of Ohio, Eastern Division.

PARTIES

4. Plaintiff Shari S. Drerup, hereinafter referred to as "Plaintiff," is a natural person residing in Alexandria, Louisiana.
5. Defendant NetJets is a private business jet charter and aircraft management company. At all relevant times, Defendant NetJets has continuously been and is now conducting business in the State of Louisiana, and has continuously had and does now have at least fifteen (15) employees within the meaning of Title VII. At all relevant times, Defendant NetJets has continuously been and is now an employer engaged in an industry affecting commerce and meets the definition of "employer" set forth in 42 U.S.C. § 2000e(b).
6. Defendant McQueen is a natural person. At all times relevant hereto, Defendant NetJets employed Defendant McQueen as the Senior Director of Training.

FACTS COMMON TO ALL COUNTS

7. Plaintiff is an experienced pilot and working for Defendant NetJets had been her dream for several years.
8. During July 2015, Plaintiff applied for a pilot's position with Defendant NetJets. Plaintiff submitted a number of glowing letters of recommendation from other pilots and employers.

9. During September 2016, NetJets advised Plaintiff that she was selected for a two-day interview process. On the first day, Plaintiff interviewed with pilots and Human Resources (“HR”) representatives. On the second day, Plaintiff participated in a simulator evaluation for the Citation EXLS airplane at Flight Safety. Despite never flying the aircraft before, Plaintiff passed the simulation.
10. On or about November 3, 2016, Defendant NetJets “formally extended the offer for the position of Pilot with NetJets.” Plaintiff’s start date was scheduled for December 5, 2016.
11. After Defendant NetJets extended the offer of employment, Plaintiff submitted her letter of resignation with her former employer, Mark Hankins Ministries.
12. There were twelve (12) other pilots at Defendant NetJets’ Indoc training for new Embraer Phenom 300 (“Phenom”), which began on December 5, 2016. Ten (10) of the pilots were male and two (2) of the pilots were female.
13. Plaintiff successfully completed the Indoc portion of her training on the Phenom, and she received her gold medal NetJets wings for her uniform jacket.
14. On February 6, 2017, Plaintiff attended Phenom training at Flight Safety. Defendant NetJets assigned Charles Felton as Plaintiff’s simulator and study partner.
15. Mr. Felton had been a pilot and Captain with Defendant NetJets for fifteen (15) years flying a Citation X. He was transferring to the Phenom.
16. Plaintiff and Captain Felton passed the Phenom Aircraft Systems training and Garmin Prodigy training followed by a Federal Aviation Administration (“FAA”) oral examination.

17. Plaintiff and Captain Felton then moved on to the simulator training for the Phenom, which began on February 15, 2016. There were nine (9) scheduled simulator sessions covering all of the maneuvers and approaches required by the FAA.
18. Leon Lambert, head of the Phenom training department at Flight Safety, was assigned as the systems ground instructor.
19. On February 22, 2017, Plaintiff and Mr. Felton began simulator session 7. While conducting “engine out” procedures, Plaintiff struggled to maintain control of the aircraft with one engine operating on full power and other engine failed. The simulation required a great deal of pressure to push the rudder pedal to the floor in order to keep the nose of the plane from turning and rolling toward the failed engine.
20. Plaintiff previously received 5 jet type ratings and never experienced this issue prior to the Phenom simulator training.
21. Plaintiff discussed her struggle with the instructor, Ashley Boyd Messenger. Mr. Messenger stated that, in all his years of teaching, he never instructed on an airplane that required so much rudder to the floor to keep the aircraft controlled and attributed it to the small rudder surface area on the tail of the airplane. Mr. Messenger told Plaintiff, “Shari your legs are simply too short. You can’t reach fully to the floor with the rudder pedals to control the airplane during single engine operation.” Mr. Messenger wrote on Plaintiff’s training record, “Shari’s stature precludes attaining sufficient control authority.” Thus, Mr. Messenger confirmed that Plaintiff’s issue on the Phenom was solely the result of her stature.
22. Later in the evening on February 22, 2017, Jim McQueen, Senior Director of Training, telephoned Plaintiff, warning her to “do whatever you need to do to pass this check ride.

Go to Cincinnati and get a booster seat or some tall shoes.” Mr. McQueen added that if Plaintiff was too short to fly the Phenom, then she would be too short to fly any of Defendant NetJets’ other airplanes. Plaintiff advised him that she had a type rating in at least two (2) of Defendant NetJets’ current fleet so she was not too short to fly their other planes. Mr. McQueen ignored Plaintiff and simply told her to “make the Phenom work.”

23. Plaintiff purchased shoes with thicker soles, and back pads to move her closer to the rudder pedals, but these did not help.
24. On February 28, 2017, Plaintiff started the FAA check ride. Until the engine failed, the check ride proceeded successfully. At that point, Plaintiff was unable to push the full rudder to the floor simply because her legs were not long enough. The FAA failed Plaintiff’s check ride.
25. Mr. McQueen telephoned Plaintiff and requested that she attend a meeting the following day, March 1, 2017, with the Chief Pilot for the Phenom and another pilot of Defendant NetJets.
26. When Plaintiff arrived for the meeting, she was blind-sided with her termination. Five (5) NetJets employees were in the room, one of whom read Plaintiff’s termination letter. Plaintiff was instructed to immediately turn in her Defendant NetJets’ badge, iPad, cell phone, and American Express card.
27. Prior to Plaintiff’s termination, NetJets reassigned three (3) male employees also hired for the December 5, 2016 Phenom orientation. These male employees were reassigned to other aircraft because of their stature. The male employees were too tall for the Phenom.
28. Plaintiff is informed and believes that Defendant NetJets did not require the FAA check ride prior to the reassignment of the male pilots as they were simply reassigned when it

was realized that the male pilots were not able to fly the Phenom because they were too tall. On the other hand, Plaintiff was required to take a FAA check ride after Defendant NetJets was aware Plaintiff was too short for the Phenom.

29. NetJets could have reassigned Plaintiff to another aircraft and training as it did for the three (3) similarly situated male employees. The Citation Excel aircraft was scheduled for March 8, 2017. In addition, Defendant NetJets had another class scheduled for April 5, 2017 for different aircraft. Plaintiff was qualified to fly both aircraft.
30. Plaintiff is type rated on at least two other of NetJets' current aircrafts.
31. Plaintiff filed a charge of discrimination with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission ("EEOC") on August 24, 2017, Charge No. 532-2017-01504.
32. Plaintiff received a Right to Sue Letter dated May 15, 2019, attached hereto as Exhibit 1.

COUNT I: SEX DISCRIMINATION, 42 U.S.C. § 2000e et seq.

33. Plaintiff reincorporates, as if fully realleged herein, the foregoing paragraphs of the Complaint.
34. Plaintiff is a member of a protected class because she is female.
35. In addition to the Phenom, Plaintiff is qualified as a Pilot on other aircrafts operated by NetJets.
36. Plaintiff suffered an adverse action when Defendant NetJets terminated her employment on or about March 1, 2017.
37. Defendant NetJets replaced Plaintiff with a male Pilot and/or Defendant NetJets treated similarly situated male pilots more favorably than Plaintiff by transferring them to different aircraft.

38. Defendant NetJets discriminated against Plaintiff because of her sex in violation of 42 U.S.C. § 2000e-2(a)(1) and/or sex was a motivating factor in Defendant NetJets' decision to terminate Plaintiff's employment in violation of 42 U.S.C. § 2000e-2(m).

COUNT II: SEX DISCRIMINATION, R.C. Chapter 4112.02(A) and 4112.99

39. Plaintiff reincorporates, as if fully realleged herein, the foregoing paragraphs of the Complaint.

40. Plaintiff is a member of a protected class because she is female.

41. Plaintiff is qualified as a Pilot on other aircrafts operated by NetJets.

42. Plaintiff suffered an adverse action when Defendant NetJets terminated her employment on or about March 1, 2017.

43. Defendant NetJets replaced Plaintiff with a male Pilot and/or Defendant NetJets treated similarly situated male pilots more favorably than Plaintiff by transferring them to different aircraft.

44. Defendants NetJets and McQueen discriminated against Plaintiff because of her sex in violation of R.C. 4112.02(A) and 4112.99.

COUNT III: SEX DISCRIMINATION, R.C. Chapter 4112.02(J)

45. Plaintiff reincorporates, as if fully realleged herein, the foregoing paragraphs of the Complaint.

46. Plaintiff is a member of a protected class because she is female.

47. Plaintiff is qualified as a Pilot on other aircrafts besides the Phenom.

48. Plaintiff suffered an adverse action when Defendant NetJets terminated her employment on or about March 1, 2017.

49. Defendant NetJets replaced Plaintiff with a male Pilot and/or Defendant NetJets treated similarly situated male pilots more favorably than Plaintiff by transferring them to different aircraft.
50. Defendant McQueen aided, abetted, incited, compelled or coerced an unlawful discriminatory practice and/or attempted directly or indirectly to commit an unlawful discriminatory practice in violation of O.R.C. 4112.02(J).

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff Shari S. Drerup prays for judgment in her favor, back pay, front pay or reinstatement, punitive damages, pain and suffering, compensatory and non-economic damages in an amount exceeding \$75,000, attorneys' fees, costs, pre- and post-judgment interest, and any other relief to which she may be entitled.

Respectfully Submitted,

s/Laren E. Knoll

Laren E. Knoll (0070594)

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Co-Counsel for Plaintiff Shari S. Drerup

JURY DEMAND

Plaintiff requests a trial by a jury on all issues set forth herein.

s/Laren E. Knoll

Laren E. Knoll (0070594)

The Knoll Law Firm, LLC

Trial Attorney for Plaintiff Shari S. Drerup