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 8 *Willow Wren Turkal,*
 9 *on behalf of themselves and all others similarly situated*

10 **UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT**
 11 **NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA**
 12 **SAN FRANCISCO DIVISION**

13 CAROLINA BERNAL STRIFLING, and
 14 WILLOW WREN TURKAL, on behalf of
 15 themselves and all others similarly situated,

16 Plaintiffs,

17 v.

18 TWITTER, INC., and X CORP.,

19 Defendants
 20
 21
 22

Case No. 4:22-cv-07739-JST

**SECOND AMENDED CLASS ACTION
 COMPLAINT AND JURY DEMAND**

1. DISCRIMINATION IN VIOLATION OF TITLE VII, 42 U.S.C. § 2000e, *et seq.*
2. DISCRIMINATION IN VIOLATION OF THE CALIFORNIA FAIR EMPLOYMENT AND HOUSING ACT, Gov. Code § 12900, *et seq.*

23 **I. INTRODUCTION**

24 1. Plaintiffs Carolina Bernal Strifling and Willow Wren Turkal file this Class and
 25 Collective Action Complaint against Twitter, Inc. and X Corp. (collectively “Twitter”), on their
 26 own behalf and on behalf of other female Twitter employees across the country who have been
 27

1 discharged or constructively discharged from their jobs during the chaotic months since multi-
2 billionaire Elon Musk purchased the company.

3 2. Plaintiffs bring claims of discrimination under Title VII, 42 U.S.C. § 2000e, *et*
4 *seq.*, and (for employees who worked out of California) the California Fair Employment and
5 Housing Act (“FEHA”), Gov. Code § 12900, *et seq.*, challenging the company’s termination of
6 female employees since Elon Musk’s acquisition of the company.

7 3. As described further below, shortly after Elon Musk completed his purchase of
8 Twitter, he immediately began laying off more than half of its workforce.

9 4. The mass termination of employees at Twitter has impacted female employees to
10 a much greater extent than male employees – and to a highly statistically significant degree.
11 Moreover, Elon Musk has made a number of publicly discriminatory remarks about females,
12 further confirming that the mass termination’s greater impact on female employees resulted from
13 discrimination.

14 5. Plaintiffs file this action on their own behalf and on behalf of similarly situated
15 individuals, bringing claims of sex discrimination.

16
17 **II. PARTIES**

18 6. Plaintiff Carolina Bernal Strifling is an adult resident of Miami, Florida, where
19 she worked for Twitter from June 2015 until November 2022. Ms. Strifling was employed by
20 Twitter as a Senior Client Partner Lead. Throughout her employment with Twitter, Ms.
21 Strifling’s performance met the Company’s expectations.

22 7. Plaintiff Willow Wren Turkal is an adult resident of San Jose, California, where
23 she worked for Twitter from June 2021 until November 2022. Ms. Turkal was employed by
24 Twitter as a Staff Site Reliability Engineer. Throughout her employment with Twitter, Ms.
25 Turkal’s performance met the Company’s expectations.

1 17. Following Elon Musk’s purchase of Twitter in late October 2022, Musk
2 immediately began a mass layoff that affected well more than half of Twitter’s workforce. See
3 Kate Conger, Ryan Mac, and Mike Isaac, Confusion and Frustration Reign as Elon Musk Cuts
4 Half of Twitter’s Staff, NEW YORK TIMES (November 4, 2022),
5 <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/04/technology/elon-musk-twitter-layoffs.html>; Kate Conger,
6 Ryan Mac, and Mike Isaac, In Latest Round of Job Cuts, Twitter is said to Layoff at Least 200
7 Employees, NEW YORK TIMES (February 26, 2023),
8 <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/02/26/technology/twitter-layoffs.html>; Ryan Morrison, Twitter
9 ‘lays off 10% of its global workforce’ in Elon Musk’s latest job cuts, TECHMONITOR (February
10 27, 2023, updated March 9, 2023) (“The Company’s headcount is down 75%.”),
11 <https://techmonitor.ai/policy/digital-economy/twitter-job-cuts-elon-musk>.

13 18. The decisions regarding which employees would be laid off were made under
14 extremely hurried circumstances, with little if any regard given to employees’ job performance,
15 qualifications, experience, and abilities. Indeed, decisions regarding laying off thousands of
16 employees were made in a period of just days after Musk’s acquisition of the company.

17 19. Most laid off employees were notified on November 4, 2022 (although many of
18 these employees were aware they had been laid off the night before, when their access to
19 Twitter’s systems was cut off).

20 20. Reportedly, the layoff decisions were made quickly by a small group of managers
21 under close supervision by Musk. Some of these managers were brought in from other
22 companies owned by Musk (such as Tesla), who did not have much, if any, knowledge about
23 Twitter’s operations. See Lora Kolodny, Elon Musk has pulled more than 50 Tesla employees
24 into his Twitter takeover, CNBC (November 1, 2022), [Elon Musk has pulled more than 50 Tesla](https://www.cnn.com/2022/11/01/tech/elon-musk-twitter-takeover/index.html)
25 [employees into Twitter \(cnbc.com\)](https://www.cnn.com/2022/11/01/tech/elon-musk-twitter-takeover/index.html).

1 27. According to Dr. Mark Killingsworth, a professor in the Department of
2 Economics at Rutgers University,² a chi square statistical analysis reveals that this distribution in
3 layoffs by sex is 7.3491 standard deviations away from a normal distribution. In other words,
4 the odds that this disparity between women and men being laid off is due only to chance
5 is .000000000000001 (or, put another way, 9.977 out of 100 trillion).

6 28. Further, the disparity between women and men being laid off cannot be explained
7 based upon a justification that Musk intended to retain more employees in engineering-related
8 roles.

9 29. According to the spreadsheet, prior to the layoffs that day, Twitter employed
10 approximately 863 female and 1,834 male employees in engineering-related roles in the United
11 States. Of those employees, approximately 507 females and 826 males were notified that day
12 they were being laid off. Thus, 59% of females in engineering-related roles were laid off on
13 November 4, 2022, while 45% of male employees in engineering-related were laid off.

14 30. This disparity is also extremely statistically significant. According to Dr.
15 Killingsworth, a chi square test reveals that this distribution in layoffs by sex is 7.6380 standard
16

17
18
19 ² A federal court has described Dr. Killingsworth's qualifications as follows:

20 Dr. Killingsworth is a labor economist with more than 40 years of experience and has a
21 substantial record as an expert witness in federal and state litigation. He is the author of
22 *Labor Supply* and *The Economics of Comparable Worth*, and has also authored numerous
23 publications in the areas of comparable worth, pay equity, employment discrimination,
24 and wage differentials. Also, Dr. Killingsworth has testified in front of United States
25 Congressional Committees and the General Assembly of Pennsylvania. In addition, he
26 has been a consultant to United States District Judge Robert L. Carter, the Canadian
27 Department of Justice, and the United States Departments of Justice and Labor. Dr.
28 Killingsworth graduated from the University of Michigan and received M.Phil. and
D.Phil. degrees from the University of Oxford, where he was a Rhodes Scholar.

Artunduaga v. Uni. Of Chicago Med. Ctr., 2016 WL 7384432, at *2-3 (N.D. Ill. Dec. 21, 2016)
(citing cases).

1 deviations away from a normal distribution. The odds that this disparity between women and
 2 men in engineering-related roles being laid off is due only to chance is .000000000000001 (or, put
 3 another way, 1.103 out of 100 trillion).

4 31. There is also a great disparity in the layoff rates between women and men in non-
 5 engineering roles. Prior to the layoffs that day, Twitter employed approximately 1,371 female
 6 and 1,066 male employees in non-engineering-related roles in the United States. Of those
 7 employees, approximately 764 females and 524 males were notified that day they were being
 8 laid off. Thus, 56% of females in non-engineering-related roles were laid off on November 4,
 9 2022, while 49% of male employees in non-engineering-related were laid off. A chi square test
 10 performed by Dr. Killingsworth revealed that this distribution in layoffs by sex is 4.0309
 11 standard deviations away from a normal distribution. The odds that this disparity between
 12 women and men in non-engineering-related roles being laid off is due only to chance is .00001
 13 (or, put another way, 2.778 out of 100 thousand).

14 32. These results are summarized in the following chart:

		Laid off	Not laid off	Total	% laid off	Standard deviations from normal	Probability of this distribution being based on chance
ALL EMPLOYEES	Female	1271	963	2234	0.57	7.3491	9.977 × 10 ⁻¹⁴ (9.977 chances out of 100 trillion)
	Male	1350	1550	2900	0.47		
	TOTAL	2621	2513	5134			
EMPLOYEES IN ENGINEERING-RELATED POSITIONS	Female	630	373	1003	0.63	7.638	1.103 × 10 ⁻¹⁴ (1.103 chances out of 100 trillion)
	Male	1037	1113	2150	0.48		
EMPLOYEES IN NON- ENGINEERING-RELATED POSITIONS	Female	545	517	1062	0.51	4.0309	2.778 × 10 ⁻⁵ (2.778 chances out of 100 thousand)
	Male	312	436	748	0.42		

15 33. Thus, it is clear that women were far more likely than men to be laid off from
 16 Twitter, and those differences are highly statistically significant.

17 34. The fact that more women than men were laid off and forced out of the company
 18 through constructive discharge since Musk’s acquisition is not surprising given Musk’s history
 19

1 of making sexist, demeaning, and hostile comments against women. Such comments show his
2 discriminatory animus against women, and it is understandable that women would feel less
3 welcome in the workplace under his leadership. As Twitter’s new owner and CEO, who
4 oversaw and closely managed the employees who were making layoff decisions and
5 implementing his policies, Musk’s discriminatory animus is imputed to Twitter.
6

7 35. Examples of Musk’s discriminatory and demeaning comments about women
8 include his posting of tweets on Twitter in which he joked about naming a school using the
9 acronym “TITS” and making other jokes about women’s breasts. See Chandra Steele, Elon
10 Musk is a Misogynist and It Matters, PCMag (December 13, 2021), [Elon Musk Is a Misogynist](#)
11 [and It Matters | PCMag](#) (quoting Musk’s tweet: “Am thinking of starting new university: Texas
12 Institute of Technology & Science”); Jon Christian, Elon Musk Deletes Sexist Tweets, The Byte
13 (October 31, 2021), [Elon Musk Deletes Sexist Tweets \(futurism.com\)](#); Stock Joker on Twitter:
14 "@ZJAYres @PhilKoopman Now deleted, but only D cups need apply
15 <https://t.co/40NBcDTonb>" / Twitter); Ananya Bhattacharya, In one tweet, Elon Musk captures
16 the everyday sexism faced by women in STEM, Quarz (November 1, 2021), [Elon Musk's tweet](#)
17 [captures everyday sexism faced by women in STEM \(qz.com\)](#).

18 36. Shortly before acquiring Twitter, Musk, who has been vocal about promoting
19 women having a lot of babies (presumably disseminating the message that is more important
20 than keeping their jobs), tweeted: “Being a Mom is just as important as any career.” Twitter
21 (August 17, 2022), <https://twitter.com/elonmusk/status/1559823434028400640>. Within weeks
22 of announcing the layoffs, Musk tweeted “Testosterone rocks ngl”. Twitter (December 4, 2022),
23 <https://twitter.com/elonmusk/status/1599345615443746817>

24 37. In April 2023, Musk had the “w” on the sign of the corporate headquarters
25 painted white so that the company’s name appeared to be “Titter.” See Twitter (April 9, 2023),
26 <https://twitter.com/elonmusk/status/1645266104351178752?cxt=HHwWgIC-7cGzINUtAAAA>.
27

1 **V. EXHAUSTION OF ADMINSTRATIVE REMEDIES**

2
3 38. Plaintiff Strifling has filed an administrative charge of sex discrimination under
4 Title VII with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. She has received a Right to Sue
5 letter to pursue this claim in court.

6 39. Plaintiff Turkal has filed an administrative charge of sex discrimination under
7 Title VII with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and under the California Fair
8 Employment and Housing Act with the California Civil Rights Department. She has received a
9 Right to Sue letter to pursue this claim in court.
10

11 **COUNT I**

12 **Title VII,**
13 **42 U.S.C. § 2000e, *et seq.***

14 Plaintiffs and other female employees have been entitled to the protections of Title VII,
15 42 U.S.C. § 2000e, *et seq.*, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex. Twitter’s conduct
16 in conducting mass layoffs that affected a higher proportion of women than men constitutes
17 unlawful discrimination against Plaintiffs and other similarly situated female Twitter employees
18 on the basis of sex in violation of Title VII.
19

20 **COUNT II**

21 **California Fair Employment and Housing Act,**
22 **Gov. Code § 12900, *et seq.***
23 **(Sex Discrimination)**

24 Plaintiffs and other female employees have been entitled to the protections of the
25 California Fair Employment and Housing Act (“FEHA”), Gov. Code § 12900, *et seq.* Twitter’s
26 conduct in conducting mass layoffs that affected a higher proportion of women than men
27 constitutes unlawful discrimination against Plaintiffs and other similarly situated female Twitter
28 employees who worked in California on the basis of sex in violation of the FEHA.

JURY DEMAND

Plaintiffs request a trial by jury on the claims asserted here.

WHEREFORE, Plaintiffs request that this Court enter the following relief:

- a. Declare and find that Defendants are liable to Plaintiffs and other similarly situated female employees under Title VII, 42 U.S.C. § 2000e, *et seq.*, and, with respect to employees who have worked out of California, the Fair Employment and Housing Act, Gov. Code § 12900, *et seq.*;
- b. Certify this case as a class action under Title VII and the Fair Employment and Housing Act;
- c. Reinstate female employees who wish to return to their jobs;
- d. Award compensatory and any other appropriate damages, including emotional distress and punitive damages under Title VII and the Fair Employment and Housing Act;
- e. Award pre- and post-judgment interest;
- f. Award reasonable attorneys' fees, costs, and expenses; and
- g. Award any other relief to which Plaintiffs and other similarly situated employees may be entitled.

1 Respectfully submitted,

2 CAROLINA BERNAL STRIFLING and WILLOW
3 WREN TURKAL, on behalf of themselves and all
4 others similarly situated,

5 By their attorneys,

6 /s/ Shannon Liss-Riordan

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14 Dated: January 19, 2024

15
16 **CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

17 I, Shannon Liss-Riordan, hereby certify that a true and accurate copy of this document
18 was served on Defendants' counsel via the CM/ECF system on January 19, 2024.

19
20 /s/ Shannon Liss-Riordan
21 Shannon Liss-Riordan