

# Banker's Suit Says She Was Fired for Questioning Account

By LYNNLEY BROWNING

A former private banker at JPMorgan Chase & Company has sued the bank, claiming that she was fired after alerting superiors to possibly questionable dealings by a top client.

The former banker, Jennifer Sharkey, said in a complaint filed in United States District Court in Manhattan on Monday that she was let go as a vice president and wealth manager in August 2009, six days after formally raising the concerns.

Darin Oduyoye, a JPMorgan spokesman, said, "We believe this case is completely without merit whatsoever." A previous complaint by Ms. Sharkey, filed with the Labor Department in October 2009, was dismissed last month.

Ms. Sharkey's lawyer, Douglas H. Wigdor, said she was seeking redress through her civil suit because the Labor Department had not reviewed her case promptly.

Ms. Sharkey, 37, worked at the bank's Park Avenue office in Manhattan since October 2006, and handled 75 clients with total assets of more than \$500 million.

In the civil complaint, Ms. Sharkey claims that in January 2009 she inherited from a colleague an Israeli client who had been with JPMorgan's private bank for more than 20 years.

That month, the complaint said, Ms. Sharkey began a "know your customer" review of the account after being alerted by the bank's compliance and risk management team about irregularities that could signal money laundering, mail fraud, wire fraud and potential violations of federal securities laws.

In June 2009, Ms. Sharkey recommended to her bosses that the bank stop dealing with the client. The complaint does not identify the customer but says the client's accounts had generated returns of \$600,000 a year over 20 years.

Mr. Wigdor said that Ms. Sharkey's review had uncovered "red flags," including multiple accounts under different names. Some of the accounts lacked proper documentation, he said.

Ms. Sharkey alerted three supervisors to her findings but was ignored, her complaint says. Ms. Sharkey, who earned about \$150,000 a year and a bonus, claimed she was denied her 2009 bonus of about \$500,000. Her suit charges breach of contract and seeks various damages and fees.