

## PRESS CUTTING

### **Personnel Today** **10 November 2009**

**By Louisa Peacock**

Two female City bankers are suing a leading investment bank for £3m after they claimed they were forced to resign by sexist bosses.

Maureen Murphy, who is half-German and half-American, claimed one woman trader had her breasts referred to as "honkers" during a meeting. She also alleged her accent was mocked, and claimed a male colleague said all women belonged "at home cleaning the floors", the Metro reported.

Both Murphy and Anna Francis are suing Japanese investment bank Nomura for race and sex discrimination, claiming bosses withheld work and forced them to leave because they were female and non-Japanese.

Murphy, a senior analyst earning £55,000 a year, and Francis, a director on £250,000 including bonus, moved to Nomura after it bought out their sales division following the Lehman Brothers bank collapse in September last year.

Barrister Michael Duggan told Central London Employment Tribunal: "This organisation is institutionally racist and sexist."

In statements submitted to the tribunal, Murphy claimed that during one meeting that a male client said to her colleague Melissa Holian: "Oh, I see you don't have your honkers out today."

"Miss Murphy was not initially sure what he was referring to, but Melissa clarified honkers referred to breasts," the court papers stated.

Francis told the tribunal her former boss allegedly told Murphy that she [Francis] was ditched because she was "too outspoken and female".

A Nomura spokesman said: "Nomura maintains that it acted fairly in the dismissal of Anna Francis and Maureen Murphy by reason of redundancy as part of a wider re-organisation following the Lehman Brothers acquisition.

"To suggest they were selected on the basis of their race or sex is wholly unfounded," he added.

**Bettina Bender**, an employment law partner at **CM Murray** law firm, said: "In the current economic climate and with public opinion of bankers (and that must include female bankers) at an all time low, awards of that magnitude, which seemingly take account of the lost bankers' bonuses of old, seem pretty unlikely."

The hearing continues.