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I would like to share my experience while I was working as a legal/compliance officer for Mercer Japan Ltd in Tokyo, Japan.

I joined Mercer (Its headquarters is located in New York City) in November 2009 as a Legal/Compliance Officer. I began to get harassed by the employees who worked as M&A consultant. At first, I had no idea why they were harassing me but in retrospect, given the trouble that the company eventually got into, it seems probable that they really didn't want me to do my job as their compliance officer but rather to only to serve as window dressing for any potential investigations from outside the company. I was confused by their attitude towards me but I stayed on in this position thinking that things would probably get better if I just worked hard and did my best. However, things did not get better. The harassment continued, and in order to deal with the pressure, my drinking got worse and worse.

I was asked to submit describing my activities every 30 min, I was also asked to submit a monthly report to the legal counsel, not my supervisor, in Singapore describing which companies were planning to execute agreement with Mercer. I was asked to deliver compliance training which I had never received before. Soon after, the president of the company started to act in very derogating manner. I received emails from the head of M&A team without any messages who also acted in derogating manner. This person claimed that he graduated from MIT with MBA, but could not speak Business English which I thought very strange. By this time, I was harassed by all the members of M&A team. Needless to say, I was very confused.

Eventually, I just lost my motivation to work for the company. I spent weekends drinking alone. In the end, things got so out of control at work and with my drinking that I started to get overwhelmed by everything. I feared I was getting involved in illegal activity and this was going to ruin my professional career. I was more confused and depressed day by day and I started seeing a doctor for depression.

One day, I felt rage because of the harassment by M&A consultant. I sent a message to the president asking to improve my working conditions. The pressure I felt was too much and I lost control. Everything was started to falling apart for me.

Soon after this, I went back to work and was cornered by the head of HR and his secretary and

taken into a room where I was falsely imprisoned and questioned and then, basically forced to sign a letter of resignation. This was an incredibly humiliating experience in which at the time I felt I was completely innocent. Looking back now I can see that it appeared they had ulterior motives for hiring me.

My employment contract with the company was terminated in 2010. Immediately after I was terminated, I drank all day for several days because I really wanted to forget everything. In fact, I did not want to live my life anymore because all I felt was pain. I thought that my career which I carefully planned since I was in college had completely vanished in the haze. I felt I was completely invisible, lost alone in a dark tunnel without an exit.

I suffered from a long successive drinking which I had never experienced in my whole life. To make matters worse, even though I had resigned, I continued getting harassed by someone, probably from my former company, receiving strange accusatory emails. These were coming to my personal email account, which few people knew. To be honest, this period in my life was the closest I came to suicide.

I started to look for a job in Tokyo, but could not find so I decided to come back to Kyoto. Two years later, I found a part-time job in Osaka; not the kind of job I was dreaming of. But I needed to take care of my parents and also wanted to do something other than drinking. Ironically, this led to more drinking.

I stayed on in Tokyo for a while, looking for work, but could find nothing, so I came back to Kyoto. Eventually, I found a part-time job in Osaka. It had nothing to what I felt I was trained for and it was demeaning to have to take it, but I had to do something to earn income and thought it would help me drink less.

In September 2011, I found the following news article, <https://archives.fbi.gov/archives/newyork/press-releases/2011/manhattan-u.s.-attorney-charges-former-consultant-and-former-investment-professional-with-insider-trading-scheme-that-reaped-more-than-2.6-million-in-illegal-profits> An American citizen who used to work for Mercer as a M&A Consultant at the headquarters was arrested for insider trading involving two Japanese companies. When I read the article, all the harassment I experienced while I was working for them as a compliance officer made sense. After his arrest, all the executives at Mercer Japan resigned. Coincidentally, the finance minister who was

getting tough on insider trading in Japan committed suicide in September 2012.
<https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2012/09/japans-finance-minister-commits-suicide-world-suicide-prevention-day/323787/> Exactly one year after the consultant was arrested by the FBI.

I hope my story will help those who have suffered and/or suffering workplace harassment and bullying. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at toshiya.ochiai@gmail.com.