

SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA  
IN AND FOR THE CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO

JOHN DOE and ROBERT ROE,	)	
Plaintiffs	)	
v.	)	No. 25-cv-1216
DEUTSCHE LUFTHANSA	)	
AKTIENGESELLSCHAFT and	)	
LUFTHANSA GROUP BUSINESS	)	
SERVICES NEW YORK, LLC,	)	<u>Filed</u> : Oct. 28, 2025
Defendants	)	

**COMPLAINT**

\* \* \*

3. Plaintiff John Doe is a citizen of California. Doe is married to Robert Roe.

4. Plaintiff Robert Roe is a citizen of Saudi Arabia. He is admitted for lawful permanent residence in the United States and domiciled in California. Roe is married to John Doe.

5. Defendant Deutsche Lufthansa Aktiengesellschaft (“Lufthansa”) is a German corporation with its principal place of business in Cologne, Germany. Lufthansa operates an international airline, flying between Germany and countries throughout the world, including Saudi Arabia and the United States. It operates dozens of flights into and out of California airports every day. It maintains offices and schedules regular flights into California’s Los Angeles Airport (“LAX”) and San Francisco Airport (“SFO”). Lufthansa has an agent for service of process in California.

6. Defendant Lufthansa Group Business Services New York, LLC (“LGBS”) is a New York limited liability company with its principal place of business in New York. LGBS is a Lufthansa subsidiary that provides IT services to Lufthansa.

\* \* \*

11. John Doe and Robert Roe are a same-sex couple. They have been in a committed relationship for more than thirty years and married in California in 2013.

12. Since 1989, they have spent at least part of the year living together and working in Saudi Arabia.

13. Because homosexuality is a capital offense in Saudi Arabia, they have kept their relationship, marriage, and sexual orientation hidden.

14. Prior to the events giving rise to this action, Doe spent part of the year working in Saudi Arabia and living with Roe.

15. Prior to the events giving rise to this action, Roe resided in Saudi Arabia and frequently traveled to California to stay with Doe.

16. When the COVID-19 pandemic began in March 2020, the United States stopped allowing non-citizen travelers from Saudi Arabia into the United States.

17. Because Roe could not enter the United States, Doe and Roe spent more than a year during the pandemic in Saudi Arabia.

18. In May 2021, the United States reopened its borders to non-citizens from Saudi Arabia if they were immediate family members of United States citizens.

19. Doe and Roe wanted to return to California.

20. They booked a flight to San Francisco through Lufthansa.

21. Doe and Roe chose Lufthansa over other airlines based in the Middle East because they expected it would be discreet in handling the confirmation of their marital status for purpose of U.S. entry requirements.

22. On May 25, 2021, Doe and Roe arrived at the Riyadh airport.

23. A Lufthansa check-in agent requested that Roe identify his familial relationship with a United States citizen.

24. Roe asked to speak with the most senior Lufthansa official at the airport, Deputy Station Chief Iqbal Jamshed. Roe explained, out of earshot of anyone else, that he and Doe were married.

25. Jamshed became loud and hostile, declaring, loudly enough for others to hear, that he could not believe they were married.

26. Doe approached and showed Jamshed their marriage certificate, but Jamshed continued to demean and question Doe and Roe about their relationship.

27. Jamshed took Doe to Lufthansa's primary airport office to send copies of Doe's and Roe's passports and marriage certificate to Lufthansa offices in Frankfurt, Germany (the location of their layover between Riyadh and San Francisco).

28. Doe said he worried the Saudi government might intercept the electronic communications to a foreign country; Lufthansa employees ignored this concern.

29. Doe asked Jamshed to call Lufthansa's Riyadh station chief, but the station chief refused to speak with Doe.

30. Doe and Roe were allowed to board the plane just before the flight departed.

31. On the flight, hoping to mitigate or prevent Lufthansa's likely disclosure of their marital status to Saudi Arabia, they explained to a Lufthansa employee and the captain on board what had happened at the airport. The employee and the captain assured them that their information would be deleted from Lufthansa's computers and would not be disclosed. They told plaintiffs that a Lufthansa agent would meet them in Frankfurt, Germany, where they had a layover. No Lufthansa agent met them, depriving them of the opportunity to mitigate.

32. On their second flight, from Frankfurt to San Francisco, again hoping to mitigate or prevent Lufthansa's likely disclosure of their marital status to Saudi Arabia, they again explained to a Lufthansa employee on board what had happened. The employee assured them their information had been deleted from Lufthansa computers and that the information would not be disclosed.

33. The captain on the second flight asked for a Lufthansa agent to meet Doe and Roe at SFO so they could lodge a complaint.

34. A Lufthansa agent did meet them at the gate in San Francisco, assuring them that an agent based in New York would call them within the hour and explain Lufthansa's procedures for protecting confidential information. They never received any such call. Plaintiffs again had hoped to mitigate or prevent Lufthansa's likely disclosure of their marital status to Saudi Arabia through this conversation at the airport and the promised phone call. Because neither occurred, they were unable to prevent or mitigate the disclosure.

35. In June 2021, Doe discovered that the marital status on his Saudi government profile was changed from "single" to "married."

36. There is no conceivable way the Saudi Arabian government could have learned about Plaintiffs' marriage other than as a result of information about their marital status—sent to Lufthansa in Germany—having been intercepted by or disclosed to the Saudi government.

37. On information and belief, the Saudi government knows about Roe's marital status and sexual orientation.

38. Roe has not returned to Saudi Arabia since this flight, for fear of harsh penalties for being homosexual, including revocation of his passport and imprisonment.

39. Roe has remained in the United States since arriving in California in May 2021.

40. Roe has not seen his family, who live in Saudi Arabia and do not know of his sexual orientation.

41. Unable to return to Saudi Arabia, Roe had to quickly sell certain real estate in Saudi Arabia, at a loss of around \$ 300,000.

42. Roe has developed pulmonary fibrosis, a terminal illness, as a result of the stress from the incident.

43. Doe has not returned to Saudi Arabia since returning to California in May 2021, based on fear of the government's awareness of his sexual orientation.

43. Doe was forced to close his Saudi Arabia businesses, an enterprise that had earned him more than \$ 250,000 per year prior to 2021.

\* \* \*

### **Count I: Breach of Contract**

66. Defendant Lufthansa contracted with Plaintiffs to transport them from Riyadh to San Francisco.

67. As part of that contract, Defendants agreed to protect and to delete confidential information about their marital status.

67. Defendants breached the contract by disclosing or allowing to be disclosed information about their marital status, information that the contract obligated them to keep private and not to disclose or to allow to be disclosed.

\* \* \*

### **Count II: Disclosure of Private Facts**

71. Defendants disclosed private facts about Plaintiffs' marital status that, given the political environment in Saudi Arabia, caused embarrassment and harm.

WHEREFORE, PLAINTIFFS REQUEST:

- Damages in amounts appropriate to losses incurred as a result of defendants' conduct, but at a minimum reflecting Plaintiffs' business and economic losses and health issues;
- Non-economic losses, including loss of family connections;
- Attorney's fees and costs; and
- Such other relief as this court deems appropriate.

Service effected on Lufthansa on December 22, 2025.

Service effected on LGBS on December 1, 2025.



UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

JOHN DOE, et al., )  
Plaintiffs )  
v. ) No. 25-cv-1216  
DEUTSCHE LUFTHANSA )  
AKTIENGESELLSCHAFT, et al., ) Filed: Feb. 1, 2026  
Defendants )

**DEFENDANTS' MOTION TO DISMISS FOR LACK OF PERSONAL  
JURISDICTION UNDER FED. R. CIV. P. 12(B)(2) OR IN THE  
ALTERNATIVE TO DISMISS FOR *FORUM NON CONVENIENS***

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

JOHN DOE, et al., )  
Plaintiffs )  
v. ) No. 25-cv-1216  
DEUTSCHE LUFTHANSA )  
AKTIENGESELLSCHAFT, et al., ) Filed: Mar. 3, 2026  
Defendants )

**PLAINTIFFS' OPPOSITION TO DEFENDANTS' MOTION TO DISMISS  
FOR LACK OF PERSONAL JURISDICTION UNDER FED. R. CIV. P.  
12(B)(2) OR IN THE ALTERNATIVE TO DISMISS FOR *FORUM NON  
CONVENIENS***

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

JOHN DOE, et al.,	)	
	)	
Plaintiffs	)	
v.	)	No. 25-cv-1216
DEUTSCHE LUFTHANSA	)	
AKTIENGESELLSCHAFT, et al.,	)	Filed: Mar. 3, 2026
Defendants	)	

**Jurisdictional Facts:**

The facts alleged in the Complaint can be taken as true. The following facts are true:

1. Communications about Plaintiffs’ marital status were made between Lufthansa employees in Riyadh’s airport and Lufthansa offices in Frankfurt, Germany. Pursuant to Lufthansa practice, Riyadh-based employees contacted the Frankfurt office because Roe and Doe were flying from Saudi Arabia to the United States through Frankfurt on their way to San Francisco.
2. Their marital information was entered into Lufthansa computer systems in Frankfurt, Germany.
3. Although LGBS is responsible for maintaining and monitoring Lufthansa’s IT security, the corporate computer system is operated and controlled from Germany. LGBS can access the system remotely.
4. The system is accessible from any computers in Lufthansa offices. The system can be analyzed from any access point to determine whether and how information was hacked or disclosed. LGBS will offer Lufthansa’s evidence of whether and how information from the system was disclosed.
5. The captains and cabin crew aboard both flights are citizens of Germany. The captain and cabin crew of the second flight (from Frankfurt to San Francisco) regularly fly routes to the United States, including California. The relevant employees in Lufthansa’s Frankfurt office are citizens of Germany.
6. Lufthansa employees at the Riyadh airport reside in Saudi Arabia. High-level employees—including the Station Chief and Deputy Station Chief—regularly travel to Germany for corporate matters.
7. The contract includes a Choice of Law provision, under which the contract is to be interpreted in accordance with California law.
8. In 2025, the caseload in the trial courts of the district including Cologne, Germany consisted of 11,792 cases, with a mean duration of 11.6 months for all cases

and 16.2 months for cases that proceed to the final litigation stage rather than settle or resolve early.

9. In 2025, the caseload in the trial courts of the district including Frankfurt, Germany consisted of 8,763 cases, with a mean duration of 13.3 months for all cases and 20.0 months for cases that proceed to the final litigation stage rather than settle or resolve early

10. In 2025, the caseload in the United States District Court for the Northern District of California consisted of 6171 cases, with a median time from filing to disposition of 7.5 months. The total federal docket consisted of 211,000 cases.

11. As a subsidiary of Lufthansa, LGBS is subject to jurisdiction in Germany.

### **Additional Law**

#### **Cal. Code Civ. P. 410.10**

A court of this state may exercise jurisdiction on any basis not inconsistent with the Constitution of this state or of the United States.

#### *Federal Republic of Germany v. Simon* (9th Cir. 2016)

The Federal Republic of Germany is a modern Western democracy. Its judicial system adheres to basic principles of due process akin to those of the United States. It is an adequate alternative forum in which United States citizens can be made to litigate appropriate disputes. The United States Department of State has certified Ger

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

JOHN DOE, et al., )  
Plaintiffs )  
v. ) No. 25-cv-1216  
DEUTSCHE LUFTHANSA )  
AKTIENGESELLSCHAFT, et al., ) Filed: Apr. 13, 2026  
Defendants )

**ORDER**

**Essay # 8:**

**Section B:** Argue in Support of the Motion to Dismiss for Lack of Personal Jurisdiction.

**Section A:** Argue in Opposition to the Motion to Dismiss for Lack of Personal Jurisdiction.

**Essay # 9:**

**Section B:** Argue in Opposition to the Motion to Dismiss for *Forum Non Conveniens*

**Section A:** Argue in Support of the Motion to Dismiss for *Forum Non Conveniens*