

Lawsuit accuses Leon Black of raping autistic teen at Jeffrey Epstein's house



By [Victoria Bisset](#)

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A woman has filed a lawsuit against billionaire Leon Black, accusing him of raping her at the Manhattan house of disgraced financier Jeffrey Epstein when she was 16.

According to a [lawsuit](#) filed in Manhattan federal court in New York on Tuesday, Epstein and his longtime girlfriend and associate, Ghislaine Maxwell, trafficked the girl to Black in 2002. The lawsuit says the plaintiff, now in her 30s and identified by the pseudonym Jane Doe, is autistic.

The lawsuit accuses Black of sexual assault and rape and describes the alleged attack in graphic detail, saying Black used sex toys to rape the girl with such force that she was left bleeding. Epstein refused to let the girl see a doctor, the lawsuit alleges, “and instead said that Ghislaine Maxwell would take care of it.”

The accuser was able to sue Black under an amendment to a New York City law designed to protect victims of gender-motivated violence. The amendment permits lawsuits over long-ago conduct to be filed during a two-year window that began on March 1. It is similar to the one-year window created through New York's Adult Survivors Act, which allowed writer E. Jean Carroll to sue former president Donald Trump for a sexual assault she says happened decades ago in a New York department store.

Black's lawyer, Susan Estrich, described the lawsuit against him as “frivolous,” writing in an emailed statement shared by Black's spokesman, Whit Clay, that the allegations “are totally made up” and “entirely uncorroborated.”

“Mr. Black has never met this individual,” the statement said, accusing the Wigdor law firm representing the plaintiff of having a “vendetta” against Black.

Black, the co-founder of Apollo Global Management who left the firm in 2021, is already facing scrutiny over his financial dealings with Epstein. He has denied any wrongdoing.

Epstein, a convicted sex offender, died by suicide in 2019 while awaiting trial for trafficking and abusing dozens of young girls. Maxwell, Epstein's longtime companion, is serving a 20-year sentence after being found guilty of recruiting girls for the abuse.

Tuesday's lawsuit alleges that the plaintiff was brought into contact with Epstein through a summer program for cheerleaders, and was required to give him massages involving sex acts.

The plaintiff is autistic, and was born with Mosaic Down syndrome — a condition that shares similarities with other forms of Down syndrome, including intellectual delays and disabilities, the lawsuit says. It describes her developmental age as about 12 years old.

As a result, she has difficulties understanding social cues, the court filing says, adding that “when she was threatened to do as told because ‘bad girls’ get in ‘trouble,’ she did as she was told.”

In late spring or early summer 2002, the lawsuit says, the girl was told she was being “shipped off” to New York City to meet Epstein's “special friend,” Leon Black. After she arrived at Epstein's home, Black allegedly subjected her to anal and vaginal rape using adult sex toys, according to the complaint.

“The violent and sadistic nature of Black's rape left an indelible mark on her, both physically and psychologically,” the lawsuit alleges.

Her legal team has requested a trial by jury.

Black has also faced other rape allegations, which he has denied. In May, a judge dismissed a former Russian model's lawsuit, which accused the former CEO of rape and defamation. Another woman also has accused Black of raping her in Epstein's home.

Last week, the New York Times reported that Black paid \$62.5 million to the U.S. Virgin Islands in January to avoid any potential legal action over his ties to Epstein. A spokesman for Black told the newspaper that the settlement contained “no suggestion ... that Mr. Black was aware of or participated in any misconduct.”

Tuesday's lawsuit against Black came on the same day as the U.S. Senate's Finance Committee said it was investigating the billionaire's ties to Epstein and had “uncovered serious tax issues and other concerns with trusts and structures Black executed to avoid over \$1 billion in future gift and estate taxes.”

“At every stage of the committee's investigation, Black has refused to answer questions or provide any documents that could demonstrate how Epstein's compensation for tax and estate planning services was determined or justified,” said the committee, which began its investigation in June 2022 after a report found that Black had paid Epstein a total of \$158 million in “inexplicably large” installments between 2012 and 2017.

In an emailed statement, Clay, a spokesman for Black, said he had “cooperated extensively with the Committee, providing detailed information about the matters under review. The transactions referenced in the Committee’s letter were lawful in all respects, were conceived of, vetted and implemented by reputable law firms and tax and other advisors, and Mr. Black has fully paid all taxes owed to the government.”

Also on Tuesday, the U.S. Virgin Islands alleged in a court filing that the New York-based bank JPMorgan Chase handled business related to Epstein “right up until his arrest” on sex trafficking charges in 2019. Epstein owned an island and mansion on the U.S. territory, and law enforcement officers have alleged he trafficked and sexually abused women on his private island as recently as 2018.

The territory is suing the bank for allegedly facilitating Epstein’s abuse. The bank has said it regrets any association with Epstein and has cast the lawsuit as an attempt by the U.S. territory to shift blame away from its own failure to act.

Shayna Jacobs in New York contributed to this report.