

Billionaire Leon Black is accused in lawsuit of raping autistic girl

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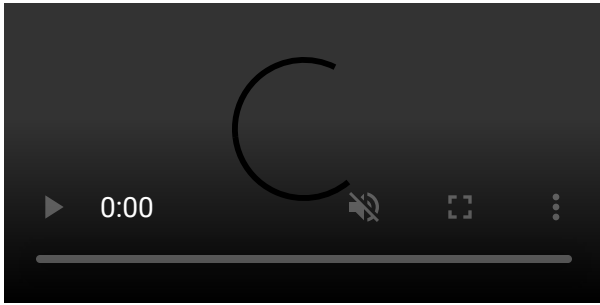
Jonathan Stempel



Leon Black speaks at the Milken Institute's 21st Global Conference in Beverly Hills, California, U.S. May 1, 2018. REUTERS/Lucy Nicholson/File Photo

NEW YORK, July 25 (Reuters) - The billionaire investor Leon Black was sued on Tuesday by an autistic woman who says he raped her in the disgraced financier Jeffrey Epstein's mansion in Manhattan in 2002, when she was 16.

In a complaint filed in Manhattan federal court, the woman, using the pseudonym Jane Doe, said that as she was preparing to give Black a massage, Black pinned her down and penetrated her with sex toys, causing her to bleed.



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She said Epstein later found her crying, but refused to let her see a doctor and said longtime associate Ghislaine Maxwell would take care of her.

Black's lawyer Susan Estrich called Doe's lawsuit frivolous.

"He never met this woman," Estrich said in an interview. "He doesn't know her at all. We're confident the lawsuit is totally uncorroborated by any evidence. It has nothing to do with Leon Black."

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Born with Mosaic Down Syndrome, Doe said she was lured into Epstein's orbit from a summer program for cheerleaders, and gave him massages, with she and he naked, before being "shipped off" to Black.

She is seeking damages for Black's alleged violation of a New York City law against gender-motivated violence. Her lawyer Jeanne Christensen declined to say whether Doe tried to settle.

Black co-founded private equity firm Apollo Global Management ([APO.N](#)), which he left in 2021. Forbes magazine said he is worth \$10.1 billion.

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The lawsuit was filed the same day the U.S. Senate's finance committee said it was examining Black's treatment of several trusts, and whether \$158 million he paid Epstein for tax and estate planning was properly deemed income or gifts for tax purposes.

Epstein died by suicide in August 2019 while awaiting trial for sex trafficking.

Black has denied other sexual abuse accusations, including in a dismissed lawsuit by former Russian model Guzel Ganieva, and a lawsuit by Cheri Pierson who also claimed he raped her in Epstein's home two decades ago.

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The billionaire has also reached a \$62.5 million settlement with the U.S. Virgin Islands, where Epstein had a home, to avoid a possible lawsuit.

The case is Doe v Black, U.S. District Court, Southern District of New York, No. 23-06418.

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