


Billionaire Leon Black Accused of Raping Autistic Girl, 16, in New Epstein-Related Lawsuit

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Billionaire financier Leon Black was accused of raping a 16-year-old autistic girl at convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein's New York townhouse in a lawsuit filed in New York federal court Tuesday.

The lawsuit was the second to accuse Black, the co-founder and former chief executive of Apollo Global Management, of inappropriate sexual conduct stemming from his relationship with Epstein.

The woman, who filed the suit anonymously through law firm Wigdor LLP, claims Black violently raped her in Epstein's New York townhouse in 2002.

"These allegations — about an incident that supposedly took place 20 years ago — are totally made up, entirely uncorroborated," Black's attorney Susan Estrich of Estrich Goldin, said in a statement to The Messenger, adding that her client says he's never met the woman.

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In the first victim lawsuit against Black, which was also filed by the Wigdor firm in New York court last November, plaintiff Cheri Pierson made a similar set of allegations.

Pierson said she was a struggling single mother working as a receptionist and was introduced to Black by Epstein at Epstein's Upper East Side mansion in spring 2002. Pierson also claimed Black raped her in a suite on the third floor.

Black filed a motion to impose sanctions against Wigdor in December for filing frivolous claims against the financier on behalf of Epstein's victims.

Wigdor didn't immediately respond to a request for comment.

Epstein died in an apparent suicide in a Manhattan jail cell in 2019, a month after federal prosecutors charged him with operating a years-long international sex trafficking ring.

Evidence of his proclivities with dozens of victims dated back to the 1990s, though he had previously been allowed to bargain a prior case down to a single charge of soliciting prostitution from a minor. He maintained an aura of power by cultivating close personal friendships with rich and famous politicians, royalty and business executives.

Separately, Black's financial dealings with Epstein are under [scrutiny by the Senate Finance Committee](#), which sent Black a letter Monday questioning \$158 million in fees he paid to the convicted sex offender.

The fees were "irregular and unusually high," and Black's refusal to answer questions about them "raises serious concerns" about whether or not the arrangement was some sort of sophisticated tax avoidance scheme, said the letter signed by Committee Chairman Ron Wyden, D-Ore.

In a statement to The Messenger, a spokesperson for Black said he's "cooperated extensively" with the investigation and the transactions were legal.

The Messenger reporter William Gavin contributed to this article.

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