

These Brothers Were Real Estate Hotshots. And Predators, Some Women Say.

[nytimes.com/2024/07/24/realestate/tal-oren-alexander-sexual-assault.html](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/24/realestate/tal-oren-alexander-sexual-assault.html)

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With a knack for brokering luxury properties, Tal and Oren Alexander, brothers who worked as real estate agents, rose as high as the New York City penthouses they sold.

They built an image as jet-setting bachelors, filling their social media feeds with photos from Wimbledon, Art Basel and the beach in Mykonos. They took calls in between ice baths after sessions with their personal trainers. Their traditional good looks and magnetism attracted ultrarich clients who propelled the brothers past thousands of other agents to the very top of the ranks at Douglas Elliman, one of the largest real estate brokerages in the country.

But as the brothers partied and sold co-ops and condos from Manhattan to Miami, they were quietly earning another reputation: Accusations that they drugged and sexually assaulted women were spreading throughout the world of high-end real estate.

Still, Tal and Oren continued to climb. They secured rarefied status in 2019 when they helped broker the sale of a nearly \$240 million penthouse — at the time, the most expensive residential sale in United States history. By 2022, they had co-founded their own real estate brokerage, Official.

Then in June, their reign as real estate princes ended. What had long been shared among brokers finally spilled into public view.

Two women sued Oren, 37, for assault, along with his twin, Alon Alexander, 37, who did not work in real estate but frequently socialized with his brothers. A third woman sued the twins as well as their older brother, Tal, 38. The brothers have denied all allegations of sexual assault, but Tal and Oren resigned from their own company.

Over the past two months, The New York Times interviewed 10 women who said they were sexually assaulted by the brothers, or believe they may have been. Some of them were speaking for the first time, including Tracy Tutor, a top broker at Douglas Elliman Beverly Hills and one of the stars of the reality TV show “Million Dollar Listing Los Angeles.” Seven of the women said they believe they had been drugged, describing a fog that erased or clouded their memory.

“I am still struggling to remember the details,” said Ms. Tutor, 48. She said she shared a drink with Oren Alexander at a cocktail party in 2014 and then blacked out. “Staying silent for so long has been damaging on many levels, and remembering now what happened feels debilitating.”

Dozens of former classmates, brokerage employees and agents told The Times that they had knowledge of drugging and violent sexual assault by the brothers, dating back at least 20 years to when the men were high school students.

Leaders at Douglas Elliman were aware of allegations that Tal and Oren may have been drugging women, yet the brokerage continued to support the duo, said five real estate professionals who either told executives about incidents or were told about them by company executives. When the brothers were starting their own agency, real estate professionals tried to dissuade Side, a brokerage, from backing Tal and Oren. But Side partnered with them anyway, according to interviews with three real estate professionals who said they had spoken with Side executives about the brothers.

In a statement, Stephen Larkin, a spokesman for Douglas Elliman, said that a concern about drugging had once been brought to the chief executive's attention, but said that it had been raised casually and confidentially, rather than in the form of an official H.R. complaint.

"Had any such complaints been received, those complaints would have been thoroughly investigated," he said. The statement did not address a second allegation raised by The Times.

Side had no knowledge of claims ever having been made to anyone at the brokerage, a spokeswoman, Katherine Mechling, said in a statement.

"We are unaware of anyone at Side who had previous knowledge of these allegations, and they are allegations that we take very seriously and behavior that we would never condone or invite into our community," she said.

Nicole Oge, who co-founded Official alongside Oren and Tal, declined to comment. The women who have sued were not employees of Official, Side or Douglas Elliman.

Oren and Alon, through their lawyer, Isabelle Kirshner, declined to comment. Deanna Paul, a lawyer who is representing Tal Alexander, said that he was not aware of any investigations into his behavior and he denied all allegations. "At no time was Tal notified, much less accused, by Elliman or Side of any misconduct and denies those purported claims," she said in an email.

Image





Some of the women who came forward to The New York Times are well-known personalities in the real estate industry, including Tracy Tutor, one of the stars of the reality TV show “Million Dollar Listing Los Angeles.” Credit...Anna Webber/Getty Images For Amazon Freevee

The lawsuits from the three women — filed just before a New York State deadline for victims of sexual assault to submit claims — all centered on allegations from the early 2010s. The lawsuits touched off a torrent of posts on social media by women who described bad encounters with the men.

“These were allegations that were so widespread that they were common knowledge in the residential real estate industry for more than a decade,” said Barbara Wagner, a public relations executive who worked with Douglas Elliman for more than 16 years. She now runs her own firm, and the company is no longer her client.

Jessica Cohen, an award-winning agent with Douglas Elliman, said in an interview with The Times that she woke up in a hospital in Manhattan in 2010 after she attended a birthday party with Tal, Oren and Alon Alexander. A hospital report shows she traveled there by ambulance, but she said she has no recollection of the journey.

Samantha Murphy, a model and now the wife of Patrick Murphy, a former congressman, said after she went to Oren Alexander’s apartment in 2017, he ripped off her dress as she screamed and said, “No.”

“Telling this story publicly is, in truth, one of the hardest things I’ve ever done in my life,” said Ms. Murphy, 33. “Years later and I still wake up in the middle of the night with nightmares.”

‘I Was Terrified’

Image



Oren and Alon, identical twin brothers from Miami Beach, were often seen on the party circuit together in Miami and Manhattan.

Tal, Oren and Alon grew up in Bal Harbour, Fla., a wealthy suburb of Miami Beach. Their father is a successful luxury real estate developer.

Allegations of sexual assault had trailed the brothers since they were teenagers, said five former classmates.

One woman, who went to high school with the three brothers, said that in the summer of 2004, when she, Oren and Alon were finishing their senior year, she went to a party at their home. Oren and Alon locked her in a bedroom together with them, she said, before Oren sexually assaulted her.

When she told her father about the assault, he took her to the police station to file a report, she said, but she did not ultimately press charges. When she went to the police station this summer to obtain a copy of the record, she was told the police department no longer had it. The woman requested anonymity because she did not want to be identified as a sexual assault victim.

Rose Martinez, 38, another classmate, was in the house that evening and said she saw the woman immediately after the incident. The woman told her what had happened, and Ms. Martinez helped her get home. “Everyone has been too scared to say anything,” said Ms. Martinez, who runs her own business selling customizable items. “They held a lot of weight, especially in Miami.”

In 2008, when he was 21, Oren Alexander moved to New York and joined Douglas Elliman, where he sold his first property, a penthouse, for \$8.2 million. Tal soon followed.

In 2012, the brothers founded the Alexander Team within the brokerage, overseeing record-breaking deals. They didn’t just cater to the wealthy, they were the wealthy — posing on private jets and riding camels in Qatar. They became fixtures on the New York social scene, frequenting private clubs and reveling at invitation-only parties in Manhattan, Miami and in the Hamptons. On social media, their lives looked like a fraternity party that wouldn’t end.

During their meteoric rise, there were more allegations of sexual assault.

On Oct. 16, 2010, Jessica Cohen arrived at a birthday party at the Core Club in Manhattan and had a drink with Oren, Alon and Tal.

She has no memory of the next five hours, she said, though time-stamped photographs taken by a friend and reviewed by The Times showed she was with all three brothers late into the evening. In one of them, she is passed out on Tal Alexander’s shoulder, her hand intertwined with his.

She said she woke up after midnight at Manhattan’s Mount Sinai West Hospital. Her vomit-covered clothes had been removed. A bystander had found her alone on the street and called 911, according to a medical report reviewed by The Times. Ms. Cohen said what she felt was very different than any alcohol-induced stupor.

“I woke up feeling like I came out of general anesthesia,” she said.

For several days, Ms. Cohen struggled to piece together what had happened that evening, describing the details she could recall to a few colleagues, including Dottie Herman, Douglas Elliman’s vice chairwoman. (The company said that Ms. Herman has no recollection of speaking with Ms. Cohen about the allegations, and Ms. Herman did not respond to a request for comment.)

About three weeks after the birthday party, at an event for Gotham Magazine, Tal Alexander approached her, Ms. Cohen said, and plucked the drink from her hand. She said he told her that she needed to be careful to protect people's reputations, which she interpreted as a threat.

Image



Howard Lorber, president and chief executive of Douglas Elliman Inc., confirmed to The New York Times that at least one woman told him about losing her memory after spending time with Tal and Oren Alexander. He said she asked him not to act on the knowledge, so he did not. Credit...Rebecca Smeyne for The New York Times

In 2012, Ms. Cohen recalled that hazy evening to another person at Douglas Elliman: Howard Lorber, president and chief executive of the company. Ms. Cohen, a former chess champion, would sometimes play chess after work with Mr. Lorber. During one game, he stopped to take a call from Oren Alexander. In that moment, Ms. Cohen told him that she believed she may have been drugged by the duo that night. She asked Mr. Lorber to please not act on the knowledge. "I was terrified," she said. "I was afraid they would hurt me."

Mr. Lorber, she said, promised her he would keep the information quiet.

In its statement, Douglas Elliman confirmed Ms. Cohen's account of the conversation and noted that Ms. Cohen had told Mr. Lorber that she did not know exactly what had happened to her that evening. "She insisted on absolute confidentiality," the company said in the

statement. “Douglas Elliman respected her wishes.”

Ms. Cohen, an award-winning broker, still works at Douglas Elliman and is considered one of their top brokers. She was named Agent of the Year by the Real Estate Board of New York in 2019.

More Allegations

Several months after Ms. Cohen’s birthday party blackout, in the summer of 2011, Lindsey Acree, an artist and gallery owner in Brooklyn, attended a house party in the Hamptons with Tal Alexander. Ms. Acree said she was handed a glass of wine as she stepped into a hot tub.

“I drank the wine, and then it’s just nothing,” she said.

Ms. Acree, 38, has a slight memory, she said, of being pinned down in a sauna by Tal Alexander and another man she had met for the first time in the car on her way to the party. But for at least 24 hours, she has no other recollections.

“I have no idea what happened to me. I have no idea what happened to my body,” she said.

About three years later, in 2014, Ms. Tutor, the real estate agent who now appears on reality TV, went out to dinner with friends, following a Douglas Elliman-sponsored event in New York.

She said her memory went blank after sharing a drink with Oren Alexander. A friend found her in the restaurant’s bathroom with Mr. Alexander and pulled her away — an event she does not remember.

The friend who pulled her out of the bathroom is a fellow Elliman agent. He asked that his name be withheld for fear of professional retaliation, but he corroborated Ms. Tutor’s version of events and said he had informed a top executive at the brokerage of the incident. He declined to name the executive and stressed he never filed a formal complaint.

About three years after Ms. Tutor’s incident, in the fall of 2017, Samantha Murphy went to dinner with Oren Alexander and friends one evening and left with Oren. She went to his apartment, but said she was not yet ready to be intimate with him. But that night, she said, he tore off her dress, pinned her down, and assaulted her.

Ms. Murphy is now married to Patrick Murphy, a former U.S. representative from Florida. Early in their relationship, Ms. Murphy told him what had happened to her, Mr. Murphy told The Times.

The Lawsuits

By the late 2010s and early 2020s, the brothers were growing professionally and personally. In 2021, they announced that they had closed more than \$1.8 billion in sales, accounting for 3.5 percent of the business that Douglas Elliman did that year.

In 2022, they announced that they were leaving Douglas Elliman to start Official, alongside three other co-founders. Both men were in serious relationships with women who would become their wives, but their reputations followed them as they were seeking a licensed brokerage to support them.

Before the deal was signed, on at least two occasions, concerns were raised to leaders of the brokerage, Side, about the Alexanders.

Brian Meier, a broker who worked with Elliman for nearly 14 years, said he was invited to a dinner with Side executives and asked what he knew about sexual assault allegations against the Alexanders. He told them that rumors had followed the brothers for years and were considered an open secret in the industry. He also told them, he said, that it was understood at Douglas Elliman that Mr. Lorber was aware of at least one incident.

“Side knew about this stuff and still went forward with them,” said Mr. Meier, who is now with Berkshire Hathaway.

A female broker in New York, who asked that her name not be shared because she fears professional retaliation, said she told a Side executive that she would not work with the company if it partnered with the Alexanders.

That executive, Meredith Moore, took her concerns to Guy Gal, Side’s chief executive. “I passed along the message, but there did not seem to be a sense of urgency,” Ms. Moore said. “He did not bring it up again.”

Ms. Moore was let go during a round of layoffs at the company a few weeks later.

In 2023, Tal and Oren got married months apart; Alon had gotten married in 2020. Oren Alexander’s wedding was featured in Vogue — his wife told the magazine that they met when Oren approached her in a Las Vegas hotel lobby and “asked if I was lost.”

A short time later, in November 2023, the brothers learned that lawsuits were on the way.

In March, Kate Whiteman filed the first lawsuit against Oren and Alon, the twin brothers.

Ms. Whiteman, a former marketing executive, is represented by Evan Torgan. She said that she met Oren and Alon at a Manhattan nightclub in 2012. As she was leaving, they forced her into an SUV and drove her to the Hamptons, where she said she was assaulted at Sir Ivan’s Castle, according to the lawsuit.



In two of the lawsuits that were filed against the Alexanders this summer, two different women claim they were assaulted at Sir Ivan's Castle, a party mansion in the Southampton town of Water Mill in 2012. Credit...Sipa USA/Alamy Live News

Ms. Whiteman's case was followed by a lawsuit from Rebecca Mandel, who accused Oren and Alon of drugging and then assaulting her at a party in Manhattan in 2010. She described consuming a drink — her first of the evening — that had been handed to her by Alon before her memory went hazy. But in the lawsuit she recalled Oren forcefully penetrating her while Alon held her down. She said they then switched places and the assault continued, according to the lawsuit.

Angelica Parker filed a third lawsuit. She said that she was sexually assaulted at an apartment in Manhattan. She said she was assaulted by both Tal and Alon, and during the act, Oren watched.

Ms. Parker, who was previously known as Angelica Cecora, lost a similar suit that she filed against Oscar De La Hoya in 2012. In a legal response to Ms. Parker's suit, lawyers for Tal said she was trying "to use the court system to pursue fabricated allegations for financial gain."

In a statement to The New York Times, Ms. Parker, who is represented by Michael J. Willemin, said she anticipated such attacks. "I knew when I filed this action that Tal, his brother and their lawyers would do everything in their power to shame, embarrass and discredit me," she said.

Susan C. Beachy contributed research.

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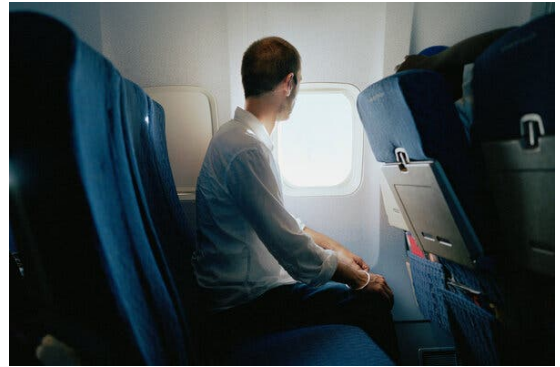




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