

Turing Pharmaceuticals, Company Founded by Martin Shkreli, Accused of Retaliation After Sexual Assault

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jezebel.com



Image via AP.

In February, Turing Pharmaceuticals was the subject of a Congressional hearing over its pricing practices. The company, launched by the Internet's favorite villain Martin Shkreli in 2015, had [raised the price](#) of Daraprim from around \$14 to \$750 a pill. The drug, over 50 years old, had long been used to treat a rare but fatal infection typically found in patients with suppressed immune systems (i.e. AIDS and cancer patients). Shkreli and Turing

executive Nancy Retzlaff were called before Congress to answer for the cost hike.

Now, Retzlaff has filed a federal complaint against Turing. In the complaint, she accuses Edwin Urrutia, one of Shkreli's friends and co-founder of Turing, of sexually assaulting her in March 2016. The *New York Times* [reports](#) that Urrutia resigned after the company launched an internal investigation. In turn, Retzlaff alleges that the company retaliated against her after the complaint.

The complaint, filed Monday with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, says that Retzlaff was assaulted during a March trip to Washington, DC for another Congressional hearing. As the chief commercial officer for Turing, Retzlaff, along with Shkreli, has been present at nearly all of the hearings. Retzlaff alleges that Urrutia made advances and tried to kiss her at the hotel bar. In response, Retzlaff left the hotel bar, but Urrutia followed her into the elevator. When he tried to leave the elevator, Urrutia blocked the doors and insisted that she join him in his hotel room for a drink.

The *Times* [reports](#):

When she did, she said, "he threw me onto the bed and sexually assaulted me."

Ms. Retzlaff said she was groped and that he repeatedly kissed her against her will, then tried to pull off her tights. "Finally, after struggling for many minutes, I was able to escape Mr. Urrutia and run out of the room," she said in the complaint.

After the incident, Urrutia was allowed to resign from the company. But Retzlaff alleges that the Turing, led by Shkreli, retaliated against her. According to the lawsuit, she had been a candidate for the CEO position—newly open after Shkreli's arrest—and had been promised more stock in the company. Retzlaff, who still works at Turing, was given neither promotion nor stock.

Retzlaff argues that the retaliation was led by Shkreli, who stepped down as CEO in December 2015 after he was arrested on fraud and securities charges. According to the lawsuit, Shkreli engaged in "sexist and vulgar behavior," leading the retaliation against Retzlaff because he was angry his friend had to resign.

Shkreli has denied all of the allegations, indicating that Retzlaff didn't receive the promotion because she was unqualified. This story is populated by some of the least sympathetic people on earth and, frankly,

none of it seems particularly surprising.