

'Taxi king' of NYC sexually harassed assistant for months: suit

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(DelMundo, Anthony freelance NYDN/Anthony DelMundo)

'Taxi king' Evgeny (Gene) Freidman is facing a sexual harassment lawsuit from a former employee.

The embattled taxi king of New York “royally misbehaved” around his chief assistant, according to a suit alleging months of sexual harassment.

A federal suit filed in Brooklyn this week against Evgeny (Gene) Freidman alleged that he subjected his assistant Elaine Gutierrez to sexually charged comments throughout her seven months at his company, Taxi Club

Management.

“New York’s so-called ‘Taxi King’... royally misbehaved through his relentless sexual harassment” of Gutierrez, who faced a “constant barrage of unwanted and sexually harassing comments during her time as his assistant.”

The suit alleges that Freidman frequently made creepy come-ons and attempts to get Gutierrez — the company’s accounts payable manager and chief executive assistant — alone with him after work hours.

Taxi king owes \$13M in taxes and NYC does nothing about it

Gutierrez, 41, who joined the company in September 2015, said that Freidman would comment about her breasts and body, while using flimsy excuses to get her into meetings with him, “just so he could ogle and stare at her,” the suit said. He would also make demeaning remarks to her in front of male employees, she said.

“It was embarrassing. It was humiliating,” Gutierrez told the Daily News. “I was treated like garbage.”

When she complained, Freidman allegedly said, “If I tell you to come, what if it’s just because I want to look at you?” and “Just do what I say and ask nothing.”

Gutierrez “physically and verbally resisted” Freidman’s harassment and advances, repeatedly telling him to stop his embarrassing behavior, according to the suit.

Taxi king evicted from Chelsea space for stiffing landlord

When Gutierrez put her foot down after an Aug. 12 meeting to end the harassment, she was fired five days later.

“I finally spoke up,” she said. “I yelled at him right back. I said I couldn’t take this anymore.”

The taxi company's chief financial officer, Andreea Dumitru Parcalaboiu, allegedly axed Gutierrez because "Gene doesn't want you here anymore" because she asks too many questions.

Freidman was incensed about the suit, telling the Daily News that he rarely worked alongside Gutierrez. He accused her of trying to shake him down for money and threatened to countersue her and the law firm that filed the suit.

"It's extortion," Freidman said. "I won't fall for extortion ever."

Freidman denied that Gutierrez was fired, insisting that she put in her two weeks' notice and quit. He also disputed her role in the company, saying she helped out with office work at an office run by Parcalaboiu.

"If it was once a month when I saw her, that would be a lot," Freidman said.

Gutierrez disputed Freidman's claims, saying that she would see him several times a week.

Parcalaboiu and Taxi Club Management are defendants in the suit along with Freidman. Messages left with Parcalaboiu were not immediately returned.

After Gutierrez was fired, she filed a complaint of discrimination and retaliation with the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission Sept. 30, according to the suit.

"No employer, not even the so-called taxi king, can be permitted to get away with terrorizing female employees with sexual harassment," said Tanvir Rahman, Gutierrez's attorney at employment litigation firm Wigdor LLP.