

# Bottle server at SoHo nightclub Paul's Casablanca drugged, raped by general manager: suit

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By Stephen Rex Brown

The general manager of a trendy SoHo nightclub slipped a drug in a bottle server's glass of champagne and raped her, a new lawsuit charges.

The server says in her suit filed in Manhattan Federal Court that after she worked up the courage to tell the club's owners about the alleged assault by Joshua Menendez, they swept her complaints under the rug and ostracized her from staff.

The Daily News is withholding the server's name because she alleges she's the victim of a sex crime,

The woman says the assault occurred on Oct. 7, 2017, at the conclusion of a shift in which the Spring St. club pulled in \$60,000.

During a meeting with Menendez and three other staffers, he suggested they pop a bottle of bubbly to commemorate the profitable evening, the suit says.

"Menendez was under the influence of drugs and alcohol that evening, and it was commonplace for Menendez to consume alcohol and cocaine while at the club," the suit says.

The server blacked out after a single glass of champagne. Her suit says she faded in and out of consciousness and only recalls crying, Menendez putting drugs to her nose and him having sex with her.

"The following afternoon, (the server) awoke in her apartment covered in blood, and with cuts and bruises all over her body," the suit says. "She was naked and had no recollection of how she got home."

Several weeks after the encounter the server confronted Menendez about what had happened.

"Menendez responded that he did not want 'any drama,' and he refused to discuss what he had done," the suit says. "Menendez also smugly indicated that he was impressed that (the server) had even mustered the courage to approach him."

It wasn't until March that the alleged victim reported she was raped to the club's owners, Paul Sevigny and Brian McPeck. It was not immediately clear Monday if she had reported the attack to police.

The server was taken off of shifts that would force her to work under Menendez — meaning she was unable to work the most lucrative evenings. The owners, after a delay, also hired “an unqualified event security company” to investigate the assault, the suit says.

Eliasson was hopeful that Sevigny would take the matter seriously, given that his sister is actress Chloe Sevigny, the suit says.

“The decision to approach Defendant Paul Sevigny was made easier by the fact that his famous sister, actress Chloë Sevigny, is an outspoken supporter of women’s rights who advocates for ‘smashing the patriarchy,’” court papers read.

Menendez was only fired after the owners learned that the alleged victim had hired a lawyer, the suit says.

She seeks damages to be determined at trial.

“This sort of conduct is exactly why many women who have been sexually assaulted or raped are afraid to come forward,” the woman’s attorney, Michael Willemin, said. “Our client hopes that this lawsuit will help women who have been subjected to such conduct to feel more comfortable coming forward.” .

An email to the club was not immediately returned.