$1.34 Million Default Judgment Granted In Sexual Harassment Lawsuit Against New York's So-Called "Taxi King"

July 16, 2018 • Results

On Monday, July 16, 2018, a U.S. District Judge for the Eastern District of New York awarded Wigdor LLP client Elaine Gutierrez a total award of over $1.34 million in damages in a sexual harassment and retaliation case against New York's so-called "Taxi King," Evgeny "Gene" Freidman and his company Taxi Club Management, Inc.

In January 2017, Wigdor LLP filed a sexual harassment lawsuit on behalf of Ms. Gutierrez, a former accounts payable manager and assistant to the "Taxi King." Ms. Gutierrez alleged that Mr. Freidman subjected her to a constant barrage of sexually harassing comments and egregious bullying throughout her employment, including making explicit comments about her body (both in private and in front of groups of associates), throwing papers on the floor and forcing Ms. Gutierrez to pick them up, and on occasion harassing her in front of her ten-year-old daughter. Ms. Gutierrez repeatedly objected to and complained about the inappropriate behavior, including to Chief Financial Officer Andreea Dumitru Parcalaboiu, but was told, "You get paid, so just deal with it," according to the lawsuit. As alleged, Ms. Gutierrez was eventually terminated in a blatant act of retaliation for speaking out against the harassment.

Mr. Freidman, who once owned over 800 taxi cab medallions, recently pled guilty to tax fraud and agreed to pay $1 million in restitution to the State of New York. Now, Taxi Club and Mr. Freidman must pay over $1.34 million in damages, including $850,000 in punitive damages, $130,000 in emotional damages, $295,032.19 for economic losses, and attorneys' fees and costs. In a separate order, a U.S. Magistrate Judge ordered Mr. Freidman to pay sanctions in connection with "exceptional vulgarity and disrespect" towards the Court and opposing counsel.

Ms. Gutierrez is represented by Wigdor LLP Partner Lawrence M. Pearson.

Statement from Lawrence M. Pearson, Partner at Wigdor LLP:

> "Ms. Gutierrez is very pleased that the Court has formally adopted the recommendation and granted judgment against Mr. Freidman and his company. In the #MeToo era, the message is clear: no one, not even the so-called 'Taxi King,' is above the law when it comes to workplace sexual harassment. The award of $850,000 in punitive damages in particular shows that employers face serious consequences for harassment and retaliation, and that the law recognizes the need for and will uphold strong

> punishment and deterrence of inexcusable, abusive conduct like that of Mr. Freidman."

Read the Full Order Here

NY Daily News
"'Taxi King' hit with a $1.34M judgment in sexual harassment case"
July 17, 2018
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The Guardian
"New York's 'Taxi King' ordered to pay $1.3m in sexual harassment case"
July 17, 2018
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Law360
"Ex-'Taxi King' Worker Wins $1.3M in Sexual Harassment Suit"
July 17, 2018
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New York Business Journal
"Taxi King ordered to pay $1.3 million in sexual harassment case"
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Law & Crime
"'Taxi King' Cooperating in Feds' Michael Cohen Probe Hit with $1.34 Million Sexual Harassment Penalty"
July 17, 2018
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NY Post
"Taxi King' must pay $1.3M to ex-assistant after sex harassment'"
June 26, 2018
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NY Post
"Judge orders 'Taxi King' to pay $1.3M in sex harassment case"
July 17, 2018

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Bloomberg
"Cohen Taxi Partner Ordered to Pay $1.3 Million in Harassment Suit"
July 17, 2018
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New York Law Journal
"Former Employee of NYC's 'Taxi King' Wins Award in Sexual Harassment Suit"
July 18, 2018
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Daily Beast
"Taxi King' Ordered to Pay $1.3 Million in Sexual-Harassment Suit"
July 17, 2018
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NY Daily News
"Judge recommends 'Taxi King' pay $1.3M in sex harassment case'"
June 26, 2018
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