

Lawsuit reveals details of rugby player's night of drunken rage

By Jason Grant and Laura Italiano December 23, 2015 / 9:47pm



Australian rugby player Matthew Lodge at Manhattan Criminal Court in October.

A new lawsuit gives the most detailed account yet of a [drunken Manhattan rampage by Australian rugby player Matthew Lodge](#), who admittedly grabbed and manhandled a pair of pretty German tourists while trying to pick them up on the Upper West Side in October.

Lodge was in a drunken rage — and screaming, “My name is Matthew Lodge. I come in peace. Salaam Alaikum” — as he violently accosted the two women and a neighbor who’d rushed out of his apartment to help them, according to a Manhattan federal lawsuit, in which one of the women, the neighbor and the neighbor’s wife join in seeking unspecified cash damages.

The suit was made public one day after the thuggy rugby star’s guilty plea in Manhattan Criminal Court on Tuesday to a single count of misdemeanor assault in connection with the October fracas.

In a sweetheart, no-jail deal, Lodge remains free on \$20,000 cash bail pending a sentencing — by Skype, from Australia — scheduled for June 17.

On October 16, 2015, plaintiff Carolin Dekeyser, a tourist from Germany, was visiting New York with a girlfriend when they came across the “thickly-muscled, visibly intoxicated” Lodge at around 4:30 a.m., the suit alleges.

Dekeyser is the daughter of outdoor-furniture tycoon Bobby Dekeyser, boyfriend of actress Gina Gershon. The Post has previously identified the second woman as Claudia Isabel Martin, a theater director.



Photo: Steven Hirsch

The women were getting out of a cab in front of the West End Avenue apartment of a friend with whom they were staying, and watched with growing alarm as Lodge tried, and failed, to get their cabby let him inside. Lodge then turned his attention to the two women, the lawsuit alleges.

The “maniacal, cursing, 240-pound white man” chased the two women, “violently grabbing Ms. Dekeyser by the shoulders, spinning her around so that she faced him and holding her with an iron grip so that she could not escape,” the lawsuit says.

“As he towered over her, his face was a mixture of confusion and barely-contained rage as he began to ramble about his desire to take the two women to Australia to meet his family,” the lawsuit says.

“Lodge quickly shifted from asking Ms. Dekeyser and her friend to return with him to Australia, to, incredibly, threatening that “This is the night you die,” in response to their refusal to accompany him,” the lawsuit says.

“Understandably fearing for their safety when faced with an enormous man standing 6’4” and well over 200 pounds threatening their lives, the two women ran to their friend’s apartment building, only to be trapped in a small enclosed foyer with an individual who was cursing at them and repeatedly threatening their lives,” the lawsuit says.



Neighbor Joseph Cartright, a fashion photographer, overheard the commotion and ran out of his apartment, along with his wife, Ruth Fowler. The couple's "brave intervention" allowed the two women "to escape Lodge's clutches and avoid grievous bodily harm, intervention for which they will be eternally grateful," the lawsuit says.

"However, not satisfied with having terrorized two innocent women who were less than half his size, Lodge turned his alcohol- and drug-induced rage onto Mr. Cartright, breaking into his apartment where his wife, Ms. Fowler, and their nine-year-old son had been peacefully sleeping," the lawsuit says.



Photo: Steven Hirsch

Lodge "savagely beat Mr. Cartright, locked himself in the couple's apartment with Ms. Fowler and their son, and attempted to attack the terrified mother, who was cowering in the bathroom with their son as Lodge rained blows on the door, nearly breaking it wide open," the lawsuit says.

Lodge also smashed the family's plates and glasses, threw their furniture around, and lobbed a two-liter wine bottle at arriving cops, shattering it "into hundreds of pieces," the lawsuit says.

"The intervention of the NYPD, who subdued Lodge at gunpoint, ended the tense standoff and potentially saved the lives of all involved," the lawsuit says.

Lodge has a history of violence against women, the lawsuit notes. Two months prior, Lodge had been suspended by his Wests Tigers team over domestic violence charges.

"Additionally, Lodge was previously disciplined by Australia's National Rugby League for proudly writing the invective, "c—," on his wristband during a match, demonstrating his animosity towards women," the suit says.

The Cartright family and Dekeyser are not happy that Lodge will not be serving a day in jail, their lawyer told The Post Wednesday.

Instead, he was allowed to return to Australia, where he will attend a 28-day in-patient program for alcohol abuse and anger management. He'll also do 200 hours community service at an Australian soup kitchen and a junior rugby club.



Photo: Getty Images

“He actually threw a bottle at the police during a home invasion, so I’m surprised,” that the DA approved a misdemeanor plea and agreed to drop the two felony charges against Lodge, said the lawyer for the Cartrights and Dekeyser, Douglas Wigdor.

“They wanted him to do some jail time,” he said of his clients. “He really tormented this family.”

“Matthew deeply regrets this incident,” said his lawyer, Thomas C. Rotko.

“He is a 20 year old young man who understands that he has much to work on and a lot of growing up to do. He has already commenced that process and will continue to do so. He is grateful that the DA’s office has recognized his commitment and has given him the chance to return to Australia and continue his journey to becoming a better person.”