

# Woman raped by Uber driver in India sues company for privacy breaches

 [theguardian.com/technology/2017/jun/15/uber-india-woman-rape-lawsuit](https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2017/jun/15/uber-india-woman-rape-lawsuit)

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An Indian woman who was raped by an Uber driver sued the ride-hailing company on Thursday, alleging that Uber executives had “violated her a second time” when [they obtained her medical records](#) and used them to cast doubt on her credibility.



The woman, a resident of Texas who is bringing the case as a Jane Doe, filed suit against the company, CEO Travis Kalanick, and former executives Eric Alexander and Emil Michael for violating her privacy and defaming her character.

The case stems from a [2014 rape](#) that caused widespread outrage against Uber in India and led to the service being [temporarily banned in Delhi](#). The victim was an Uber passenger who was assaulted by her driver. The driver, Shiv Kumar Yadav, was convicted of rape and [sentenced to life in prison](#).

Uber faced harsh criticism for failing to perform effective background checks when it was revealed that the driver was [facing charges in four other criminal cases](#) at the time of the attack.

The nearly \$70bn startup expressed support for the victim at the time, with Kalanick releasing a statement that read: “We will do everything, I repeat, everything to help bring this perpetrator to justice and to support the victim and her family in her recovery.”

Last week, however, it was [reported](#) that Uber took a different view of the assault internally. Alexander, then the president of business for Uber Asia Pacific, reportedly traveled to India in the days after the attack and obtained the victim’s medical records. He then allegedly shared those records with Kalanick and Michael, the senior vice-president for business, and the group theorized that the victim was part of a conspiracy by rival Indian firm Ola to damage Uber’s reputation.

“It is shocking that Travis Kalanick could publicly say that [Uber](#) would do everything to support our client and her family in her recovery when he and other executives were reviewing illegally obtained medical records and engaging in offensive and spurious conspiracy theories about the brutal rape she so tragically suffered,” Douglas Wigdor, Jane Doe’s attorney, said in a statement.

Alexander was [fired](#) on 6 June, after reporters from Recode and other outlets began inquiring about the incident. According to the [New York Times](#), an Uber spokesman lied to a Times reporter in April when he inquired about the issue. Michael left Uber on Monday, amid [pressure from the board of directors](#). Kalanick began an [indefinite leave of absence](#) on Tuesday.

The suit alleges that Alexander “met with Delhi police and intentionally obtained plaintiff’s confidential medical

records” just days after the assault. Though Alexander’s copy of the documents was turned over to the company around December 2015, the suit alleges that Uber still possesses it.

It remains unclear how Alexander obtained the medical records.

Madhur Verma, a senior Delhi police official who was in charge of investigating the December 2014 sexual assault, [told the Guardian](#) that there was “no reason for it”.

Alexander testified for the prosecution in the case, but about the driver’s route and background. “Had [Uber] applied for permission” to access the records, Verma said, “police would never have given it.”

Jane Doe sued Uber for negligence and fraud in 2015. The case was [reportedly settled](#) for at least \$3m.

“No one should have to go through a horrific experience like this, and we’re truly sorry that she’s had to relive it over the last few weeks,” an Uber spokesman said in a statement.

The lawsuit comes at a time of considerable turmoil for Uber, which has been rocked by scandal over the past six months. On Tuesday, the company [released the results](#) of an investigation into allegations of widespread sexual assault and gender discrimination. The company’s board of directors unanimously adopted the report’s recommendations, which included reducing Kalanick’s role and implementing basic business practices like a functioning human resources department.

Uber’s reformation efforts hit a speed bump when a member of the board of directors made a sexist remark at the all-staff meeting addressing the corporate cultural makeover. He [resigned](#) later that day.