

# Rape victim sues Uber, Travis Kalanick for digging into medical records

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**Bengaluru:** The woman who was raped by a Uber driver in Delhi in 2014 has sued the company, its chief executive Travis Kalanick and two former senior executives Emil Michael and Eric Alexander, for accessing her medical records, according to a report in *The New York Times*.

The woman has sued Kalanick, Michael and Alexander for intrusion into private affairs, public disclosure of private facts and defamation, according to the report. The report states that the woman has taken an exception to the Uber executives contemplating that the allegations of rape were a campaign by a rival to malign the company.

“Rape denial is just another form of the toxic gender discrimination that is endemic at Uber and ingrained in its culture,” *The New York Times* quoted Douglas Wigdor, the lawyer for the woman, as saying. A case has been filed in the federal district court of California.

“Hopefully, this lawsuit coupled with the changes recommended by the independent counsel will create real change and reform at Uber and elsewhere,” Wigdor told *New York Times*.

“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 spokesperson said in an email response.

*Mint* couldn’t reach Wigdor for comment.

Alexander, who was then the head of Uber’s Asia Pacific business, had sought the medical records because he and some other senior executives at Uber had doubts that the woman had been raped, *Mint* reported on 9 June.

Alexander left Uber last week.

In December 2014, Shiv Kumar Yadav, an Uber driver in Delhi, raped a woman rider. Yadav was sentenced to life imprisonment in November 2015 by a sessions court after a fast-track trial.

Some senior leaders at Uber’s India unit knew that Alexander had secured the rape victim’s medical records, *Mint* reported on 9 June. It’s not clear how Alexander obtained the medical records of the rape victim and whether his actions were legal.

It is not immediately clear if Uber will act against some of the India executives who were in the know of Alexander’s actions.

Alexander’s actions were being investigated as part of a wide-ranging probe into Uber’s practices on issues such as sexual harassment and professionalism. Uber’s board hired two law firms, Perkins Coie and Covington & Burling, to conduct the investigation after reports emerged earlier this year about several instances of sexual harassment and inappropriate behaviour by members of the company’s management team. Uber has already fired 20 employees as part of this probe though Alexander wasn’t one of them.

Alexander showed the medical records to Kalanick and Michael, a close aide of the chief executive. All three believed it was possible that Ola, Uber’s arch-rival in India, had orchestrated the incident. Michael quit Uber earlier this week.

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