

Victim in Uber India rape case may take action, her attorney says

[usatoday.com/story/tech/talkingtech/2017/06/08/victim-uber-india-rape-case-may-take-action-her-attorney-says/102642726/](https://www.usatoday.com/story/tech/talkingtech/2017/06/08/victim-uber-india-rape-case-may-take-action-her-attorney-says/102642726/)

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Uber is in the midst of another rough patch, from firings due to sexual assault to not paying men and women equally. Time

SAN FRANCISCO — Uber and its recently [fired head of Asia Pacific operations](#) could potentially face legal action for illegally obtaining the medical records of an Indian woman who was raped by her Uber driver.

"We are investigating and researching all potential avenues to address this situation and expect to have more information next week," attorney Douglas Wigdor said in an email to USA TODAY Thursday.

New York-based Wigdor represents the woman who was raped by her driver in 2014 at age 26, as well as dozens of plaintiffs who have brought discrimination charges [against Fox News](#).

According to a [report](#) Wednesday in Recode, former Uber executive Eric Alexander traveled to India after the incident, obtained the woman's medical records and shared them with CEO Travis Kalanick, senior vice president Emil Michael and other top executives at Uber.

The Medical Council of India [requires](#) that a patient's medical records can only be obtained by "the patients/authorized attendant or legal authorities involved."

When Recode presented its findings to Uber Wednesday, the ride-hailing company fired Alexander. On Tuesday, Uber also [fired 20 other staffers](#) as a result of inquiries into 215 cases of sexual harassment, bullying and other workplace transgressions that were brought to law firm Perkins Coie.

Wigdor said in a statement that "it is incredible in this day and age that one could even fathom that a legitimate rape victim was part of a conspiracy by a rival firm to harm Uber. Sadly, these views, coupled with the scrutiny of private medical records, support rape culture and must end."

An Uber spokesperson did not respond to a request for comment on the attorney's statement Thursday.

Uber is facing a major cultural crisis stemming from a February blog post by former engineer Susan Fowler, who detailed a sexist and cutthroat work environment. The recommendations of an internal investigation headed by former U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder are due to be released June 13, and will cover a broad range of cultural and governance topics.



Travis Kalanick, 40, CEO of Uber. The company is facing a crisis after a former employee's complaint about sexism has roiled both staffers and consumers and forced a reaction from the company's senior leadership team. (Photo: Tobias Hase, AFP/Getty Images)

Playing fast and loose with rules is by now a familiar refrain when it comes to Uber. The company, which is valued at \$69 billion, has often employed aggressive tactics to secure its dominant market position (U.S. rival Lyft is valued at \$7.5 billion).

For example, its Greyball program allowed Uber officials to deceive municipal regulators who were investigating the company's business. Federal investigators are now investigating Greyball.

But the company's internal culture is what has drawn the most scrutiny, despite human resources chief Liane Hornsey's observation that the [top concerns](#) among employees are morale and compensation.

The Recode report suggested that the reason Alexander might have wanted to gain access to the woman's records was to try to cast doubt on her claim. Uber executives had become suspicious that India's ride-hailing company Ola orchestrated the incident to thwart competition from Uber.

The driver who committed the rape had a criminal record and is now serving jail time. Indian officials initially [banned](#) Uber's service in response to the incident. Uber then instituted a tougher screening policy for drivers and an SOS button on its app for passengers.