

'Taxi King' must pay \$1.3M to ex-assistant after sex harassment

June 27, 2018

By Emily Saul

June 26, 2018 | 8:27pm | Updated June 26, 2018 | 10:40pm



Gene Freidman Steven Hirsch

A Brooklyn judge wants embattled “taxi king” Gene Freidman to cough up \$1.3 million to his former assistant, who sued the businessman following months of alleged sexual harassment.

Elaine Gutierrez filed her suit against the beleaguered Freidman last year, saying he subjected her to a steady stream of unwanted attention during the seven months she worked for his now-shuttered company, Taxi Club Management.

Freidman frequently commented on the woman's breasts, exclaiming "Oh, your big boobs," and "Get your big boobs out of my face," Gutierrez testified.

"Mr. Friedman frequently asked Ms. Gutierrez to give him hugs, when she resisted and objected to his advances, he often said, 'I know you want me,' or 'You know you like it,' or 'she says "no," but we know what "no" means,'" according to court papers.

"Plaintiff testified that Mr. Freidman routinely harassed her in front of others, harassed her in front of her daughter, and would become angry when she rebuffed him," Magistrate Judge Vera Scanlon wrote in her recommendation.

She noted in court papers that Freidman failed to appear at the inquest hearing, though his attendance was required.

Presiding Brooklyn federal court judge Anne Donnelly still has to sign off on the payout before it's official.

The recommendation also cited testimony that Freidman "often insulted Ms. Gutierrez's appearance saying, 'Oh I don't want you anyway – you gained weight,' or 'Elaine gained weight, she got fat, look at them boobs.'"

While Gutierrez sued for \$1.8 million, Scanlon found Freidman liable for \$1,340,914.97

That amount includes \$130,000 for pain and suffering, \$295,032.19 for economic losses, \$64,714.14 for attorneys' fees and costs and \$850,000 in punitive damages, as well as prejudgment interest of \$1,168.64.

Freidman most recently pleaded guilty in May to evading \$50,000 worth of taxes related to his taxi medallion business, as part of a deal that could lead to him cooperating against President Trump's personal lawyer, Michael Cohen—who he's called a "dear, dear personal friend and a passive client."

Asked for comment Tuesday, Freidman texted a reporter "Huh? Not even aware of that law suit," before writing, "I will pass, thx."