

Taxi King ordered to pay \$1.3 million in sexual harassment case

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Taxi-medallion owner Evgeny "Gene" Freidman has been hit with a \$1.34 million judgment over claims he sexually harassed employee Elaine Gutierrez.

Freidman, who was once touted as the so-called "Taxi King of New York," was first hit with the charges last year.

He allegedly made explicit comments about Gutierrez's body in private and in front of groups of associates. He was also accused of subjecting to Gutierrez to a range of other abuses.

Gutierrez says she was fired last year after speaking out against the harassment.

"In the #MeToo era, the message is clear: no one, not even the so-called 'Taxi King,' is above the law when it comes to workplace sexual harassment," Gutierrez's lawyer, Lawrence Pearson, said in a statement.

In June, Magistrate Judge Vera Scanlon recommended the damages award, noting that Gutierrez was still "visibly upset" about the indecent dealings. This week, a Brooklyn federal judge signed off on the award.

This is just one of many legal issues facing Freidman, a Russian immigrant who became the largest medallion owner in the U.S. At one point his company owned 900 medallions, the licenses to run yellow cabs in New York.

In July 2015, Freidman was cited by the New York state tax authorities for being among the state's top 250 delinquent business taxpayers.

In May, it was reported that Freidman had agreed to cooperate with the government as a potential witness as part of a plea deal on tax evasion charges relating to his taxi medallion business.

He agreed to cooperate with the government as a potential witness in the investigation of Michael Cohen, President Donald Trump's personal lawyer, as a way to avoid jail time.

The development came the same day acting New York Attorney General Barbara Underwood announced that Friedman was convicted of stealing nearly \$5 million in MTA taxes.