

Harvey Weinstein reaches tentative \$25 million settlement; some accusers object

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Disgraced Hollywood heavyweight Harvey Weinstein and the board of his bankrupt film studio have reached a tentative global settlement with dozens of women who accuse him of having preyed on them, two of his accusers and an attorney for a third said Wednesday.

Caitlin Dulany, an actress who accuses Weinstein of having sexually assaulted her during the Cannes Film Festival in 1996, said in an interview with NBC News that Weinstein, his former associates, directors and officers had negotiated the settlement of almost all the civil cases pending against him for nearly \$47 million, about \$25 million of which would compensate the women.

Under terms of the proposed deal, which took less than two years to hammer out and would have to be approved by the judges in two cases involving him, Weinstein wouldn't be required to admit to wrongdoing or to pay his accusers directly, according to Dulany and the third woman's attorney.

Instead, The Weinstein Co.'s insurance companies would be on the hook for \$6.2 million that would go to 18 women who have sued Weinstein independently and for \$18.5 million that would be set aside as a settlement fund in a class-action lawsuit filed in New York. That fund would be available to all of the class members in the suit, even in cases in which the statute of limitations has expired.

But as soon as word of the proposal hit the web, some of the parties objected.

"This settlement breaks my heart," Zoë Brock, a model who was one of the first women to accuse Weinstein of sexual misconduct, said in a statement.

"I have signed it only because I have explored every other legal option and at this point have found no alternative," Brock said, adding: "Let us hope the criminal system does not go as easy on Harvey as the civil system has."

Douglas Wigdor and Kevin Mintzer, lawyers who represent two of the accusers, said they would "vigorously object" to any deal that seeks to block accusers who want to "proceed with holding Harvey Weinstein accountable for his actions, which is exactly what we intend to do."

While stressing that they don't "begrudge victims who want to settle," Wigdor and Mintzer said: "It is shameful that \$12 million of the settlement is going to the lawyers for the directors who we alleged enabled Harvey Weinstein and it is even more outrageous that the

proposed settlement will seek to bind nonparticipating members by providing a release to the insurance companies and the directors of the Weinstein company itself."

Thomas Giuffra, a lawyer who represents Alexandra Canosa, a producer who has accused Weinstein of rape, also opposed the settlement in a statement.

"Our client is being presented with a 'choice' of accepting an unfair settlement for which the main wrongdoers are paying nothing, or proceed against a company that has been stripped of all assets and against our client's abuser, whose defense will be funded by the very agreement she has turned down," the statement said. "There is nothing fair or just about this."

But Genie Harrison, an attorney for Sandeep Rehal, a former personal assistant to Weinstein who has sued him alleging "incessant sexual harassment" from 2013 to 2015, called the settlement the best deal available.

"I don't think there's a markedly better deal to be made," Harrison said. "We have really, truly done the best we can under the circumstances, and it's important for other victims to know this, come forward and be able to get the best level of compensation we were able to get."

Weinstein is free on bail after having pleaded not guilty to raping a woman in a New York hotel room in 2013 and performing a forcible sex act on a different woman in 2006. A judge increased his bail Wednesday because of allegations that he mishandled his electronic ankle monitor, and he was allowed to remain free by posting a \$2 million bond.

Weinstein, who is scheduled to go on trial in January, has pleaded not guilty and maintains that any sexual activity was consensual. There was no immediate response from his legal team.