

Former model sues Harvey Weinstein, alleging he sexually abused her when she was 16

[washingtonpost.com/arts-entertainment/2019/12/19/former-model-sues-harvey-weinstein-alleging-he-](https://www.washingtonpost.com/arts-entertainment/2019/12/19/former-model-sues-harvey-weinstein-alleging-he-)

When Kaja Sokola first moved to New York in 2002, she was a 16-year-old model who dreamed of becoming an actress.

Within weeks of arriving, she met Hollywood producer Harvey Weinstein at an event affiliated with her modeling agency. Weinstein — then running the Miramax movie studio and employed by the Walt Disney Co. — showed interest in helping make Sokola's film ambitions materialize and invited the teenager to lunch.

But when he picked her up several days later, Sokola said, the driver brought them to Weinstein's New York City apartment, where he said that if she wanted to be an actress, she would have to become comfortable "doing whatever the director told her to do," according to a lawsuit filed Thursday.

That day, Sokola claimed, Weinstein instructed her to undress and then forced her to touch his genitals.

The civil complaint, filed in New York under the state's recently passed Child Victims Act, accused Weinstein, then 50, of sexual assault. It also named Miramax Films, the Walt Disney Co. and Robert Weinstein as enablers who ignored allegations of sexual misconduct made against the Oscar-winning producer.

The new legislation, passed in August, opened a year-long window for survivors of child sexual abuse to file claims against their alleged abusers and against institutions that protected those abusers. New York's statute of limitations previously barred victims from suing after they turned 23. Sokola is now 33.

Since 2017, when the New Yorker and the New York Times published the first accounts alleging sexual harassment and abuse by Harvey Weinstein, he has been accused of misconduct by dozens of women. He is also facing criminal sex crimes charges in Manhattan, which he has denied; his trial is scheduled to begin Jan. 6.

Sokola's allegations first appeared in a 2018 class-action lawsuit that accused Weinstein and the board of his former film company of a pattern of sexual misconduct. At the time, the former teen model was named only as "Jane Doe" in court papers.

Last week, the New York Times reported that Weinstein reached a tentative \$47 million settlement, of which about \$25 million will compensate women who have accused him of sexual misconduct and who choose to participate.

If the agreement is approved, Weinstein and his associates will also be paid \$12 million from the settlement to cover a portion of their legal costs, and board members will receive blanket immunity from future liability, attorneys said. It would also resolve most of the pending civil lawsuits, including the class-action suit Sokola was a party to.

Some accusers, including Sokola, have opted not to participate in the settlement. Instead, she filed an individual lawsuit Thursday.

"I cannot accept the proposed 'global settlement' as fair or just. There is no accountability for the perpetrators, insufficient compensation for all of the victims, and millions of dollars going to people that I believe enabled Weinstein," Sokola, now a clinical psychologist based in Poland, said in a statement Thursday.

She continued, "Therefore, today I am filing my own case, in my own name, under New York's Child Victims Act."

Attorneys for Weinstein declined to comment on the new lawsuit, and lawyers for Robert Weinstein, Miramax and Disney could not immediately be reached.

Douglas H. Wigdor and Kevin Mintzer, who represent Sokola, said in a statement Thursday that their client "is entitled to justice."

"While others may have decided to settle, albeit under some of the most offensive and one-sided terms," they added, "we hope that the filing of this complaint encourages other victims and the New York Attorney General to join us as we continue our efforts at holding Harvey Weinstein and his enablers accountable."

In addition to Robert Weinstein, Thursday's complaint names at least six other Miramax and Disney executives who, it alleges, were aware of Weinstein's sexual misconduct. Although Sokola's allegations are too old to be prosecuted as criminal conduct under New York law, because of the Child Victims Act, she is one of the few Weinstein accusers who can pursue claims against Disney, which purchased Weinstein-owned Miramax in 1993.