

Goldman Sachs tried to cover up sexual misconduct by one of its top lawyers, according to a lawsuit from a former employee who says she was fired for speaking out

BI [businessinsider.com/goldman-sachs-top-lawyer-accused-of-sexual-misconduct-lawsuit-2020-10](https://www.businessinsider.com/goldman-sachs-top-lawyer-accused-of-sexual-misconduct-lawsuit-2020-10)

Tyler Sonnemaker 1 hour ago

- Former Goldman Sachs employee Marla Crawford said in a lawsuit Monday that Darrell Cafasso, the bank's head of litigation, sexually harassed a female subordinate, eventually leading the woman to leave the company.
- Crawford also said that Cafasso and Karen Seymour, Goldman's general counsel, covered up the allegations and retaliated against her for trying to speak out by giving her negative performance reviews, cutting her pay, and eventually firing her.
- Crawford alleged that Seymour hired an outside law firm, Weil Gotshal & Manges, to "sweep it under the rug" and told them to "try to put this genie back in the bottle."
- "As a lawyer and professional, I always try to stand up for what is right. Unfortunately for Goldman's top lawyers, that made me a liability. I will hold Goldman and its senior lawyers accountable for the blatant retaliation perpetrated against me," Crawford told Business Insider in a statement.
- [Visit Business Insider's homepage for more stories.](#)

A former Goldman Sachs employee alleged in a lawsuit filed Monday that she faced retaliation for attempting to speak up about allegations of sexual misconduct by the bank's head of litigation, Darrell Cafasso, and that he and the bank's general counsel, Karen Seymour, attempted to cover up Cafasso's behavior.

Marla Crawford, formerly an associate general counsel at Goldman, asserted in the lawsuit that Cafasso sexually harassed one of his former direct reports, referred to in the lawsuit as Jane Doe, ultimately pushing Doe to leave the company, and that Seymour and Cafasso tried to cover up the incident using the outside law firm Weil, Gotshal & Manges.

Crawford said that, after she raised concerns internally about Cafasso's conduct, he altered her performance review to include negative comments, and that when she complained that those actions were retaliatory, Cafasso and Seymour lowered her bonus for the first time in her 10 years at Goldman — and that shortly after, she was fired by the bank, which expedited her firing after she informed it of her plans to take legal action.

"As a lawyer and professional, I always try to stand up for what is right. Unfortunately for Goldman's top lawyers, that made me a liability. I will hold Goldman and its senior lawyers accountable for the blatant retaliation perpetrated against me," Crawford told Business

Insider in a statement through her lawyers.

"We conducted a review of the allegations in this complaint and found that they were completely without merit. The General Counsel took all appropriate actions, including ensuring there were thorough investigations by our HR function, after the incidents that form the basis of the plaintiff's complaint," a Goldman Sachs spokesperson told Business Insider.

Cafasso and Seymour declined to comment through a spokesperson. Weil, Gotshal & Manges did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Crawford's lawsuit alleged that Cafasso used his position of power over Doe "to romantically prey upon a much younger and vulnerable female colleague," which included behavior such as "excessive drinking, sexual harassment and favoritism," as well as "declarations of love" toward Doe, promises of positive reviews if she would "return the favor," and attempts to blame her for his misconduct.

Crawford alleged that Cafasso's relationship with Doe was well-known throughout the department and that his wife learned of it as well, leading her to directly confront Doe about it by phone and forcing Cafasso to "come clean" to Seymour in November 2019.

Crawford asserted in the suit that, after telling Seymour, Cafasso abruptly called Doe to end the relationship and that, embarrassed about the situation, Doe quit Goldman. The lawsuit alleged that Doe then hired high-profile lawyer Gloria Allred, "was likely paid a sum of money and forced out of the Bank," and was "likely forced to sign a non-disclosure agreement preventing her from speaking about her experiences."

But, Crawford claimed, "rather than address the situation appropriately and engage in remedial discipline — including termination [of Cafasso] — for engaging in such unacceptable conduct and horrific judgment, [Seymour] did the opposite" by hiring Weil, Gotshal & Manges "to conduct a bogus investigation to quickly 'sweep it under the rug.'"

The lawsuit alleged that Seymour even "told another senior lawyer that it was a 'sticky situation' and concluded: 'Let's try to put this genie back in the bottle.'"

Crawford said Doe had confided in her about Cafasso's behavior, and that she attempted to share what she knew with Goldman's human resources department, but that "the response was that she should keep her mouth shut, not speak about the matter and she was never questioned further."

According to Crawford's lawsuit, that's when the retaliation against her accelerated.

Before being placed on leave pending the investigation, Cafasso lowered her score on a performance review while raising the scores "for the women for whom he had sexual desires," Crawford alleged, and upon returning, gave her "negative comments on her previously finalized review."

Crawford also alleged that, after she complained to HR about Cafasso's behavior and the company refused to take action, she "was told that her bonus would be decreased for the first time in her tenure" — more than 10 years — and was eventually fired.

Goldman's spokesperson told Business Insider that the bank offered Crawford her same job in a different location "as part of a broader legal division restructuring."

But Crawford alleged in her lawsuit that she viewed the offer, which was in Dallas and came with a pay cut, as a "false choice" intended to force her out of Goldman, given that the company knew her family, including her "83-year old immunocompromised mother" for whom she was the primary caregiver, lived in New York where she recently bought a home.

The lawsuit asserted that, on Sept 29, two bank employees called Crawford to inform her she was being let go, but that she believed Cafasso and Seymour had jointly made the decision to fire her. Goldman initially agreed to let Crawford keep working through the end of November, but after her lawyers informed the bank on Oct 6 that she would be taking legal action, the bank ended her employment immediately and shut off her email and computer access, according to the lawsuit.

"Senior lawyers at Goldman Sachs should know better than to engage in sexual harassment, cover-ups and blatant retaliation against those who have the courage to speak up. Given these allegations, it should come as no surprise that Goldman has been referred to as the villain of Wall Street," Crawford's lawyers, Douglas Wigdor and David Gottlieb, told Business Insider in a statement.

In her lawsuit, filed in New York's state Supreme Court, Crawford accused Goldman Sachs, Karen Seymour, and Darrell Cafasso of unlawfully discriminating against her in violation of New York City's human rights law as well as the state's human rights law. She is seeking "declaratory, injunctive and equitable relief, as well as monetary damages," and also plans to file a discrimination lawsuit with the federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.