

# Apollo Billionaire Leon Black Tried To Make Russian Model Have Sex With Jeffrey Epstein, Court Filing Claims

**F** [forbes.com/sites/jemimamcevoy/2021/08/09/apollo-billionaire-leon-black-tried-to-make-russian-model-have-sex-with-jeffrey-epstein-court-filing-claims](https://forbes.com/sites/jemimamcevoy/2021/08/09/apollo-billionaire-leon-black-tried-to-make-russian-model-have-sex-with-jeffrey-epstein-court-filing-claims)

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A former Russian model accusing private equity giant Leon Black of rape and harassment is now claiming the billionaire once flew her to Florida against her will to “satisfy the sex needs” of disgraced financier and longtime friend Jeffrey Epstein, an escalation of the allegations against the Apollo Global Management cofounder, who previously claimed he knew nothing of Epstein’s criminal behavior (Black’s attorney quickly denied the new allegations, too).

## Key Facts

First reported by *Vanity Fair*, lawyers representing ex-model Guzel Ganieva filed an amended complaint Monday in which they claimed for the first time Black tried to sexually traffic Ganieva to Epstein in October 2008, several months after the two first met.

According to the court filing, also obtained by *Forbes*, Black invited Ganieva to lunch in Manhattan, but instead took her to the Teterboro Airport in New Jersey, where he revealed he was flying her to Florida to meet Epstein, whom he allegedly referred to as his “best friend.”

## PROMOTED

The court filing stresses that it was “wholly without her consent” that Ganieva was brought to meet Epstein, who had just a few months earlier pleaded guilty to a felony charge of solicitation of prostitution involving a minor, and claims that Black threatened to plant drugs on the ex-model if she told anyone about the trip.

Once they arrived at Epstein’s home in Palm Beach, Ganieva’s lawyers allege she was greeted by Epstein’s assistant, but soon found herself alone with Black and Epstein “in a room that appeared to be an office,” where the men were “situated close to one another, each facing Ms. Ganieva while in almost supine positions, as if they were waiting for her to get on top of them.”

The court filing claims Ganieva resisted their advances and was subsequently told to leave the room, where the assistant allegedly told her Epstein and Leon “are sex addicts” and “you have to let them do whatever they want with you” as “they are very powerful.”

Danya Perry, a lawyer representing Black, labeled Ganieva’s new claims “demonstrably and transparently” false in a statement to *Forbes*.

## Chief Critic

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“Ms. Ganieva had six years to prepare her initial complaint in this case. . . . She now claims to recall in August supposedly crucial events and connections that somehow had slipped her mind at the time of her June filing,” said Perry, referencing the original defamation and sexual violence lawsuit filed by Ganieva last month, which included no mention of the alleged incident with Epstein. “Just like her June complaint, Ms. Ganieva’s story today is demonstrably and transparently false and betrays her willingness to say anything and fabricate a story in the hope that something will stick. It won’t.”

Ganieva’s lawyers did not immediately respond to a request for comment from *Forbes*.

## Key Background

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Ganieva filed a lawsuit in June accusing Black, 69, of coercing her into signing a nondisclosure agreement to stay silent about years of “sexual violence,” including rape, and using his money and power to exert control over her after the two met while Ganieva, now 38 years old, was in her early 20s. But Black—in a 52-page counterclaim filed July 19—deemed Ganieva’s claims a “work of fiction,” saying though he had an affair with the model from 2008 to 2015 while he was still married, it was a consensual relationship that she spun into an “extortion scheme.” Black’s lawyers said in the court filing he gave Ganieva millions of dollars in gifts during their relationship, including a pricey Upper East Side apartment, a Steinway piano and her tuition paid at Columbia University, all of which made him an “easy target” for extortion.

## Surprising Fact

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Black shed his final public position at Apollo, a company he had launched three decades prior, and announced he would not run for reelection as the chairman of the Museum of Modern Art just days after Ganieva went public with her claims. The New York-based billionaire also expedited his plans to step down as CEO from Apollo, which he had previously planned to do amid scrutiny over his connection to Epstein, the disgraced financier who died by suicide in 2019 while awaiting trial on human trafficking charges. An investigation by Apollo’s board of directors revealed earlier this year that Black paid Epstein \$158 million in fees and services, loaned him over \$30 million and made a \$10 million donation to Epstein’s charity before the two cut off their relationship in 2018 over a “fee dispute.” While the probe by law firm Dechert found “no evidence Mr. Black was involved in any way with Mr. Epstein’s criminal activities at the time,” the vast sums of money forwarded to Epstein for what Black described as “professional services to my family partnership and related family entities” drew scrutiny over how Black may have supported Epstein’s accused criminal behavior. Black has claimed he had no knowledge of the sexual trafficking of minors Epstein was allegedly engaged in.

## Crucial Quote

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Ganieva, in her Monday court filing, contradicted those claims. “Though Black has, conveniently, tried to distance himself from Epstein in the wake of Epstein’s death and the revelation of more sordid details about Epstein’s criminal affairs, and though Black has tried his best, with the help of a well-crafted public relations and legal team, to make it appear that his and Epstein’s relationship was only ‘professional,’ in reality, the two had an extremely close personal friendship, and Epstein was Black’s ‘best friend,’” the filing said.

## Big Number

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**\$9.6 billion.** That’s how much Black is worth, according to *Forbes* estimates. Still touting ownership of roughly 23% of Apollo, he has been a mainstay on The Forbes 400 list since 1999, ranking No. 55 last year.