

# Leon Black Accuser Amends Lawsuit, Alleging Ties With Jeffrey Epstein

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By Miriam Gottfried and Mark Maremont

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A woman who accused former [Apollo Global Management](#) Inc. Chief Executive Leon Black of rape and defamation filed an amended complaint that alleges the private-equity titan was “best friends” with the late sex offender Jeffrey Epstein and once flew her to Florida for a potential sexual encounter involving Epstein.

One of Mr. Black’s lawyers called the claims “demonstrably and transparently false.”

The allegations, filed Monday in a New York State court, are the latest claims to emerge in [litigation started in June](#) by Guzel Ganieva, a Russian immigrant and former model, who had a yearslong relationship with Mr. Black.

Ms. Ganieva has previously alleged that Mr. Black sexually abused her and forced her to sign a nondisclosure document in 2015 and then defamed her by claiming in media reports earlier this year that Ms. Ganieva had extorted him.

Mr. Black, whose attorneys have called Ms. Ganieva’s claims a “work of fiction,” has said he [paid her millions of dollars](#), including \$100,000 a month for many years, to keep their consensual affair from becoming public. In a prior court document, Mr. Black cited text messages and secretly recorded conversations with Ms. Ganieva that allegedly contradict her claims.

In the document filed Monday, Ms. Ganieva alleged that Mr. Black, who is married, had no interest in keeping their affair secret because he had conducted numerous other affairs in public, including with other young Russian women.

Instead, she linked the 2015 agreement and ongoing payments to Mr. Black’s desire to keep her from discussing his relationship with Epstein.

Ms. Ganieva alleged that Mr. Black, who has characterized his relationship with Epstein as professional, was actually close personal friends with the disgraced financier and knew Epstein had a sexual predilection for “pretty and very young girls.”

In the latest filing, Ms. Ganieva also claimed that she unwittingly accompanied Mr. Black on a private-jet trip from New York to Palm Beach, Fla., in October 2008 to meet with Epstein, who at the time was on work release while serving his sentence for soliciting prostitution from an underage girl. Ms. Ganieva claimed Mr. Black and Epstein tried to lure her into a sexual encounter, but she resisted.

Danya Perry, an attorney for Mr. Black, said Ms. Ganieva had “abruptly changed her story” from her original complaint, and “betrays her willingness to say anything and fabricate a story in the hope that something will stick. It won’t.”

Epstein’s name, mentioned only tangentially in Ms. Ganieva’s original complaint, appears more than 170 times in the amended version.

Ms. Ganieva’s willingness to “fabricate such heinous charges...raises substantial questions of who is behind (and bankrolling) Ms. Ganieva’s illegal defamation and extortion scheme,” Ms. Perry said.

Jeanne Christensen, a lawyer for Ms. Ganieva, called Mr. Black’s claims against Ms. Ganieva “baseless and retaliatory” and said they were “yet another attempt to inflict extreme pain upon Ms. Ganieva while making good on his threats to destroy her life.”