



From left, Harvey Weinstein and Fabrizio Lombardo attend the "Michael Clayton" premiere in 2007. (Fascal Le Segretain/Getty Images)

'They Looked at Models as Meat': Weinstein Survivor Reacts to New Rape Lawsuit Against Harvey's Fixer | Exclusive

by [SHARON WAXMAN](#) | April 9, 2023 @ 3:00 PM

WaxWord: Years after he was accused of procuring women for the convicted Miramax co-founder, Fabrizio Lombardo is facing a rape accusation as well

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For 19 years, Fabrizio Lombardo has stuck in my journalistic throat like a hairball that wouldn't come up. To those who were on the entertainment circuit in the 2000s, he was well-known as Harvey Weinstein's fixer in Europe, the sycophant who was at the mogul's side at Cannes parties and a constant presence at the Venice Film Festival.

But who exactly was he and what did he do?

In 2017, [I exposed Lombardo](#) as Weinstein's procurer of women while on the Disney payroll, making \$400,000 in under a year in 2003-2004 as the head of Miramax Italy. He knew next to nothing about the film business.

Four women came forward to corroborate reporting I had originally attempted in 2004, saying Lombardo recruited, stalked and otherwise pushed them into sexual encounters with Weinstein or other important people in the entertainment industry.

Last week, former model [Sara Ziff sued Lombardo](#), Weinstein and the Walt Disney Company for abuse and negligence under the Adult Survivors Act, a New York law that allows sex crime victims to bring civil claims that would otherwise have expired under the statute of limitations.



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Ziff says Lombardo raped her in 2001, when she was working as a model and aspiring actor. Her lawsuit says that she was sent to meet Lombardo, then an executive at Miramax, in New York. He allegedly told her that he knew Weinstein, then Miramax's CEO.

A few days later, she was invited to a private screening at Miramax, according to the suit. Afterward, Ziff says Lombardo asked her to join him at his hotel, on the pretense they would be joined by Weinstein and his brother and business partner Bob.

"Ms. Ziff did not know that what awaited her at the hotel was not the promised chance to discuss her acting career with the Weinstein brothers, but a trap set by Mr. Lombardo to get Ms. Ziff alone and rape her," the suit claims. It describes in detail that Lombardo brought her to his penthouse suite, pushed her onto a bed and raped her.

What Ziff describes is the Weinstein playbook that we all now recognize after dozens of survivors have told of being lured to a hotel room on a pretense of work, trapped and then raped — or escaped after an attempted assault.


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That's what happened to Zoe Brock, who in 2017 told me it was Lombardo who brought her to Weinstein's room at the Hotel du Cap where the mogul attempted to rape her.

That's what happened to director-actress Asia Argento, who confirmed in 2017 that it was Lombardo who brought her to the same hotel where she says she was raped by Weinstein in 1997 during the Cannes Film Festival.

Another survivor, former model Sacha Voski, told me Lombardo stalked her relentlessly around that same time. "He just kept coming after me... calling me 12 times a day... convincing, convincing, convincing me... offering me one of his many empty [apartments] he just happens to have laying around Milano," she wrote me in 2017. A fourth woman, a producer, confirmed Lombardo's real role in Weinstein's world.

I called Brock in New Zealand to see what she thought of the new lawsuit. Brock has tried to put all this behind her, but agreed to talk on the record.

"It doesn't surprise me that Fabrizio was a sexual predator," she said. "They looked at young models as meat. We were cat toys. They all have the same M.O. They lie for each other. And then there you were — alone."


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Like so many survivors, reading about Lombardo raised the trauma all over again. Nonetheless, "There's a lot of validation," Brock said. "I'm kind of numb."

I've [written before](#) about travelling to Italy in 2004 as a reporter for the New York Times investigating rumors about Weinstein's sexual behavior. I learned that Lombardo was, actually, the operator who procured women for Weinstein, while nominally working as the head of Miramax Italy, a division of Buena Vista.

He was, in today's parlance, a sex trafficker. I dug out documents, believed I had the story nailed and tried to write it in the New York Times where I worked. What appeared was a sad shadow of that reporting, a victim of Weinstein's campaign to get it killed. ([Details here.](#))

Lombardo denied being a trafficker for Weinstein at the time. We've never been able to reach him in more recent attempts, and the Times was unable to do so this week. Weinstein denied any connection to this alleged rape in a lawyer's statement to the Times, and Disney hasn't commented on the lawsuit.

But Lombardo was one who wouldn't let go of my conscience. (Brock insists that Weinstein's assistant at the time, Rick Schwartz, was also culpable. I have never been able to locate Schwartz to ask him.)

Ziff took a brave step toward speaking her truth and seeking justice in her lawsuit. Reading her story struck me with a pang of regret, for the women to whom I couldn't give a voice.

The New York Times doesn't owe me an apology for the story that was stripped of any reference to women or stalking or grooming. But it does owe one to Sarah, Zoe, Asia, Sacha and all the women both named and anonymous who were victimized by Lombardo and Weinstein.


Also Read:
[How Fabrizio Lombardo Became Harvey Weinstein's Hustler](#)

SHARON WAXMAN

Sharon Waxman, is the founder, CEO and Editor in Chief of TheWrap. She is an award-winning journalist and best-selling author, and was a Hollywood correspondent for The New York Times. Twitter: [@sharonwaxman](#)

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