

# Model Sara Ziff Accuses Harvey Weinstein's Alleged 'Fixer' Fabrizio Lombardo of Rape in NYC Hotel Suite

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## Model Accuses Harvey Weinstein's Alleged 'Fixer' of Rape in NYC Hotel Suite

'A TRAP'

Sara Ziff has filed a lawsuit against Fabrizio Lombardo, claiming the former Miramax executive raped her after luring her in with the false promise of a meeting with Weinstein.

Model and activist Sara Ziff filed a suit in New York civil court Thursday, alleging that she was raped as a teen by Fabrizio Lombardo, a former Miramax executive once described as Harvey Weinstein's "hustler."

The lawsuit was filed under new New York's Adult Survivors Act, which allows survivors of sexual violence to sue, regardless of how long ago the alleged crime was committed.

"Today I took an important step toward seeking accountability and finally moving towards healing. What happened to me at 19 years old was a catalytic moment for my life's work," Ziff said in a statement on the lawsuit.

Ziff was a 19-year-old model and aspiring actress when she met Lombardo in 2001, according to her suit. Her agent recommended she attend a New York City screening of *Black Hawk Down* with Lombardo, who was then an executive at Miramax. Lombardo told her that at the screening he could introduce her to Harvey Weinstein, who could potentially help her acting career.

At the screening, Weinstein “barely acknowledged her,” according to the suit. Afterwards, Lombardo invited Ziff to the nearby Mercer Hotel, promising that Weinstein would be there and Bob Weinstein might also join, the documents say.

“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 lawsuit states.

When they got to the hotel, Ziff’s suit claims, Lombardo led her up to the penthouse suite. There, she “began to doubt that anyone else would be joining them.”

Lombardo began to make “unwelcome advances” towards Ziff by rubbing her thigh, the suit alleges, while she repeatedly pushed his hands away.

“Desperate to stop Mr. Lombardo from touching her, but afraid that she might lose professional opportunities if she offended him, Ms. Ziff made clear she was not interested in Mr. Lombardo by saying that she was flattered, but she had a boyfriend,” the suit claims.

Lombardo then forced Ziff onto the bed and raped her as she repeatedly told him “no,” according to the suit. When he was finished, Lombardo “said that it was fantastic that a girl Ms. Ziff’s age would find a man of his age attractive,” the suit alleges.

In the weeks after the alleged rape, Lombardo invited Ziff to three different meetings with, among others, Harvey Weinstein and fashion photographer Patrick Demarchelier, the suit claims.

“Ms. Ziff attended the meetings because, among other reasons, she feared that if she did not, Mr. Lombardo would retaliate against her by using his powerful connections in the modeling and acting industries—including with Mr. Weinstein—to deny her work at an early stage in her career,” according to the suit.

Ziff is also suing Miramax and Disney, claiming the companies were aware of Lombardo and Weinstein’s behavior, and how the men were using their positions to entice women.

“Mr. Lombardo would never have been able to rape Ms. Ziff if not for his position at Miramax and Disney,” the suit claims.

Disney and Miramax did not respond to requests for comment.

Harvey Weinstein is also named as a defendant in the suit.

“Sara Ziff is not accusing Harvey Weinstein of rape nor does she allege that there was any sexual misconduct directed at her by Mr. Weinstein. Her allegations of rape are directed at Fabrizio Lombardo,” said Imran H. Ansari, an attorney for Weinstein, “Mr. Weinstein firmly denies that he has any liability for the alleged conduct of another.”

At the time of Ziff's alleged assault, Lombardo was a close friend of Weinstein's and head of Miramax Italy. (Weinstein was best man at Lombardo's wedding in 2003.)

At the time, there was internal anxiety about Lombardo's behavior at Miramax, Elizabeth Dreyer, a former senior executive at Miramax, told *The New York Times* in 2017. She once requested a room for Mr. Lombardo at the Hôtel du Cap-Eden-Roc, she told the newspaper, but was told that he was banned because he "brings too many girls."

"That was kind of an 'ah-ha' moment for me," she told the *Times*. "I get what Fabrizio is about now. I get the relationship."

Lombardo came under public scrutiny in 2017, after actor Asia Argento and models Samantha Panagrosso and Zoë Brock, alleged that Lombardo "procured" women for Weinstein, luring them into private meetings with the producer, who then assaulted them.

Argento told *Variety* that during the 1997 Cannes Film Festival, Lombardo tricked her into going to Weinstein's room at the Hôtel du Cap-Eden-Roc, where she was later raped.

"During this drive I remember [Lombardo] kind of touching my knee, not that he put his hand up my skirt, but thinking he had the license to touch my knee because I was wearing a short dress, which I found repulsive," Argento told *Variety*.

Australian model Zoë Brock claimed that Lombardo tricked her into going to Weinstein's private hotel room at Cannes in 1997, where the movie mogul stripped naked and chased her around the room.

"I believe he was a fixer for [Weinstein] and is responsible for helping procure women," she wrote in a 2017 [blog post](#).

In 2017, the British film director Nigel Cole [tweeted](#) about meeting Lombardo at a Weinstein lunch party at the Cannes film festival in 2003.

"I asked him what he did for Harvey," Cole wrote, "'I'm his pimp,' he eventually replied."

At the time, Lombardo vehemently denied the accusations that he acted as a fixer for Weinstein.

"I did not hunt for him," Lombardo told the *Guardian* in 2017. "It is not my style... it is not my relationship with Weinstein," he added.

Lombardo could not be reached for comment on the new lawsuit.

In the years since the alleged rape, Ziff has never spoken publicly about Lombardo. But she has been an outspoken advocate for better protections for models and fashion workers. In 2012, she founded the Model Alliance, an advocacy group for better labor conditions for

models and workers in the fashion industry.

(Ziff authored [an opinion piece](#) for The Daily Beast in 2022, arguing for better labor protections for models.)

Following the bombshell allegations of the #Metoo movement, Ziff launched the Model Alliance's Respect Programme, in which 100 models called on industry leaders to sign a legally binding agreement to protect models from sexual harassment.



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