

## BUSINESS

# Sara Ziff Files Lawsuit Against Fabrizio Lombardo and More

● The former model and founder of the Model Alliance alleges she was raped by Lombardo in 2001.

BY LISA LOCKWOOD AND ROSEMARY FEITELBERG

Sara Ziff, a former model and the founder of the Model Alliance, filed a lawsuit Thursday in New York State Supreme Court against Fabrizio Lombardo, the former head of Miramax in Italy, along with Harvey Weinstein, Disney and its subsidiaries Buena Vista and Miramax, for abuse and negligence under the Adult Survivors Act.

Ziff sued Weinstein, Miramax, Disney and others alleging that she was raped by Lombardo in 2001 and his position within the company directly facilitated it.

"Today I took an important step toward seeing accountability and finally moving toward healing," Ziff said. "What happened to me at 19 years old was a catalytic moment for my life's work. I am fortunate to stand with a powerful community of survivors, and I want to thank those who came before me and paved the way."

Through the Model Alliance, Ziff has advocated about the importance of the Adult Survivors Act along with fellow models like Carré Otis, who has also alleged that she was raped at 17 by Gérard Marie, who was then the president of Elite Models' European division.

In the complaint, it is alleged that Lombardo "forcibly and against Ziff's will

and without her consent, subjected her to bodily harm when he sexually assaulted and raped her. As a result of Fabrizio Lombardo's alleged conduct, Ms. Ziff has suffered physical injury, severe emotional distress, humiliation, embarrassment, mental and emotional distress and anxiety, economic harm and other consequential damages."

She is alleging sexual battery, gender-motivated violence and negligent supervision. She is seeking an undisclosed amount of monetary, punitive and compensatory damages.

The cause of action is timely under the Adult Survivors Act, because it arises out of conduct perpetrated against the plaintiff when she was 18 or older, and the conduct constitutes a sexual offense as defined in Article 130 of the New York Penal Law, according to the complaint.

The May 2022 passage of the Adult Survivors Act in New York State allows abuse victims to file civil charges on matters that had outrun the statute of limitations until November 2023.

Ziff is represented by Laura Edidin of Wigdor LLP and Kevin Mintzer.

Lombardo did not respond immediately Friday afternoon to a media request for comment about Ziff's allegations of rape.

Weinstein's attorney Imran Ansari of Aidala Bertuna & Kamins, PC Law, who is not working on behalf of Lombardo, declined further comment beyond the following statement. "To be clear, 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. Certainly Mr. Weinstein had no control over any alleged conduct by Mr. Lombardo, nor would he have any reason to know what Mr. Lombardo was doing nor where Mr. Lombardo was at the time that Ms. Ziff alleges she was raped. As such, Mr. Weinstein firmly denies that he has any liability for the alleged conduct of another."

Weinstein is currently serving a combined 39-year prison sentence for various sex crimes.

According to the suit, Ziff claims that in 2001 when she was 19 years old she was working as a model, and her agents set up a meeting with Lombardo because she wanted to become an actor. According to the complaint, Lombardo invited her to a private screening of "Black Hawk Down" at the Miramax offices and told her Weinstein would be there. Hoping to connect with Weinstein, she attended and later accepted an invitation from Lombardo to go to a nearby hotel to meet with Weinstein, as well as others, including Bob Weinstein, another producer whom Lombardo said the aspiring actress should meet.

In the suit, she claims this was a trick to get her alone in a hotel where she says Lombardo raped her. Ziff alleges she was so traumatized that she couldn't speak of the assault for several years, and in the following weeks, she even attended meetings initiated by Lombardo because she feared retaliation. The suit claims she was worried that he would use his powerful connections in the modeling and



Sara Ziff

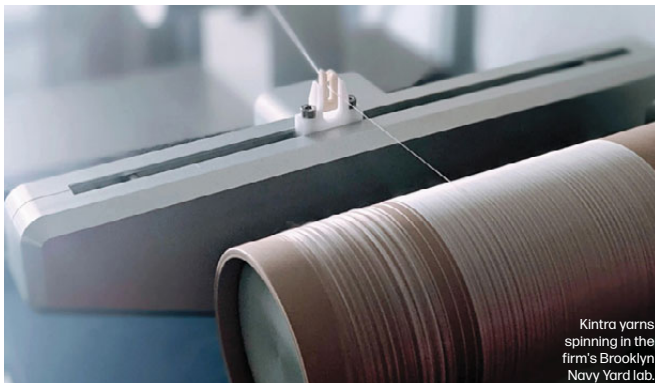
acting industries, including with Harvey Weinstein, to deny her work in an early stage in her career. She was also worried that alienating Lombardo would rupture her relationship with her modeling agency since the co-owner of the agency Next was a friend of Lombardo, and Next had arranged an initial meeting with him.

The suit claims Lombardo would never have been able to rape Ziff if not for his position at Miramax and Disney. "Mr. Lombardo used the companies' offices, resources, prestige and the possibility of career advancement to entice Ms. Ziff to a film screening where Mr. Weinstein would be present, and then offered the prospect of a further meeting with Harvey and Robert Weinstein as a cover to get her alone in his hotel room," the suit claims.

In 2012, Ziff founded the Model Alliance, which encourages any model who feels they have been subjected to any unwanted sexual attention of abuse at work to contact its support team, which offers discreet grievance reporting and guidance.

## EXCLUSIVE

## H&M Group Ventures-backed Kintra Fibers Raises \$8M



Kintra yarn spinning in the firm's Brooklyn Navy Yard lab.

● Brooklyn's Kintra fibers – used by Pangaia, H&M and more – raised \$8 million in funding.

BY KALEY ROSHITSH

**Kintra Fibers** – known for its bio-based polyester alternative used by Pangaia, H&M, Reformation and more – raised \$8 million in Series A funding.

The Brooklyn, New York-based biotech firm is backed by H&M Group Ventures, with Bestseller's Invest Fwd funding arm, Fashion for Good, New York Ventures, Tech Council Ventures and Fab Ventures among the co-investors. Many notable female angel investors also participated in the Series A including Parade's founder Cami Téllez.

"Our investment in Kintra Fibers' technology is a compelling opportunity to transform the manufacturing process and contribute toward a circular and climate-positive future. What impresses us is that Kintra Fibers' technology leverages existing polyester production equipment for critical manufacturing processes, such as resin and yarn production," commented Erik Karlsson, investment manager at H&M Group Ventures, in a press statement. "This capability to scale quickly and cost-effectively is a major advantage for Kintra Fibers as they work towards their goal of reducing the fashion industry's environmental footprint."

Kintra fibers are a bio-based monomaterial synthetic fiber that swap fossil fuel inputs at the molecular level for

corn. Last year, Kintra joined Fashion for Good's raw material cohort, shared its first prototype and even ran a pilot with H&M, Bestseller, Inditex and Reformation.

"The super power of Kintra is that our material provides the strength of polyester, but we're measurably an order of magnitude softer," said Alissa Baier-Lentz, cofounder and chief operating officer of Kintra, to WWD. Kintra has a stretch recovery of 10 to 15 percent, per its testing, making a use case for everything from knit sweaters to the outer coating on a puffer jacket.

There are other lures for industry investors. The Kintra fiber itself is biodegradable in an oxygen-rich environment (like a wastewater treatment facility) but can also be chemically recycled given it's produced on the same equipment as polyester, though with 20 percent lower energy use per estimates from Kintra.

"What our LCA shows, unequivocally, is that with Kintra greenhouse emissions are reduced by 95 percent compared to traditional polyester," Baier-Lentz reiterated.

Baier-Lentz said the Series A will be used for the material's commercial milestones as well as its "manufacturing commitment" at its Brooklyn Navy Yard lab. "The goal of the first round of funding was to create our MVP, a staple, spinnable resin that can compete with polyester at an industrial setting," she said.

With 250 kilograms of resin produced to date on a pilot line, Kintra is currently expanding to a commercial facility with the support of its Series A funding. The

firm hopes to move into commercial scale and produce its first ton at the end of year. Baier-Lentz said Kintra will eventually reach price parity with recycled polyester and even virgin polyester at 60,000 tons and up. At that point, agricultural waste and even algae can be used as feedstock.

Given that some 54 percent of textiles used today in fashion derive from fossil fuels, per Textile Exchange, Kintra and its industry funders are looking to rapidly scale the fiber.

"Innovations like this that help reduce our reliance on fossil fuel-based synthetics are essential to our sustainability efforts at Reformation, particularly our goal to be Climate Positive by 2025," shared Kathleen Talbot, chief sustainability officer and vice president of operations at Reformation. "It's on us as an industry to take an active role in scaling next generation solutions, like Kintra, that have the potential to power the future of fashion."



A closeup of Kintra's process.