

Leon Black Accused of Raping 16-Year-Old With Down Syndrome

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'TRAFFICKED'

Jane Doe is the third woman to file a lawsuit against the billionaire.



Reuters//Kevork Djansezian

A disturbing new lawsuit accuses billionaire Leon Black of violently raping a 16-year-old girl with autism and a rare form of Down Syndrome at sex-trafficker Jeffrey Epstein's New York mansion in 2002.

On Tuesday, a woman identified as Jane Doe filed a lawsuit in Manhattan federal court claiming that Epstein instructed her to give his “special friend Leon Black” a sexualized massage, during which he is accused of brutalizing her to the point that she began bleeding.

Because of Doe’s condition, identified in the complaint as mosaic Down Syndrome, her developmental age was about 12 years old and she had “neurological disabilities and health issues.” As a result, the filing states, Doe was “a perfect target” for Epstein and his girlfriend and accomplice Ghislaine Maxwell.

“Epstein and Maxwell seized upon Plaintiff’s developmental disabilities, coupled with her outwardly physical appearance, specifically fair skin, blue eyes and blond hair, for their own deviant sexual predation,” the lawsuit continues. “Disgustingly, Epstein and Maxwell trafficked Ms. Doe to other men in their circle, including Defendant Black.”

The lawsuit includes graphic details of Black’s alleged abuse, as well as allegations of Doe signing up for a cheerleading program only to be groomed and abused by an adult volunteer named “Elizabeth,” who eventually introduced her to Maxwell.

It's the third sex-abuse claim filed by the Wigdor LLP law firm against Black since 2021. The new complaint also follows revelations in *The New York Times* that Black agreed to pay the U.S. Virgin Islands \$62.5 million in cash to settle claims related to the territory's investigation into Epstein's sex ring.

Wigdor first sued Black in 2021 on behalf of Guzel Ganieva, a former model who claimed that Black abused her for years. That defamation suit was dismissed in May of this year by a New York judge who ruled that an NDA that Ganieva inked with Black in 2015 "clearly and unambiguously covers all claims arising out of the parties' relationship, past or future."

Aside from Ganieva's case, an accuser named Cheri Pierson also sued the Apollo Global Management co-founder in November 2022, alleging she was a struggling single mom when Black raped her at Epstein's mansion in 2002 during a massage. In that pending litigation, Black's lawyers filed a motion for sanctions against Wigdor, accusing the firm of filing false claims intended to tarnish his "well-earned and sterling reputation."

Senate Probing Epstein's \$158M in Tax Advice to Leon Black

LOOPHOLES?



Court records show that Jeanne Christensen, the Wigdor attorney behind the suits, filed a cross-motion for sanctions against Black's lawyers, too. She argued Black sought "to harm and sully" Pierson's and Wigdor's reputations and "provide cover for Black in the press to continue his smear campaign" and "deflect attention from him."

Susan Estrich, an attorney for Black, called Doe's lawsuit "frivolous and sanctionable" and referred to Wigdor and its "vendetta" against the mogul.

"Mr. Black has never met this individual," Estrich said of Doe in a statement. "These vicious and defamatory lies, masquerading as allegations, have been intentionally manufactured by the Wigdor law firm as part of the firm's vendetta against Mr. Black for vigorously and successfully defending himself over the past two years."

"Wigdor's prior case against Mr. Black was recently thrown out by the Court and this one will be too," Estrich added. "These allegations—about an incident that supposedly took place 20 years ago—are totally made up, entirely uncorroborated and, as pleaded, squarely violate the statute of limitations. This sham proceeding will be promptly dismissed and will provide further ammunition for Mr. Black's pending sanctions motion against the Wigdor firm."

According to Doe’s complaint, the cheerleading camp volunteer, Elizabeth, paid Doe “extra attention” and persuaded the girl to stay at her home most days a week. After moving in with Elizabeth, Doe was physically and psychologically abused, deprived of food and water, locked in a room for hours, and forced to wear small children’s clothing, the lawsuit says.

Doe says Elizabeth’s male friends, including one in his late 40s, began to sexually groom her and forced her to watch them have intercourse.

In the summer of 2001, the complaint adds, Elizabeth brought Doe to a large home in a Washington, D.C., suburb for an adult “party” that mostly included men. There, Doe allegedly crossed paths with “a woman with dark hair and a British accent” who called her “a beautiful darling girl” who looked like a real-life “doll.”

The complaint says Doe later learned this stranger was Maxwell, who is now servicing a 20-year prison sentence for trafficking minors for Epstein.

Andrew Met Epstein While He Was Under House Arrest: Report

DATES IN THE DIARY



Doe was put on a private plane the following week to Palm Beach, the lawsuit alleges, and was transported in a large SUV to Epstein’s mansion. “Maxwell and Epstein began exposing [Doe] to their sexual deviance less than an hour after she first arrived,” the complaint says, adding that they ordered her to sit in a chair outside a bedroom where they were having sex.

“Quickly, Maxwell showed [Doe] how to ‘make Jeffrey happy,’” the filing states. “Maxwell held [her] hand the first time she showed her the way to massage Jeffrey and make him ejaculate through oral sex—both Maxwell and Epstein gave [her] ‘happy claps’ for her brilliant success, the way parents do with five-year-olds.”

Meanwhile, Epstein’s then assistant Sarah Kellen is accused of teaching Doe how to have sex with Epstein.

After that, the lawsuit says, Elizabeth “shipped out” Doe to Palm Beach and the U.S. Virgin Islands to be abused by Epstein and Maxwell. She was delivered to them so frequently that she allegedly skipped multiple days in her junior year of high school and nearly failed.

The filing alleges Epstein would go on to “hand off” Doe to other men in his circle, including Black, at his homes in Florida and the USVI. On two occasions, Doe claims, she stayed with Epstein and Maxwell in New York, where she was brought to the offices of a ballet performance and introduced to a dancer. Doe was also allegedly brought to Maxwell’s Upper East Side townhouse.

Before Doe was sent back home, the lawsuit says, Maxwell, Kellen or someone named “Nadia” would stash an envelope in her bag with money but she wasn’t allowed to open it.

In late spring or summer of 2002, Elizabeth informed Doe she would be heading to New York to meet Black, whom she described as a “very important and special person” to “Jeffrey,” according to the complaint.

After she arrived at Epstein’s townhouse, Doe spotted Black—whom she described as “a huge older man” who is “6’ 4” and about 300 pounds” with a “bulbous nose” and “skin tags and moles”—having a conversation with Epstein. The lawsuit says Doe’s “initial impression of Black was that he looked like an ‘ogre,’ and she felt frightened.”



Epstein ordered Doe to give Black “the same kind of ‘massage treatment’ that she gives Epstein —meaning that it would involve sexual intercourse and she was expected to strip naked,” the lawsuit alleges.

According to the document, Black then led Doe to an upstairs massage room, gripping her hand “so hard that she thought he might have broken bones.”

Once inside the room, Black allegedly tossed Doe over his shoulder and threw her onto the massage table, knocking the wind out of her. “She tried to scream but Black placed his hand over her mouth and leaned over her while ripping off her shirt and under her skirt pulling her underwear off,” the lawsuit continues.

Doe claims Black called her “demeaning” names during the assault and laughed at her attempts to escape him, asking if she was “feisty.” She also alleges that Black penetrated her forcefully with sex toys. At one point, Doe says his assault was so painful that she kicked him, sending him into a rage where he called her a “whore” and “slut” and threw her to the ground.

After this vicious attack, the lawsuit alleges, Doe “begged Epstein to take her to a doctor because she was in physical agony and was continuing to bleed but he refused, instead telling her that Maxwell would take care of her.”

“Although Epstein trafficked [Doe] to other men, both before and after Black, she was never again taken to NYC,” the complaint says. “The violent and sadistic nature of Black’s rape left an indelible mark on her, both physically and psychologically. [Doe] suffered internal abrasions in her rectum that continue to cause her pain.”

Doe’s lawsuit references a New York City law—the Victims of Gender-Motivated Violence Protection Act—that provides a two-year lookback window for survivors to pursue claims that would ordinarily be barred under a statute of limitations.

“Today, because of legislative initiatives in NYS granting sexual violence victims the right to file claims previously barred by the statute of limitations, we were able to commence a legal action against Leon Black for harms committed years ago against our client Jane Doe when she was a minor,” Christensen said in a statement. “This is significant for our client and for all sexual assault survivors. It is an honor to represent Jane Doe and we look forward to proceeding to discovery and trial on Jane Doe’s claims.”



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Donald Trump Finally Has His Richard Nixon Moment

TRICKY

It’s not the crime; it’s the coverup.



Photo Illustration by Thomas Levinson/The Daily Beast/Getty

Donald Trump already faced more than 30 charges related to his illegal retention of classified documents—in addition to a grab bag of alleged felonies in a number other cases. So when prosecutors added three more charges against Trump last week, it was never going to turn Trump’s legal or political fortunes upside down.

And yet, these new charges may do just that.

Trump now faces two new counts of obstruction of justice over his attempts to erase security footage at Mar-a-Lago, as well as a new Espionage Act violation over his alleged possession of an Iran war plan that he waved around during an interview.

While the superseding indictment may not seem any more serious than the original charges, they could substantially aid special prosecutor Jack Smith in getting a conviction—both in the public’s eye and in an actual courtroom.

As Richard Nixon taught America: It’s not the crime; it’s the coverup. And with this new evidence, that Trump directed assistants to wipe a computer server that would show security footage at his South Florida club—evidence that Trump not only knew he was doing something wrong, but also that he tried to conceal the whole affair—Smith may have the smoking gun. Just like Nixon’s accusers did when they found out the president wouldn’t turn over White House tapes—and that there was an 18-minute gap in the audio.

Trump Could Have Deleted Video if He Wanted, His Lawyer Says

'COMMON SENSE'



Presidential scholars told *The Daily Beast* that the parallels between Trump and Nixon weren't difficult to draw.

"I couldn't help thinking of that Peter, Paul and Mary line: 'When will they ever learn?'" said Barbara Ann Perry, presidential studies professor at the University of Virginia.

"It's not an instance of the coverup being worse than the crime," she stressed. "We know he's broken the law of the Presidential Records Act. We don't have to debate that... and he allegedly waved this document around about war plans with Iran—the most secret of documents—that put our military service men and women in harm's way. What is more damning than that?"

The superseding indictment lays out how, just two hours after hearing from his lawyer that the feds had subpoenaed camera footage outside a Mar-a-Lago storage room that was illegally housing boxes filled with classified records, Trump put out word that he wanted to speak to his Diet Coke valet, Walt Nauta.

Over the next few days in June of last year, Nauta and Mar-a-Lago maintenance worker Carlos De Oliveira scouted out the cameras. De Oliveira allegedly pulled the estate's IT director, identified by *The New York Times* as Yuscil Taveras, into an "audio closet" to quietly let him know "the boss" wanted the server deleted. Prosecutors say the IT director pushed back, questioning whether he even had the permission to do that, directing both Trump lackeys to the Trump Organization's security director.

The idea that Trump hatched a plan to destroy evidence dramatically increases the seriousness of the case against him, threatening to amplify his infamy in the history books. And if proven at trial next year, it could very well derail his ambitions to return to the White House in 2025.

Presidential scholars told *The Daily Beast* that Trump is cementing himself in history as the closest progeny of Nixon's notorious lawlessness.

"I've been thinking a lot about the Trump-Nixon stuff," said American University professor Chris Edelson, who studies the power of the presidency.

Both men were driven to act by a relentless obsession with remaining in power, scholars noted.

“The two of them have what my family would call a ‘mental aberration’—a personality disorder of some kind. Their desire to be president and remain president causes them to act illegally,” Perry said. “This is so Shakespearean... Nixon brought himself down, and we don’t know how this will end for Trump. “

And their self-serving justifications are the same.

“Nixon believed that he was justified in committing crimes because he assumed the Democrats were doing the same thing... Trump is the same,” Edelson said, pointing to a section of the recent indictment that lays out how Trump nudged his lawyers to resist federal investigators by mischaracterizing actions undertaken by an attorney for his one-time political archenemy, Hillary Clinton.



USA-ELECTION/TRUMP

LINDSAY DEDARIO

“There’s a part in there where Trump is praising Hillary Clinton’s lawyer, saying they got rid of all this stuff. He has this fantasy that other people are breaking the law, so he can do the same thing. And I suspect that’s how he justified this too, like Nixon, who believed the other side is terrible,” Edelson said.

But the parallels don’t stop there. Presidential scholars noted that Nixon was eventually undone by his role directing underlings to commit additional crimes to hide previous ones. As time went on, investigators began to squeeze out information from the burglars who broke into the Watergate Office Building that then served as the Washington headquarters of the Democratic National Committee.

“The biggest problem for Nixon was how intimately he became involved in the coverup. There were just so many people involved. The burglars start talking and other people working for the committee to reelect the president. That’s the problem for Trump too,” Edelson said. “That’s the thing about conspiracies. You have to make sure everyone keeps their mouth shut.”

Trump’s indictment, which cites phone calls and text messages with exact dates and times, makes clear that Smith’s investigators have collected people’s private phone communications and have also interviewed several Mar-a-Lago employees.

It’s also telling that prosecutors waited 50 days to add De Oliveira’s name to the original indictment, hinting at a quiet effort to get additional information from him or others before bringing down the hammer on someone who could serve as a key witness.

Nixon’s decision to cover up evidence of his crimes seems to have been prompted by his fear that John W. Dean III, a White House lawyer who had started talking to Watergate prosecutors, would lay out a roadmap that led straight to the top. *The Washington Post*, which famously covered the scandal, also discovered decades later that Nixon had suggested they ought to “get rid” of Oval Office recordings in April 1973, months before the public ever heard that they even existed.

“Well, the hell with Dean,” Nixon told his chief of staff, H.R. Haldeman—also on tape. “Frankly, I don’t want to have in the record discussions we’ve had in this room on Watergate.”

The American public might find out more about Trump’s tape-deletion scheme at the scheduled May 2024 trial in Fort Pierce, Florida, where prosecutors will have to share the evidence in court.

So far, the indictment only implies that a conversation took place. It notes that Nauta, after hearing that the former president wanted to speak with him, suddenly changed his plans to travel with Trump to Illinois and instead went to Florida on a low-key mission that came straight from the top.



But the parallels between Nixon and Trump could veer sharply in different directions, presidential scholars said—it's all up to American voters next year.

Nixon faced a Republican Party that couldn't stomach being led by a humiliated and disgraced politician. Today's GOP has so far remained loyal to Trump, no matter the embarrassment.

"I think Trump sees it's in his best interest to keep fighting, because his only way out at this point is to win an election and pardon himself—or get the Department of Justice to shut this down," Edelson said.

And that leads to what former journalist Luke Nichter, now a presidential historian at Chapman University, calls the real takeaway here.

"Nixon was never ready for battle, ready to mount the defense the way Reagan did with Iran-Contra," he said. "With Trump's base, you could impeach him 10 times. That's the lesson of Nixon and Watergate: It pays to be partisan. It doesn't matter what the evidence is, you stand by your leader. Since Watergate, that's what parties have done."



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