

## Claim: Epstein filed lawsuit to 'intimidate' attorney Edwards prosecuting sex abuse cases

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Billionaire sex offender Jeffrey Epstein filed his 2009 lawsuit against attorney Brad Edwards in an effort to get Edwards to drop sex abuse lawsuits filed against Epstein, attorney Jack Scarola said Friday.

"The sole motivation for these claims against Mr. Edwards is an attempt to intimidate him so as to abandon the justified prosecution of his claims against Mr. Epstein," Scarola said.

Edwards secured deals for victims L.M., E.W. and Jane Doe, who were among nearly two dozen young women who received confidential settlements from Epstein. Edwards filed a new lawsuit last month against Epstein on behalf of victim M.J., asking for \$50 million in damages.

At a court hearing Friday, Scarola told Circuit Judge David Crow that all lawsuits were settled for "very substantial sums of money, which is directly contrary to the assertions that Mr. Epstein made that these cases were fabrications."

The hearing was related to Epstein's lawsuit against Edwards, alleging Edwards was involved in false claims made by Ponzi schemer Scott Rothstein. Epstein says Rothstein lured investors to his scheme by telling them Epstein had agreed to settle sex abuse lawsuits for as much as \$200 million. Edwards worked at Rothstein's firm for less than a year; Rothstein is named as a defendant.

Speaking on behalf of Epstein, attorney Joseph Ackerman said, "Except in certain cases, we believe the Rothstein firm was marketing cases that didn't exist, not necessarily the ones he settled. We believe actions were taken in those cases that were an abuse of process to inflate the marketing."

Edwards filed a counterclaim, alleging Epstein filed a frivolous lawsuit to get him to back down from representing the victims.

Epstein had filed a complaint with the Florida Bar against Edwards, raising allegations that Edwards and others were involved in Rothstein's wrongdoing. After investigating the claim, the Florida Bar dismissed the complaint. In July, Edwards received a letter from the U.S. Attorney's Office — the office responsible for prosecuting Rothstein — identifying Edwards as a potential victim of Rothstein.

Scarola wants the judge to sever the cases and fast-track Edwards' case.

"This constitutes a very substantial cloud over Mr. Edwards' head," Scarola said.

"Public allegations have been made against him that he was a participant in this major fraud, one of the largest in the history of South Florida, and we want, expeditiously, to have that cloud removed."

Epstein, 57, finished serving his one-year probation in July on state charges of soliciting prostitution and soliciting a minor for prostitution. More than two dozen underage girls were identified in federal documents as having been sexually abused by Epstein.

A secret deal with federal prosecutors revealed Epstein could have been charged with multiple federal counts of sexual exploitation of minors, resulting in much harsher penalties. But the feds deferred to two state charges that got him an 18-month sentence. He served only 13 months in a vacant wing at the Palm Beach County Stockade.

In more than 62 pages of court documents, Scarola asserts the court should rule in Edwards' favor for at least two reasons: that Epstein has elected to invoke his Fifth Amendment privilege in depositions, and Epstein's claims are unsupported and contradicted by the evidence.

"Under the well-established 'sword and shield' doctrine, Epstein cannot seek damages from Edwards while at the same time asserting a Fifth Amendment privilege to block relevant discovery," Scarola wrote in court papers.

"Epstein's deposition was taken at least five times," court papers say. "During all of these depositions, Epstein refused to answer any substantive questions about his sexual abuse of minor girls."

Ackerman said the Rothstein lawsuit is a different situation than Epstein taking the Fifth in depositions regarding the victims, because the allegations against Rothstein and Edwards "took place outside of Epstein's personal knowledge.

"This is not a case where Mr. Epstein has personal knowledge of what happened at the Rothstein firm in regard to these claims," Ackerman said. "These investors went to the Rothstein firm and were shown case files for the L.M. litigation against our client for the purpose of putting investments in. The complaint is not based on whether our client is guilty or not guilty for the crimes for which he settled or pled guilty to. What he has said in the complaint is they took the cases against me ... to attempt to inflate the value for the purpose of the investment."

Scarola told Crow that Epstein has refused to answer any questions regarding his basis for claims against Edwards.

"We have undertaken not only to demonstrate absence of any evidence to support any claims that have been made against Mr. Edwards, but to affirmatively and conclusively demonstrate his complete and total innocence with respect to these matters," Scarola said.

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