

Judge denies gag order in Epstein, Edwards lawsuit; dismisses complaint

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A circuit judge Wednesday squashed an attempt by attorneys for Jeffrey Epstein to prevent parties in a civil lawsuit involving the billionaire sex offender from talking to the media.

Circuit Judge David Crow denied the motion for a gag order.

In addition, Crow dismissed the complaint by Epstein against attorney Brad Edwards, who has represented 10 underage girls in sex abuse claims brought against Epstein. Epstein alleged Edwards abused the court system by threatening to depose Epstein's powerful friends, which included Donald Trump and President Bill Clinton.

Other claims included that Edwards tried to obtain records from an alleged sex therapist who had never treated Epstein and that Edwards used investigative tools that included trespassing on Epstein's property.

Crow gave Epstein's attorneys 30 days to refile the lawsuit, which will be the second amended complaint and third evolution of the lawsuit.

Epstein also named Edwards' former boss, convicted Ponzi schemer Scott Rothstein, in the lawsuit, alleging Rothstein made "various representations to potential investors regarding the Epstein actions."

In dismissing the lawsuit, Crow said he found "serious problems" with the complaint. Crow called the lawsuit "vague.

"You have to know, at this point in time, what he did or didn't do that was an abuse of process," Crow said.

Epstein, 58, has confidentially settled more than two dozen lawsuits with young women who allege they were sexually abused by him when they were minors.

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

"Mr. Epstein had to pay more to settle these cases than he would have if Mr. Edwards wasn't out there putting all this pressure on him," said attorney Jack Scarola, who represents Edwards. "That's Mr. Edwards' job ... to put as much legitimate pressure on the defendant as he possibly could and he obviously did an extremely effective job."

Epstein pleaded guilty to two felony charges: soliciting prostitution and soliciting a minor for prostitution. He served 13 months in the county jail and has to register as a lifelong sex offender.

Representing Epstein, attorney Joseph Ackerman argued unsuccessfully for a gag order. Ackerman said Scarola has repeatedly made statements to several news organizations about the case.

"Mr. Scarola has constantly referred to Mr. Epstein as a pedophile and there's been no proof of that anywhere," Ackerman said. "Muzzling lawyers who may wish to make public statements has been long recognized as within the court's inherent power ... We don't believe it's appropriate to wage a media campaign and taint the jury pool."

Scarola said it would be unconstitutional to impose a gag order.

"There is a complete and total absence of proof that we have engaged in any conduct whatsoever that could be prohibited," Scarola said.

Scarola said he and Edwards have been asked to appear on national television as well as received interview requests from the foreign press. Scarola said he has been selective in his interviews.

There has been a frenzy in the British press ever since [REDACTED] an Epstein victim, [REDACTED] about being introduced to Prince Andrew and spending time with him at Epstein's behest. [REDACTED] alleged she served as a sex slave to Epstein when she was a minor.

"If Mr. Epstein is embarrassed by Mr. Epstein's conduct, that's Mr. Epstein's problem," Scarola said.

"I'm pleased to hear he's embarrassed by his conduct. Maybe it will serve as some deterrent in the future."

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