

Bill Cosby Loses Legal Bid to Block Sexual Abuse Lawsuit

Bill Cosby lost his latest bid to fend off a lawsuit accusing him of sexually abusing a 15-year-old girl at the Playboy Mansion in Los Angeles in 1974, as the California Supreme Court on Wednesday denied the comedian's petition to review the case.

The accuser's attorney, Gloria Allred, said the decision cleared the way for litigation brought by Judy Huth, now in her 50s, to proceed, and that she intended to take Cosby's sworn deposition within the next 30 days.

"We are looking forward to Mr. Cosby answering questions under oath at his deposition," Allred said. "It's a very big victory."

There was no immediate response from Cosby or his lawyers, who have consistently denied allegations of sexual misconduct lodged against the 78-year-old performer.

But the legal setback for Cosby came as his defense team mounted a new public relations blitz on his behalf.

In a round of interviews with various news outlets, including ABC's "Good Morning America" and the New York Times, Cosby lawyer Monique Pressley said the media have distorted deposition testimony made public this month from a separate sexual assault lawsuit Cosby settled in 2006.

Pressley, a newly hired Cosby attorney based in Washington, said that while the deposition may have proved embarrassing to Cosby, nothing in his sworn statements marked an admission of criminal wrongdoing or of sexual encounters that were anything but consensual.

Huth is one of more than 40 women who have come forward in the past year to say that they were raped or molested by Cosby after he plied them with drugs or alcohol in incidents dating back decades.

The complaint filed by Huth against Cosby is one of at least four pending civil lawsuits stemming from such accusations, but Allred said Huth's is the only one seeking damages for the alleged sexual misconduct itself.

The others are defamation suits whose principal causes of action allege the entertainer falsely branded his accusers as liars by denying that he ever sexually assaulted them.

In addition, Los Angeles police are conducting a criminal investigation into a complaint brought against Cosby, an LAPD spokesman confirmed on Wednesday. He declined to give details.

Cosby has never been charged.

Los Angeles County prosecutors declined last year to bring a criminal case against him over Huth's allegations, saying the matter dated back too far under California's statute of limitations.

Allred said the statute is more forgiving of civil complaints of childhood sexual abuse, allowing for a claim of repressed psychological injury that is discovered by the accuser in the last three years.

Cosby's attorneys had sought dismissal of Huth's lawsuit on procedural grounds, arguing among other things that she lacked required certification from a mental health professional to support her claims. They also said in court papers that Huth sued Cosby only after she failed to extort money from him to buy her silence.

A Los Angeles Superior Court judge ruled against Cosby, and a state appeals court refused to hear the case in May. On

Wednesday, the state Supreme Court did likewise, a decision that Allred said leaves Cosby no further legal recourse for blocking the lawsuit.

She said she expects to take Cosby's deposition in Massachusetts, where the performer resides.

The decision comes weeks after a federal judge in Philadelphia unsealed excerpts of a deposition Cosby gave in a separate sexual assault case he settled with a former Temple University employee, Andrea Constand, for an undisclosed sum in 2006.

The excerpts included Cosby's admission under oath that he had obtained Quaaludes, the brand name for a sedative widely used as a recreational drug in the 1970s, with the intent of giving the pills to young women in order to have sex with them.

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