



News Release

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Great-Granddaughter of Gucci Founder Files Child Sexual Assault Lawsuit Against Stepfather, Mother and Grandmother

Gucci Great-Granddaughter to Form Foundation to End Child Sexual Assault

Los Angeles, California – Attorneys from Greenberg Gross and Jeff Anderson & Associates filed a lawsuit against members of the Gucci family including Aldo Gucci’s longtime partner, Bruna Palombo, his daughter Patricia Gucci and her ex-husband Joseph Ruffalo on behalf of the plaintiff Alexandra Zarini.

The case was filed under the California Child Victims Act (AB 218) and alleges Patricia Gucci and Bruna Palombo were negligent, Patricia Gucci was physically and emotionally abusive, and Joseph Ruffalo, Zarini’s stepfather, repeatedly sexual harassed, abused and assaulted Zarini when she was a minor. Ruffalo was formerly the manager of Prince as well as Earth, Wind and Fire and he has been a prominent member of the music industry for decades.

“When I was abused and assaulted, I had no one to protect me, no one to save me and no one who did anything about it,” said Alexandra Zarini. “I am coming forward publicly today to refute the misconceptions about child sexual assault and to raise awareness that this type of abuse is happening everywhere. I hope I can also show other survivors that they are not alone and they are not to blame for what they have endured.”

“Alexandra Zarini is bravely speaking out to hold her abusers accountable and to shine a light on how sexual assault can happen to anyone,” said attorney Deborah Mallgrave of Greenberg Gross. “Alexandra’s lawsuit seeks to hold Joseph Ruffalo accountable for having taken advantage of his relationship with Alexandra to harass and sexually assault her for years. The lawsuit also seeks to hold Patricia Gucci accountable for having not only physically and emotionally abused her own daughter, but for standing by while her husband sexually assaulted Alexandra and then covering it up.”

The complaint alleges a history of abuse that began in 1991, when Zarini was just six years old. That year, she moved with her sister and her mother, Patricia Gucci, into a house with Joseph Ruffalo in Los Angeles, California. Ruffalo sexually assaulted Zarini, as a minor, in the bed he shared with his then-girlfriend Patricia Gucci who was also present.

After Gucci and Ruffalo married, when Zarini was eight years old, the abuse continued and escalated. In addition to her callous disregard for Zarini's pain and suffering from Ruffalo's abuse, Patricia Gucci was emotionally and physically abusive of Zarini throughout her childhood. As detailed in the complaint, Ruffalo took advantage of Zarini's vulnerability following her mother's physical abuse to comfort her and then sexually assault her.

At age sixteen, her grandmother Bruna Palombo asked Zarini whether her stepfather had been abusing her. Instead of protecting her and reporting the abuse to the police, Palombo warned Zarini not to tell anyone about the abuse. Over the years, Palombo also repeated the threat made by Patricia Gucci to induce Zarini's compliance and ensure she would not speak out or report what had happened to her.

When Zarini was twenty-two years old, two of her co-workers witnessed a public confrontation between Zarini and Ruffalo. They contacted Zarini's biological father who then attempted to intervene on Zarini's behalf to Patricia Gucci. Following this, Ruffalo and Zarini had a physical altercation that left Zarini on crutches. After Zarini told her mother that she planned to go to the police to report the years of abuse and sexual assaults she suffered at the hands of Ruffalo, Patricia Gucci expressed more concern about the risk of losing millions and the scandal it would create than about her daughter's well-being.

In 2009, after Ruffalo admitted to what he called an illness, Gucci and Palombo continued to threaten Zarini to prevent her from reporting the history of abuse to the police, even though Ruffalo was still free to potentially sexually assault other minors. These threats continued until 2019, when Zarini bravely reported Ruffalo's assaults to the police.

"Alexandra Zarini is reclaiming the power that was stolen from her as a child," said attorney Jeff Anderson of Jeff Anderson & Associates. "Her courage will help other survivors step forward and seek justice."

Zarini has started a charitable foundation, the Alexandra Gucci Children's Foundation (guccifoundation.org) with the clear mission to End Child Sexual Abuse. She is both financially and personally committing as much as she can to this cause and the foundation will also benefit from any award from this lawsuit.

Zarini has recorded a statement. You can find the video [here](#).

You can find the full complaint [here](#).

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