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*Nadeem Bezar of Kline & Specter. Courtesy photo*

## Lyft, Days Inn to Pay \$9M to Resolve Claims That They Enabled the Rape of an 11-Year-Old

The plaintiffs said three separate Lyft drivers transported the girl despite knowing she had not been the one to order the vehicles and that she was a minor.

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### What You Need to Know

- Lyft and a pair of Days Inn hotels agreed to pay \$9 million to resolve claims that they enabled the rape of an 11-year-old girl.
- The plaintiff claimed the Lyft car ordered by her abuser transported her to the hotel, where she was assaulted.

- The plaintiffs accused Lyft of not enforcing policies aimed at preventing the transportation of unaccompanied minors.

Ride-hailing company Lyft and a pair of Days Inn hotels agreed to collectively pay \$9 million to resolve claims that they enabled a man to rape an 11-year-old girl.

Lyft and the Days Inn defendants reached their respective settlements Nov. 13 and 15, according to **Kline & Specter partner Nadeem Bezar**, who represented the plaintiff.

“We are happy that this matter is resolved and are hopeful that Lyft will continue to do what it can to limit or even eradicate these types of occurrences,” Bezar said.

The girl, a then-11-year-old referred to in court documents as N.J., and her mother sued Lyft in 2020 over a rape N.J. allegedly suffered at the hands of an adult man, Bernard Rogers, in 2018.

Rogers was charged with multiple offenses related to the assault in a criminal matter that is still ongoing.

According to pretrial memos, Rogers had initiated communication with N.J. via Instagram and eventually orchestrated a late-night meeting at a hotel, ordering Lyft rides to transport N.J. to meet him.

The plaintiffs said three separate Lyft drivers transported N.J. despite knowing that she had not been the one to order the vehicles and that she was a minor.

The plaintiffs alleged that although Lyft had a policy against drivers transporting unaccompanied minors, the company did not provide adequate training to ensure those policies were enforced.

Bezar noted that in the time since N.J.'s assault, Lyft has developed more measures to ensure drivers are not transporting unaccompanied minors.

Tucker Law Group founder Joe Tucker Jr., who represented Lyft in the settlement negotiations, directed a request for comment to a spokesperson for Lyft, who did not respond by press time.

According to pretrial memos, N.J. first took a Lyft to the Days Inn Philadelphia Convention Center, upon which Rogers realized he had entered the wrong destination and ordered another vehicle to drive her to the Days Inn Roosevelt Boulevard, where he was staying.

The plaintiffs claim Rogers raped N.J. at the Days Inn Roosevelt and then ordered a third Lyft to transport her home.

Lyft joined both hotels as defendants in the case, asserting that they should be held liable for N.J.'s assault because their staff did not recognize or act on signs that she was being trafficked.

"The undisputed facts cannot support imposing a duty on Lyft or the defendant drivers here, because all of N.J.'s injuries occurred when N.J. was sexually assaulted by Rogers inside the premises of the Days Inn Roosevelt Boulevard Hotel, at a time when N.J. was not using the Lyft platform in any way, i.e., after any conceivable duty owed by Lyft ended," Lyft argued in a pretrial memo.

The Days Inn defendants denied that they contributed to the plaintiff's alleged damages.

Philip Priore, a senior shareholder at McCormick & Priore representing the Days Inn Roosevelt, did not respond to requests for comment.

Bezar said the litigation had at times been contentious, with legal questions arising about the ride-hailing company's duty to the plaintiff and the fact that the assault was by a third-party perpetrator.

But as the mid-December trial approached, Bezar said he and his co-counsel—Kline & Specter lawyers Helen Lawless, George Zindel and Wyatt Larkin—were able to reach a resolution with the defendants.

Lawless said in an emailed statement, “Rideshare companies like Lyft and Uber represent that their passengers are safe, and we intend to hold them to that.”