

CONTACT: GLORIA ALLRED
(323) 653-6530
Email: gallred@amglaw.com

Statement of Kristen Hernandez

For one year my family and I saved as much money as we could in order to afford what we thought would be a trip of a lifetime for the 11 members of our family.

Finally, we had saved enough to afford a vacation at the Hard Rock Riviera Maya Resort in Mexico.

The first few days were wonderful. We stayed on the side of the resort that was dedicated to families with children, called the Hacienda side.

Then on April 11, 2017, a children's day camp was planned and my brother, two of my cousins and I went to the adult side called "Heaven" where the swimming pool was located.

We were enjoying ourselves swimming in the pool and having some drinks when a waiter appeared in front of me to ask me if I wanted a drink. I had a drink in my hand and I told him that I had a drink and also that we had a dedicated waiter. I thanked him for asking.

He kept leaving and then returning asking the same question. I kept repeating the same answer.

Later I returned to my suite on the Hacienda side, and he appeared again when I was outside of my door in the hallway talking to my cousin, Angel.

He interrupted to ask if I had dirty dishes in my room. I said "no." He then spoke to Angel. Then Angel left and returned to his room saying that he would contact me in 15 minutes and then we would return to the Heaven side. I saw the waiter go to the elevator and I went inside my room to take a shower.

Approximately 5 minutes later there was a knock on my door. I opened it and the same waiter was there with a tray, two glasses and a bottle of champagne which I did not order. I thought my brother, Jordan, had ordered champagne for the suite.

Since I had just come out of the shower, I was covered with a towel.

The waiter popped the cork open, poured a half glass for me and a full glass for himself.

To my surprise, the waiter then drank his glass of champagne and then poured another for himself. I did not drink mine.

I asked him what he was doing and asked him to leave. I started walking to the door to lead him out of my suite and into the hall. At that point, he grabbed me, pushed me into the bathroom and said it is better in here because there are no cameras. He threw me down on the counter, and forced my head down so that I had to watch myself in the mirror being violently raped.

I was screaming and trying to fight him off. He put one of his hands over my mouth and he stopped the sound of my screaming. He bruised me on my chest, my arms and my legs. I also ended up with a bump on my head.

It only stopped when my father and daughter returned to my suite. They tried to open the door to the suite, and it made a loud sound, because the waiter had bolted the door shut from the inside.

When the waiter heard the noise, he stopped and threw me aside, unlocked the bathroom door, which he had also locked and pointed at me saying “shhh”. Then he opened the door and rushed past my father and my daughter into the hallway. The waiter then returned to work. He was later arrested while on the job at the hotel.

I told my brother what happened and he called security. Security saw the video of the waiter entering our suite and leaving the room 28 minutes later. Security also learned that there was no call from our suite ordering champagne.

I was and still am devastated by this unexpected and violent sexual assault on me.

I can't help but think about it every day. It has changed my life and the life of my family.

Because a nurse at the public hospital where I sought treatment for the rape damaged my nerve when she took blood, I must also wear a wrist brace everyday indefinitely into the future. I have been told that my wrist may never be fully functional again without the brace.

Since I must always wear this brace, I am constantly reminded of the rape and the injuries inflicted on me and from which I still suffer.

I am a registered nurse and prior to being raped I had worked as an R.N. at a hospital since 2012. As a result of my injuries I can no longer work as an R.N. and I am now relegated to answering phones. In addition, I have had to take a pay cut because I can't perform my duties as a nurse.

I am speaking out for the first time today because I believe that women have a right to expect that they will be able to enjoy a vacation with their family in a safe place and not be forced to become a victim of violence and sexual assault.

I am appalled that in my time of need the Hard Rock Riviera Maya treated me and my family in such a callous and insensitive manner.

Rape not only affects the victim who is attacked, it can also affect the victim's entire family and it has affected mine.

I would like the Better Business Bureau to investigate Hard Rock International and I hope that the New York City Councilman will agree to meet with us regarding what happened to me and how Hard Rock International has turned their corporate back on me.

Legal technicalities should not be used to avoid corporate responsibility to rape victims.

Perhaps Hard Rock International thought that I would walk away when they turned their back on me. They were wrong. I refuse to be silent, because I don't want what happened to me to happen to anyone else.

I want there to be change, and I want other women to be protected and assisted by Hard Rock International in the future.

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Kristen Hernandez
Represented by Gloria Allred