

\$15 million extortion: German woman's false rape claim against Saudi Sheikh's son

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By Agencies

Criminal charges have been filed against a woman and two of her attorneys for falsely claiming she was sexually assaulted by a Saudi sheikh's son in a scheme to extort at least \$15 million, Los Angeles County prosecutors said Monday.

Leyla Ors, Joseph Gerard Cavallo and Emanuel Karl Hudson were charged with attempted extortion, conspiracy to commit extortion, conspiracy to receive a bribe and conspiracy to obstruct justice, according to a statement from the district attorney's office.

In addition, Ors, 33, was charged with one count of offering to receive a bribe by a witness.

Ors, a German national, told police in March that she had been raped by Thamer Albalwi, the 23-year-old son of Sheik Monsur Albalwi, one of the wealthiest men in Saudi Arabia, the district attorney's office said.

Based on her allegations, a physical examination and visible injuries, the junior Albalwi was charged March 13 with four counts of sexual assault.

In June, prosecutors allege, Hudson, 58, called Thamer Albalwi's father and told him that for \$15 million, Ors would not testify against the son and "the case would be over."

On the same day, Cavallo, 58, allegedly called the sheikh and demanded \$20 million, saying an account would be set up in Lucerne, Switzerland, to receive the cash.

The three were arrested last week. The sexual assault case against Thamer Albalwi was dismissed on Friday.

The attorneys were released on bail, but Ors remained in custody. Her scheduled arraignment Monday was postponed until Tuesday when she asked for a German interpreter.

Cavallo was scheduled for arraignment on Tuesday, and Hudson is expected to be arraigned July 31.

If convicted, each defendant could face up to four years behind bars.

Albalwi's attorneys issued a statement Monday saying that an investigation showed the Albalwi family was "the target of a sophisticated, international extortion scheme."

Thamer Albalwi issued a statement saying, "I prayed that the truth would come out and, thanks to the American justice system, it did."

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