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## Stormy Daniels' Lawsuit Claims Former Lawyer 'Colluded' With Michael Cohen

**Former adult film star alleges attorney Keith Davidson was a 'puppet' for Trump's lawyer in complaint**

**By ALTHEA LEGASPI**

Former adult film star Stormy Daniels filed a new lawsuit on Wednesday that alleges her former attorney, Keith Davidson, acted as a “puppet” for President Donald Trump and his personal attorney, Michael Cohen, Associated Press reports. In the suit, she claims that the pair “colluded” to have her appear on Sean Hannity’s show on Fox News to deny she had sex with Trump. The interview did not take place.

Daniels, whose legal name is Stephanie Clifford, has claimed that she had sex with Trump in 2006 and that Cohen paid her \$130,000 in hush money to keep silent. She is currently fighting the nondisclosure agreement she signed prior to the 2016 election.

The new lawsuit against Davidson and Cohen filed in Los Angeles and obtained by Rolling Stone claims that Daniels was unaware that “Mr. Davidson continued to regularly communicate with Mr. Cohen to the detriment of Ms. Clifford.”

The lawsuit details that in January an article in In Touch magazine regarding Daniels and Trump was published and that prompted Cohen to message Davidson to call him. It alleges the two lawyers then spoke on the phone and “hatched a plan to have Ms. Clifford appear on Mr. Sean Hannity’s program to falsely deny the accuracy of the In Touch article.”

Text messages included in the complaint detail the two lawyers working to schedule the interview, which ultimately did not take place, and included several requests to call to discuss the matter.

“I have her tentatively scheduled for Hannity tonight. Call me after your trial,” one message from Cohen to Davidson read. After Davidson replied that she was unavailable at that time, Davidson added, “I’m trying to commit for tomorrow.”

According to the lawsuit, after the two continued to go back and forth to confirm the interview, Cohen texted Davidson, “This is no good. We need her as by doing tomorrow you just create another news cycle instead of putting an end to this one.”

Several hours later Cohen texted Davidson that “The wise men all believe the story is dying and don’t think it’s smart for her to do any interviews. Let her do her thing but no interviews at all with anyone.” Davidson replied, “100%.” Cohen returned with, “Thanks pal.”

The lawsuit alleges that the exchange was to “collude and arrange a media appearance of Ms. Clifford,” which would not benefit her but instead for her “to provide a false interview and lie to the American people to serve the best interests of Mr. Trump and Mr. Cohen.”

Trump and Cohen have denied Daniels’ allegations that she had sex with Trump. An attorney for Cohen and a representative for Fox News did not immediately respond to Rolling Stone’s request for comment.

The suit further alleges that Cohen tipped off first lady Melania Trump about Daniels disclosing her alleged sexual encounter with Donald Trump after Davidson let Cohen know following Daniels’ hiring of a new attorney.

“Mr. Cohen successfully corrupted Mr. Davidson, all to the detriment of Ms. Daniels,” Daniels’ current attorney Michael Avenatti said in a statement to Rolling Stone.

“We believe that this is an attempt by Avenatti to change the dialog,” Davidson’s lawyer, Michael D. Padula of Carlton Fields, tells Rolling Stone. “He has, over the last few weeks, not been getting good press. There’s issues related to a bankruptcy, another thing related to tax stuff. [It’s] not been a good narrative for him for the last week, 10 days. And this is his way of trying to change the news cycle, have a different conversation out there.”

According to AP, in May, a federal judge in California ordered a law firm connected to Avenatti to pay \$10 million to a lawyer who alleged the firm misrepresented its profits and during the hearing a Justice Department lawyer said the firm also owes back taxes to the Internal Revenue Service. Meanwhile, Cohen is under federal criminal investigation. The FBI raided Cohen’s home, hotel and office earlier this year.

“It’s ridiculous for [Avenatti] to assert that Keith Davidson and Michael Cohen had a cozy relationship, that they were tight-knit and that there was no arms-length negotiations going on. That couldn’t be further from the truth,” Padula adds. “Keith was zealously representing Ms.

Clifford and there was, frankly, it was a normal relationship that any lawyer has with the other side.”

The suit could also seemingly have further legal repercussions for Daniels.

“I don’t want to overstate it, but there’s a very good chance that by filing this lawsuit that a judge might say the privilege has been waived,” Padula explains. “And Mr. Davidson can use the privileged materials to defend himself and that’s a very strong possibility now that the lawsuit’s been filed.”