

Hairdresser to the Elite Faces New Lawsuit

Andre Chreky Accused by a Second Former Employee of Sexual Harassment

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Andre Chreky, a prominent Washington hairdresser who used to cut first lady Laura Bush's locks, is the target of his second sexual harassment lawsuit in a little more than four months.

An ex-employee said Chreky routinely demanded sexual favors, grabbed and touched her and made humiliating comments about her appearance and her husband's sexual prowess. When she rebuffed him, Chreky retaliated by taking away clients, refusing to accommodate her during her pregnancy and ultimately firing her, the plaintiff, Ronnie Barrett, said in the complaint filed in U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia.

Lawyers for Chreky and his salon denied Barrett's allegations. Chreky is fighting similar charges by another former employee, Jennifer Thong, who sued in September.

Barrett claims Chreky repeatedly told her that if she wanted to go to the White House or have contact with President Bush or his family, she would have to come to the salon early in the morning, before other employees arrived. Barrett "understood this to be . . . a thinly veiled threat that if she

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An attorney for Andre Chreky, above, said the events "never happened." (By Lois Raimondo -- The Washington Post)

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wanted to advance in her career she needed to accede to his sexual demands," according to the lawsuit.

Barrett says that the advances and inappropriate comments began in 2003, shortly after she returned to the salon, where she had worked in the 1990s. She was fired in December 2005.

Barrett, who is seeking \$4 million in damages from Chreky and his salon, said in a telephone interview with the Associated Press that she didn't leave earlier because of an agreement forbidding her to work at another salon within a radius of five miles for six months after leaving.

A lawyer for Chreky, David J. Sullivan, said in an e-mail that Barrett's account of events "simply never happened."

"Hundreds of clients and scores of employees -- as well as Mr. Chreky's wife, who manages the salon's business -- are in and out of every square foot of the salon all day long," he said.

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