

Attorney Steve Effman Accused of Sexual Misconduct Again



Steven Effman Law

Broward County's Family Law Attorney

Summary: The former Florida state representative who admitted to having sex with clients 17 years ago is finding himself under the same allegations again.

Attorney Steve Effman admitted to allowing women unable to pay for his services on divorce proceedings to pay with sex seventeen years ago. The incident heavily ruined his reputation, causing him to lose a high position within the Democratic Party, a seat with the Florida House of Representatives and his law license for 91 days.



Effman rebuilt a successful law practice after giving up his previous one to his fellow partners. The legal community moved on after a few years, forgetting his past indiscretions until a woman cried foul against the attorney again.

Effman denies the allegations raised by Catherine Benjamin, a mother of three that Effman helped during child custody hearings. Benjamin claims Effman grabbed her breasts under her tank top while at his office last November. Effman claims she is making it all up because she did not want to pay him the \$3,600 owed for his services.

Benjamin knows it is her word against his but she still filed police, state attorney and bar association complaints against him. She alleges the incident happened last November on a Sunday when she met him at his office to pick up paperwork because she could no longer afford to keep paying him for work on her divorce and child custody cases. She said to *Gossip Extra*, "I felt really uncomfortable from the start that day. It was on a Sunday and there was no one in the whole building except for us."

Benjamin explained that met him at the office to pick up her files because Effman had a \$10,000 retainer that she could not pay. For her upcoming child custody trial, Benjamin was going to represent herself even though she was at risk of losing her kids to her ex-husband. Her former husband was claiming she had a problem with drugs and alcohol.

Benjamin said, "I told him I was all stressed out and he started talking about how sex would be good for me and whether I have sex often with my boyfriend. I got up to leave and he stood up and gave me a hug. When I turned to walk away, he started massaging my shoulders and suddenly slipped his hand under my tank top and bra. And he just grabbed my boobs. I just walked away fast and when I tried to open the door of his office, it was locked. I got really scared but he opened it and I walked out."

Since Benjamin was not able to hire another attorney, she did not say anything against him then but kept communicating with him to get advice on her custody case from him. Effman says he provided her with free help on how to navigate her December 2016 trial. Benjamin ended up winning custody of her three children.

By the beginning of 2017, Effman was filing motions with the court to get paid for the work he had done for Benjamin earlier on before she picked up her files. He claimed he was owed \$3,600. Benjamin finally paid him in August when she was threatened with two weeks behind bars for not paying. During one of the hearing over the unpaid fee, Benjamin tried to claim Effman had harassed her but Broward County Family Judge Andrea Ruth Gundersen dismissed her claims. Benjamin said, "I said to myself 'I'll be damned if I pay that guy after what he did.' When I brought up that fact Steve put his hands on me, the judge started screaming at me."

Benjamin went to her dad for the money to pay Effman. After that she filed her complaints. He denies the allegations, arguing that she is trying to retaliate against him for making her pay the bill.

His wife, Barbara, is the president of the West Broward Democratic Club.

Do you think the timing of the allegations make them suspicious? Share your thoughts with us in the comments below.

To learn more about attorneys who had sex with their clients, read these articles:

- [Lawyer Disbarred for Sex with Immigration Clients](#)
- [San Antonio Lawyer Compelled Clients for Sex](#)
- [Disbarred NY Attorney Dmitry Shubov Arrested for Sexual Relationship with 14-Year-Old](#)

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