



Written by [R. Cort Kirkwood](#) on January 16, 2020

Avenatti Arrested Again, This Time at a Bar Disciplinary Hearing

Tough-talking porn lawyer Michael Avenatti was arrested again yesterday, this time for violating terms of his release before a federal trial.

But at least federal agents didn't have to track him down. They collared him during a disciplinary hearing before the State Bar of California, where he was defending himself against charges that he ripped off a client.

That and other charges are what the feds collared him for last year.

Thus is the career of Michael Avenatti — porn lawyer, smear merchant, and erstwhile presidential candidate — in ruins.

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The Arrest

The arrest “occurred outside the disciplinary hearing in which the State Bar of California has accused the hard-charging, tough-talking attorney of using a doctored document to scam a client out of nearly \$840,000, funneling money from a lawsuit settlement fund to his own personal use,” the online [Daily Beast reported](#).

The legal licensing agency moved to place Avenatti on “involuntary inactive status,” [it says](#), because he robbed a client. Avenatti will likely be disbarred.

“During a break in testimony, members of the United States Attorney’s Office for the Central District of California, who are prosecuting Avenatti in a separate criminal matter in Orange County, parlayed with Avenatti’s team of lawyers and took the lawyer into custody,” the [Daily Beast reported](#).

Avenatti was taken into custody at around 6 p.m. PST. When the court resumed, his lead counsel in the disciplinary case, Thomas Warren, told the court that in connection with a criminal matter in Santa Ana, Avenatti was unable to return to court.

Thom Mrozek, a spokesman for the U.S. attorney’s office in Los Angeles, confirmed to *The Daily Beast* that Avenatti was arrested on allegations of violating the terms of his pre-trial release. Mrozek declined to go into details, as the documents in the case are under seal. “I do expect him to appear in federal court in Santa Ana tomorrow,” he said.

As Avenatti was being led out of the courthouse, the normally garrulous lawyer said simply, “Completely innocent.”

“I can confirm that he was arrested by federal agents,” Avenatti’s lawyer, [Dean Steward, told Fox News](#). “I anticipate a bail hearing at 2 p.m. tomorrow in Magistrate’s Court in Santa Ana. I haven’t seen the details of the warrant, but should have it later this evening.”

Avenatti’s latest arrest came just days before he was about to go on trial for attempting to extort \$25





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million from Nike. [Prosecutors opened](#) that case in March, and have amended their criminal complaint, [Reuters reported](#). Avenatti pleaded not guilty last month.

The Disciplinary Matter

Two words sum up what Avenatti faces professionally: big trouble.

The California Bar's case looks grim for the jet-setting lawyer, who used his client's money, [prosecutors in the criminal case against him allege](#), to finance a lavish lifestyle.

"Involuntary inactive enrollment," the [bar's filing says](#), occurs when "the attorney has caused or is causing substantial harm to the attorney's clients or the public," and when "there is reasonable probability" the bar will not only "prevail on the merits in a disciplinary proceeding," but also "that the attorney will be disbarred."

The bar, its filing says, has "clear and convincing evidence" that Avenatti provided client Gregory Barela with "a fabricated settlement agreement." Avenatti "concealed the status" of the settlement, the bar alleges, and "intentionally and dishonestly misappropriated nearly \$840,000" of the settlement for his "own personal use."

Beyond that, the bar alleges, Avenatti "repeatedly responded" to Barela's questions about the settlement "with lies and evasions" and "never provided Mr. Barela with an accounting ... despite [his] multiple requests."

Avenatti, the [bar alleges](#), owes the man \$710,000.

Even worse for Avenatti, he "has not provided to State Bar with a substantive response — let alone a defense — to these charges, nor any evidence to refute the allegations."

Thus, the [bar concludes](#), "disbarment is the appropriate level of discipline for [Avenatti's] misconduct."

Kavanaugh Lies

Yet Avenatti doesn't just lie to his clients.

[He also lied](#) to the public and the Senate Judiciary Committee to wreck the career of U.S. Supreme Court Justice Brett Kavanaugh. Avenatti and his "client," Julie Swetnick, peddled a wild tale that Kavanaugh, as a high-school student, was the criminal mastermind behind weekend gang rape parties.

Unhappily for Avenatti, Swetnick, [reversed herself](#) on national television, which led then-Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman [Charles Grassley to declare](#) the accusation a "fraud."

Avenatti, [arrested on domestic abuse charges](#) that [prosecutors declined](#) to pursue, [lost the lawsuit](#) he filed against President Trump on behalf of porn star Stormy Daniels [whom he is also accused of defrauding](#).

Image of Michael Avenatti: [Screenshot from twitter.com](#)



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