



Written by [R. Cort Kirkwood](#) on July 9, 2021

Avenatti Sentenced to 30 Months for Extortion. New Trial For Bilking Clients Begins Next Week

A federal judge has sentenced Michael Avenatti, the lying porn lawyer who boasted that he would run against President Trump in 2020, to 30 months in prison for trying to extort Nike, Inc., for as much as \$25 million. The scheme also involved defrauding a client.

[Convicted in February](#) last year, now that Avenatti knows he can't get away with trying to extort major corporations, he goes to trial next week on charges that he bilked clients out of millions.

Avenatti became famous when he surfaced on social media and television in 2018 with the scurrilous lie that then-U.S. Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh was a gang rapist.



Michael Avenatti (AP Images)

Extortion Conviction

The tough-talking porn lawyer blew it big time.

“In a scheme that unfolded in less than a week,” [federal prosecutors said](#), Avenatti threatened “economic and reputational harm to seek to extort Nike” and also defrauded his client with a promise to settle the client’s potential claims against Nike if the company “agreed to make extortionate payments to Avenatti.”

The threat was a bold one:

Avenatti threatened to hold a press conference on the eve of Nike’s quarterly earnings call and the start of the annual National Collegiate Athletic Association (“NCAA”) basketball tournament at which he would announce allegations of misconduct by employees of Nike. However, Avenatti stated that he would refrain from holding the press conference and harming Nike only if Nike made a payment of \$1.5 million to [the client], who was in possession of information potentially damaging to Nike.

Avenatti also demanded that Nike retain him and another individual “to conduct a supposed ‘internal investigation’ — an investigation that neither Nike nor [the client] requested — for which Avenatti demanded to be paid, at a minimum, between \$15 million and \$25 million.”

Avenatti’s other extortionate offer was that Nike simply stroke a check for \$22.5 million to settle the client’s claims and “buy Avenatti’s offer.”



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Avenatti didn't tell the client he was extorting Nike.

[Said U.S. Attorney Audrey Strauss:](#)

Michael Avenatti used illegal and extortionate threats and betrayed one of his clients for the purpose of seeking to obtain millions of dollars for himself. Not only did Avenatti attempt to weaponize his law license and celebrity to seek to extort payments for himself, he also defrauded his own client. Avenatti will now serve substantial time in prison for his criminal conduct.

Embezzlement Charges

Next week, Avenatti faces trial [for ripping off](#) clients to finance [his lavish, globe-trotting lifestyle](#).

Avenatti concocted a five-part "scheme" to defraud at least five clients, federal prosecutors allege.

"Avenatti would negotiate a settlement on behalf of a client that would require the payment of funds to the client," prosecutors allege, and then would "misrepresent, conceal, and falsely describe to the client the true terms of the settlement and/or the disposition of the settlement proceeds."

Then he "would cause the settlement proceeds to be deposited in or transferred to attorney trust accounts" that he controlled. Avenatti "would embezzle and misappropriate settlement proceeds."

Then Avenatti hid the embezzlement:

[He] falsely [denied] the settlement proceeds had been paid, sending funds to the client under the false pretense that such funds were "advances" on the reportedly yet-to-be received settlement proceeds, and falsely claiming the payment of the settlement proceeds to the client had been delayed for legitimate reasons and would occur at a later time.

Defrauded the Senate

The one misdeed for which Avenatti won't be punished is the infamous lie about Kavanaugh.

In September 2018, after leftist professor [Christine Blasey Ford lodged](#) a false sex-assault charge against Kavanaugh, Avenatti stepped forward with Julie Swetnick.

The pair claimed that Kavanaugh drugged women and participated in weekend gang rape parties during high school. [After Swetnick retracted](#) the preposterous claim, Avenatti raised his bet and released a statement from another "client" who supposedly knew Swetnick, attended the same parties, and would verify Swetnick's claims. That woman supposedly saw Kavanaugh spike punch.

[That woman denied](#) telling Avenatti any such thing. The fast-talking porn lawyer, she said, "twisted my words."

Then Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Charles Grassley [sent two referrals](#) to the FBI [to investigate](#) Avenatti's "fraud" and "materially false statements."

It appears that Avenatti will not run for president any time soon.



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