

Eric Adams and His Campaign Receive Subpoenas in Federal Investigation

A new round of federal grand jury subpoenas in the investigation of Mayor Eric Adams and his 2021 fund-raising seeks a wide range of information.

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By William K. Rashbaum and Dana Rubinstein

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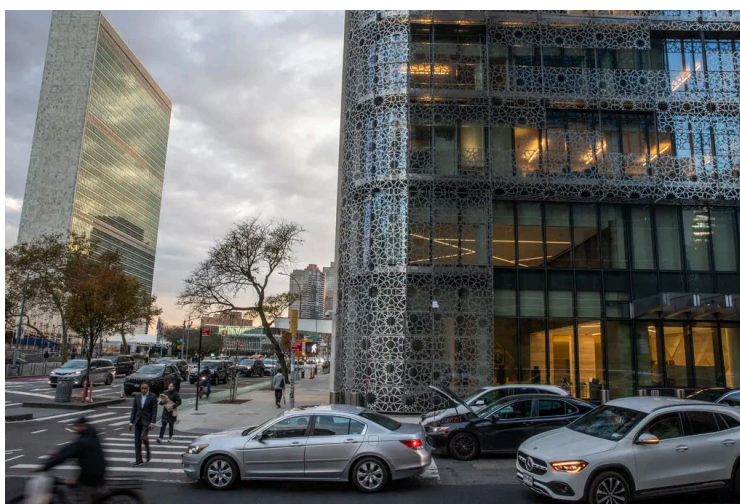
Federal prosecutors investigating Mayor Eric Adams of New York and his 2021 campaign have served a new round of grand jury subpoenas in their long-running corruption inquiry, issuing them to Mr. Adams himself, to City Hall and to his election committee, according to four people with knowledge of the matter.

The three subpoenas were served in July and seek an extensive range of materials, including text messages, other communications and documents, two of the people said.

The subpoenas contain similar language and seek information in a number of areas, including travel by the mayor, his aides and others, as well as fund-raising. They appear likely to sweep in information related to some aides to the mayor and people who worked both in City Hall and on Mr. Adams's 2021 campaign, the people said.

The new subpoenas came nearly nine months after the corruption investigation first entered public view, meaningfully altering the city's political landscape. Since then, the mayor has become a political target, with sagging approval ratings and at least three challengers in the 2025 Democratic primary.

The full scope of the investigation remains unclear. But it has focused at least in part on whether Mr. Adams and his campaign conspired with the Turkish government to receive illegal foreign donations and pressured the Fire Department to sign off on Turkey's new high-rise consulate in Manhattan despite safety concerns. It also has examined free flight upgrades Mr. Adams received from Turkish Airlines.



Federal prosecutors were examining whether Mr. Adams pressured the Fire Department to sign off on the opening of a new high-rise Turkish consulate. Sara Hylton for The New York Times

Mayor Adams has repeatedly denied wrongdoing and maintained that he and his campaign have scrupulously followed the law.

Two lawyers representing him and his campaign said in a statement on Thursday that over the past nine months, they have conducted their own investigation into the conduct that they believe is the focus of the federal inquiry.

Both lawyers in the past two decades oversaw public corruption prosecutions for the same federal prosecutor's office that is now investigating the mayor. Their examination has included "an evaluation of campaign documents, an analysis of tens of thousands of electronic communications, and witness interviews," the statement said.

"To be clear, we have not identified any evidence of illegal conduct by the mayor," the lawyers, Brendan R. McGuire and Boyd M. Johnson III, said in the statement. "To the contrary, we have identified extensive evidence undermining the reported theories of federal prosecution as to the mayor, which we have voluntarily shared with the U.S. attorney."

The lawyers said they were responding to the new subpoenas.

"We continue to look forward to a prompt and just resolution of this investigation," they said.

The subpoenas, which have not been previously reported, also came amid some indications that the public corruption investigation may be nearing its conclusion.

Prosecutors and F.B.I. agents have recently been contacting lawyers for witnesses they interviewed earlier this year with follow-up questions to clarify certain details, and they have sought to expedite interviews with some other witnesses, four people with knowledge of the outreach have said.

Spokesmen for the U.S. attorney's office for the Southern District of New York and the F.B.I., which are conducting the investigation, declined to comment.

Neither Mr. Adams nor any other administration officials or campaign staffers have been accused of wrongdoing, and it is possible that the investigation could conclude without charges being brought against the mayor or any of his aides. His predecessor, Bill de Blasio, endured lengthy and well-publicized federal and state criminal investigations focused on his campaign fund-raising, but those ended with no charges. He won re-election in 2017.

In the federal investigation of Mr. de Blasio, at least one senior official from City Hall and one from his campaign received grand jury subpoenas, a development that prompted his chief counsel, Maya Wiley, to issue a statement at the time saying "City Hall has been subpoenaed."

Those subpoenas were issued nearly a year before that investigation concluded in an unusual announcement by federal prosecutors from the Southern District — the same office investigating Mr. Adams — that harshly criticized Mr. de Blasio.

The mayor's spokesman, Fabien Levy, noted that Mr. Adams, a retired police captain, had a career in law enforcement before politics and "has been clear over the last nine months that he will cooperate with any investigation underway."

"Nothing has changed," he added.

It is unclear what prompted the new round of subpoenas. Grand juries operate in secret and federal law bars prosecutors and federal agents from speaking about subpoenas or the materials or testimony that the subpoenas seek.

The investigation into Mr. Adams and his campaign began in 2021, before Mr. Adams took office as mayor, and continued in secret until this past fall, two people with knowledge of its origin said.

It may have been effectively dormant during some of that time, but later heated up, with F.B.I. agents and prosecutors gathering enough evidence to persuade a federal judge to sign several search warrants that were executed on the same morning in November of last year. The warrants included one for the Brooklyn home of Brianna Suggs, who was then the mayor's chief fund-raiser.



Federal agents searched the Brooklyn home of the mayor's chief fund-raiser, Brianna Suggs, as part of the investigation. Stephanie Keith for The New York Times

The agents who searched her home emerged with two laptop computers, three iPhones and a manila folder bearing Mr. Adams's name, according to a search warrant and other documents obtained by The New York Times.

The warrant made clear that the raid was part of a broader federal investigation involving the Turkish government.

On the same day as the search of Ms. Suggs's home, F.B.I. agents also searched the homes of Rana Abbasova, an aide in Mr. Adams's international affairs office, and Cenk Öcal, a member of his mayoral transition team and former executive at Turkish Airlines, from which Mr. Adams received free flight upgrades.

Mr. Adams, an avid traveler, has praised the airline, telling a Turkish pro-government publication that the airline "is my way of flying."

When he was Brooklyn borough president, Ms. Abbasova served as his liaison to Brooklyn's small Turkish community, a position that no longer exists in the Borough Hall of Mr. Adams's successor, Antonio Reynoso.

Just days after the searches, F.B.I. agents stopped Mr. Adams outside an evening event at New York University, asked his security detail to step aside, joined him inside his S.U.V. and presented him with a warrant to seize his electronic devices.

While Mr. Adams has often noted that he urges his staff to "follow the law," his campaign has been dogged by repeated straw-donor investigations that have resulted in criminal charges, though he has not been accused of involvement. Several senior members of his administration have also been the subject of a wide range of investigations.

In July, the city's campaign finance board released a draft audit of the mayor's 2021 campaign that described an operation marked by disorganization and opacity. The campaign failed to disclose who paid for 158 fund-raisers, reported expenditures which — based on the documentation provided so far — were not campaign-related, accepted anonymous contributions and exceeded spending limits. The draft audit was first reported by Gothamist.

Last September, the Manhattan district attorney, Alvin L. Bragg, indicted Eric Ulrich, Mr. Adams's former senior adviser and former Buildings Department commissioner, accusing him of taking bribes. That case is pending.

Timothy Pearson, another senior adviser to Mr. Adams, has been sued four times this year for sexual harassment and is facing two investigations by the city's independent anti-corruption agency.

And in February, the F.B.I. searched two homes owned by Winnie Greco, another senior adviser to the mayor, in a separate investigation by the F.B.I. and federal prosecutors in Brooklyn.

Bianca Pallaro contributed reporting.

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Mayor Adams Is Accused of Sexually Assaulting a Colleague in 1993

In a lawsuit, a former police colleague of Eric Adams said that he demanded oral sex in exchange for career help in 1993 and assaulted her when she refused.



By Emma G. Fitzsimmons

March 18, 2024

A woman accused Mayor Eric Adams in a lawsuit of asking her for oral sex in exchange for career help in 1993 and sexually assaulting her when she refused.

The allegation was made on Monday in a legal complaint connected to a lawsuit that the woman originally filed in November in Manhattan under the Adult Survivors Act. The woman, who worked with Mr. Adams at New York City's transit police bureau, claimed she asked him for help after she had been passed over for a promotion.

Mr. Adams, who was a police officer, drove the woman, an administrative aide with the department, to a vacant lot and requested oral sex, according to the 26-page complaint. When she declined, he forced her to touch his penis and ejaculated on her leg, the complaint says.

"The effects of that sexual assault, betrayal and astonishing abuse of power, continue to haunt plaintiff to this day," the complaint said.

Mr. Adams, a Democrat, has repeatedly denied assaulting the woman. The mayor's office released a statement from Sylvia O. Hinds-Radix, New York City's corporation counsel, denying the allegations.

"While we review the complaint, the mayor fully denies these outrageous allegations and the events described here; we expect full vindication in court," she said.

Mr. Adams dismissed the allegations at a community meeting in December, saying: "That is not who I am."

"I want to be very clear: Never happened," he said. "I don't even know who the person is. I don't even remember if I ever met them before."

New York's Adult Survivors Act, which was signed into law by Gov. Kathy Hochul in 2022, provided a one-year window for people to bring lawsuits over sexual assaults that may have occurred years or decades ago.

The woman filed a brief notice of claim in New York Supreme Court in November, just before the law's one-year grace period expired, accusing Mr. Adams of assaulting her with no further elaboration.

But the new complaint, which was first reported by The Daily Beast, goes into greater detail and accuses Mr. Adams of requesting a "quid pro quo sexual favor." It says that the woman was particularly fearful during the alleged assault because she believed that Mr. Adams, as a police officer, had a loaded gun in the car.

The woman, who now lives in Florida, joined the transit police bureau as an administrative aide in 1980 and stopped working for the city in 1994, according to the complaint.

Her lawyer, Megan Goddard, said in a statement that she was proud of her client.

"She knew that filing this lawsuit would cause her significant personal challenges, but she did so nevertheless, because she believes sexual abusers must be held to account, no matter who they are," she said.

The detailed complaint is the latest legal complication confronting Mr. Adams as he prepares to run for re-election next year in what is expected to be a competitive Democratic primary. In November, F.B.I. agents searched the home of the mayor's chief fund-raiser and seized Mr. Adams's electronic devices as part of an investigation into whether his campaign conspired with the Turkish government to accept illegal foreign donations.

F.B.I. agents also recently searched two houses owned by a close aide to Mr. Adams as part of a separate investigation, and a retired police inspector pleaded guilty to misdemeanor conspiracy as part of a straw donor scheme related to the mayor's 2021 campaign.

The sexual assault lawsuit against Mr. Adams seeks \$5 million and also names the Police Department and the Guardians Association, a fraternal organization of Black police officers, as defendants. Mr. Adams was a leader in the Guardians at the time of the alleged assault.

In addition to sexual assault, the woman accuses Mr. Adams and the department of gender discrimination, retaliation, creating a hostile work environment and inflicting emotional distress.

The plaintiff has filed other lawsuits in the past. In 2008, she sued American Airlines and lost, arguing that an employee had caused her to fall out of a wheelchair, injuring her back.

She sued the Miami-Dade County Public Schools Board in 2009, arguing that she was denied compensation after she was attacked by a student. She lost at trial and then appealed parts of the decision to the Florida Supreme Court and the United States Supreme Court, where she won several procedural motions but failed to win a retrial.

Mr. Adams was an officer in the transit police bureau at the time of the alleged assault in 1993. He joined the Police Department in 1995, after the transit bureau was absorbed into the larger agency.

After more than two decades as a police officer, Mr. Adams served as a state senator and Brooklyn borough president before he was elected mayor in November 2021.

The complaint said that the plaintiff sought help from Mr. Adams because he had been an advocate for Black employees within the Police Department. She said she repeatedly said "no" to him during the alleged assault and that she was "sickened and outraged" by his behavior.

She said she did not come forward with the allegations at the time because she was a divorced mother of young children and feared she could lose her job.

The complaint also said that the plaintiff told several people about the assault, including current and former police employees and her daughters when they were older.

Ms. Hinds-Radix said that Mr. Adams had been "one of the most prominent public opponents of the racism within the N.Y.P.D." in 1993 and that he had no influence over promotions of civilian employees. She called the idea "ludicrous."

The mayor's office has said that it was appropriate for Ms. Hinds-Radix to represent the mayor because the case related to his time as a city employee, though some have raised questions about the arrangement.

Emma G. Fitzsimmons is the City Hall Bureau Chief for The Times, covering Mayor Eric Adams and his administration. More about Emma G. Fitzsimmons

NEW YORK

Top Eric Adams aide hit with third lawsuit

A sexual assault lawsuit against Tim Pearson also alleges the FBI asked about his role atop a mysterious city agency.



The latest allegations against Tim Pearson stem from his time at the Mayor's Office of Municipal Services Assessment, a secretive mayoral agency that attempts to increase efficiency at other departments across the city. | Arturo Holmes/Getty Images

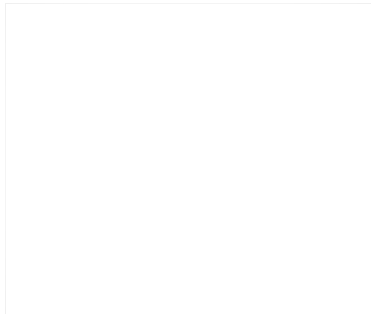
By **JOE ANUTA**
06/06/2024 11:07 AM EDT



NEW YORK — One of Mayor Eric Adams' top aides, Tim Pearson, was named in a third lawsuit Thursday for allegedly retaliating against a staffer who corroborated accusations of sexual harassment against Pearson.

NYPD Lt. George Huang accused Pearson — along with the city, the NYPD’s Chief of Department Jeffrey Maddrey and another police official — of derailing his career after he backed up accounts of Pearson sexually harassing staffers at a clandestine agency he ran, according to the complaint filed in state Supreme Court in Manhattan. It was first reported by the [Daily News](#).

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The latest allegations against Pearson stem from his time at the Mayor’s Office of Municipal Services Assessment, a secretive mayoral agency that attempts to increase efficiency at other departments across the city.

The Law Department referred POLITICO to City Hall, which did not immediately respond.

The accusations against Pearson were [first made public](#) in March, when former NYPD Sergeant Roxanne Ludemann filed a lawsuit accusing the former NYPD inspector, who is one of the mayor’s closest and highest-paid aides, of tanking her career after she rejected his advances while working under him.

On Thursday, Huang backed up many of Ludemann’s claims and said he and a colleague were eventually tasked with monitoring Pearson’s behavior around women in the office.

After requesting to leave the agency as the accusations against Pearson shook up top leadership there, Huang alleges he was demoted to a career-ending post at the NYPD and subsequently intimidated by the department’s Internal Affairs Bureau to change his testimony about Pearson’s conduct.

Over the course of three interviews this year and last Huang said Joseph Profeta, who is now the commanding officer of a unit within the Internal Affairs Bureau, pressured him to change his account of Pearson’s behavior, at one point banging his fists on the table.

Huang’s lawsuit also alleges that an agent from the FBI knocked on his door in February alongside a liaison from the NYPD’s Internal Affairs Bureau and inquired about the services assessment office and Pearson specifically. Huang declined to discuss either, citing his current employment with the city.

After Ludemann filed her suit in March, one of her colleagues filed a second lawsuit in April with similar allegations.

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