

# Former NYPD detective and prosecutor use their skills for a new side business — busting blackmailers

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Attorney Jeremy Saland (l.) and private investigator Herman Weisberg get their clients out of extortion deals in sordid scenarios that threaten their livelihoods and families. (Jefferson Siegel/New York Daily News)

A former prosecutor and a retired NYPD detective have made a successful side gig out of intervening in the tricky business of blackmail — a game they learned years ago on the job.

Attorney Jeremy Saland and private investigator Herman Weisberg serve desperate men and women, tasked with getting them out of extortion deals in sordid scenarios that threaten their livelihoods and families.

Their clients have included a married Brooklyn father in the financial sector whose cocaine-fueled affair with a transgender Backpage prostitute derailed his white picket fence facade of a life.

The call girl — who shook the man down for hush money — backed down when confronted with the illegality of her exploits, the duo recalled.

"I don't care what you did or what you didn't do at all. I don't care what the situation is with your wife, or if it's a business context I don't care what's going on with your business," Saland said he tells clients. "My job is to protect you whether I like you or not."

There was also a rising-star model whose success made her ex-boyfriend crazed with jealousy and incited a campaign that threatened to ruin her by exposing an intimate secret.

Yet another customer met a 17-year-old girl on Seekingarrangments.com, a "sugar daddy" hookup site. She had claimed to be four years older. They went to a Manhattan club, got drunk and the young lady left with a collection of selfies with her new gentleman friend. Nothing sexual had transpired between the two — but she threatened to share the photos with his wife if he did not fork over \$2,000.



The duo were paired up at the Manhattan District Attorney's office in 2004 to handle the prosecution of four men charged with trying to shake down hoops star Carmelo Anthony for \$3 million. (Elsa/Getty Images)

Complications mounted when Saland and Weisberg learned the girl was the daughter of an NYPD cop — but they negotiated an end to the conduct with the troubled teen's concerned parent.

Saland and Weisberg — who were paired up at the Manhattan District Attorney's office in 2004 to handle the prosecution of four men charged with trying to shake down hoops star Carmelo Anthony for \$3 million — said most of their targets back off once they realize the gravity of their criminal conduct.

Their targets get schooled on the law — not threatened — with strongly worded cease-and-desist letters and face-to-face visits from Weisberg.

The tactics they use are nothing new to the former members of law enforcement.

"We're wearing the exact same hats as we did as prosecutor and detective doing controlled calls, wiring people up, videotaping meetings and in the end we're preserving the evidence so that we're coming from the strongest place possible to either stop this person from continuing the blackmail or we'll turn over those materials to the district attorney's office," Saland said.

Clients, Saland said, get the benefit of knowing their secrets are safe.



"We're wearing the exact same hats as we did as prosecutor and detective doing controlled calls, wiring people up, videotaping meetings," Saland (r.) said. (Jefferson Siegel/New York Daily News)

"If they come to us there is no chance from our end that they will be exposed whereas if it goes to the channel of the NYPD there's a real risk, especially if the person has some form of celebrity or has money, that it would be potentially leaked either to the press or some other third party," the lawyer said.

In the case of the model, Weisberg recalled the ex-boyfriend was defensive at first. When approached at his Brooklyn apartment that reeked of pot, however, he quickly gave in.

"At 11:30 a.m., marijuana smoke was wafting out of the door," Weisberg said. "I explained to him that what he was doing was a crime."

The jilted stoner sounded off on his former flame, calling her "every name in the book" and complained that "fame had gone to her head."

Then reality set in.

"He apologized profusely and said it wouldn't happen again," Weisberg said. "He was very concerned about the repercussions."