

## Mark Geragos (prononcer Guiragos) impliqué dans l'affaire Nike contre Avenatti ?

Michael Avenatti est accusé d'avoir tenté de faire chanter l'entreprise américaine Nike. Il prétendait détenir des informations concernant une vaste affaire de corruption dont l'équipementier Nike serait complice. En échange de son silence, l'avocat exigeait 22,5 millions de dollars. «Nous tiendrons une conférence de presse pour divulguer un scandale majeur sur le basket-ball scolaire et universitaire commis par Nike, déclarait Michael Avenatti sur Twitter. Ce comportement criminel atteint les plus hauts niveaux de Nike et implique certains des plus grands noms du basket-ball universitaire». Une heure plus tard, l'avocat était arrêté par la police fédérale.

Selon la plainte de Nike , Avenatti aurait rencontré le 19 mars 2019 des dirigeants de Nike avec un autre avocat identifié par plusieurs media , comme Mark Geragos , un autre poids lourd du barreau US .



"Prosecutors say in court papers that an unnamed attorney joined Avenatti in demanding that Nike pay millions of dollars, or risk being embarrassed by a scandal involving its sponsorship of an amateur basketball team.

They described the attorney as a co-conspirator but didn't charge him with a crime.

The person knowledgeable about the case tells the AP that co-conspirator was Geragos, a Los Angeles criminal defense lawyer.

The person spoke on condition of anonymity because the information was not made public by prosecutors.

Geragos's clients have included Michael Jackson, Winona Ryder, Scott Peterson and most recently Jussie Smollett.

Geragos didn't respond to messages seeking comment.

1:12 p.m.

Nike says it has been cooperating with the federal government's ongoing investigation of college basketball for more than a year.

The company issued a statement Monday saying it "will not be extorted or hide information that is relevant to a government investigation."

The statement followed the arrest of celebrity attorney Michael Avenatti on federal extortion charges.

Federal prosecutors say Avenatti threatened to hold a news conference to announce damaging allegations against Nike if the company didn't pay him more than \$20 million.

Nike officials told investigators Avenatti claimed to know of rules violations by an amateur basketball team sponsored by the company.

Nike said it "believes in ethical and fair play, both in business and sports, and will continue to assist the prosecutors."

Avenatti also is charged in Los Angeles with bank and wire fraud. He's accused of embezzling a client's money to pay his own expenses.

12:24 p.m.

Federal prosecutors in New York say their investigation of the firebrand attorney Michael Avenatti began only last week and was complete in days.

At a news conference Monday in Manhattan, U.S. Attorney Geoffrey Berman said the apparel giant Nike contacted his office March 19 and claimed that Avenatti was trying to

extort the company.

Nike officials told investigators Avenatti claimed to know of rules violations by an amateur basketball team sponsored by Nike.

They said he threatened to make the wrongdoing public unless the company paid him tens of millions of dollars.

Berman says investigators recorded subsequent discussions between Nike and Avenatti, then arrested him Monday on extortion conspiracy charges.

Avenatti was in custody Monday and not responding to phone calls or texts.

Nike Inc. did not respond to a request for comment.

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12:15 p.m.

A federal prosecutor says there's no political connection to wire and bank fraud charges filed against lawyer Michael Avenatti, who's a vocal critic of President Donald Trump.

U.S. Attorney Nick Hanna in Los Angeles says the charges announced Monday began with Internal Revenue Service tax collection efforts and came to prosecutors in an ordinary way.

The case alleges in part that Avenatti collected a \$1.6 million settlement for a client and used it for his own interests.

Hanna says the timing of the announcement had nothing to do with the weekend release of a summary of special counsel Robert Mueller's investigation into Trump's campaign.

Hanna says he had no idea when the Mueller report would be presented.

Avenatti is best known for representing porn star Stormy Daniels in lawsuits against Trump and also is charged with extortion in New York.

11:55 a.m.

Porn star Stormy Daniels says she's "saddened but not shocked" over the arrest of her former attorney, Michael Avenatti.

Daniels issued a statement Monday on Twitter saying she fired Avenatti a month ago after

"discovering that he had dealt with me extremely dishonestly." She said she wouldn't elaborate.

Avenatti is best known for representing Daniels in lawsuits against President Donald Trump and has been charged with extortion in New York and bank and wire fraud in California.

Avenatti represented Daniels, whose real name is Stephanie Clifford, in a lawsuit to break a confidentiality agreement to speak about her alleged affair with Trump.

An email to Avenatti's office and phone and text messages sent to his phone seeking comment haven't been immediately returned.

11:40 a.m.

U.S. Attorney Nick Hanna in Los Angeles says lawyer Michael Avenatti could face up to 50 years in prison if convicted on wire and bank fraud charges.

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sources : A.P. , Fox , LeFigaro .