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## **Woman who accused Corey Lewandowski of assault speaks out: "I don't want this to happen to anyone else"**

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The political class barely shrugged in August when Corey Lewandowski announced he was back at former President Donald Trump's side. But when Trashelle Odom learned that Lewandowski had joined Trump's 2024 presidential campaign as a senior adviser, it was a gut punch. That's because a little over three years ago, in 2021, Odom, then the wife of a wealthy Republican donor, had reported Lewandowski to the police for allegedly assaulting and stalking her at a Las Vegas charity event. Later, she said his lawyers offered her payment to keep quiet.

Lewandowski, who was [Trump's first campaign manager](#), was charged with misdemeanor battery and reached an agreement with prosecutors to dismiss the charges in exchange for community service, a \$1,000 fine, enrollment in an impulse control class and an apology in court to Odom for "any discomfort he may have caused her." Lewandowski was ousted from Trump's orbit, where he'd been running a super PAC supporting the former president. A Trump spokesman vowed at the time that Lewandowski "would no longer be associated with Trump world."

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In response to a request for comment, lawyers for Lewandowski, David Chesnoff and Richard Schonfeld, stated, "Lewandowski was not charged with assault or stalking in Clark County, Nevada. In fact, the case against Mr. Lewandowski was dismissed."

Odom said his dismissal put her on a path to healing. She divorced, moved to another state, left the world of politics and started a small business while raising her young children.

So when a friend called her last month to tell her Lewandowski was back in the Trump fold, she told CBS News she was stunned.

"I just broke down," she said in her first television interview since Lewandowski's return. "I was very, very upset." Odom said she wanted others to hear her story. "He has his power back," she said.

Lewandowski's aggressive style and penchant for personal peccadilloes made for a turbulent tenure in Trump's orbit. But Trump has stayed loyal to Lewandowski, bringing him back into his inner circle after he was fired twice, once by the campaign and once by the super PAC Make America Great Again Action.



Corey Lewandowski during the Republican National Convention in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, July 18, 2024.

Al Drago/Bloomberg via Getty Images

The longtime political strategist, who once served as a New Hampshire state trooper, rose to prominence for his role in catapulting Trump – a longshot candidate – all the way to the White House. Since the 2016 election, he's been described as a kind of comfort pillow for Trump. He is someone who encourages the former president's more extreme instincts, even when other aides are looking to rein him in.

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"Let Trump be Trump" is Lewandowski's mantra — and the name of a book he co-wrote in 2017 with Dave Bossie, Trump's former deputy campaign manager.

"I just like him," Trump recently told New York magazine. "Corey's a character." Lewandowski faced scrutiny for his treatment of women almost from the start. During the 2016 campaign, CCTV footage showed him grabbing a journalist's arm following a press conference. Images from the video showed she had bruises on her arm. Lewandowski was charged with simple battery, but prosecutors ultimately dropped the charges.

Lewandowski's lawyers said in response to the allegation that the matter "was concluded long ago with Florida authorities electing not to pursue charges after completing their investigation."

In 2017, a woman told police that Lewandowski slapped her behind during a holiday party at the Trump International Hotel in Washington, D.C. She objected, according to the police report, but Lewandowski ignored her disapproval and did it again.

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"It was completely demeaning and shocking," she told Politico, but in the end, she declined to press charges.

Odom said she'd hoped to never have to publicly revisit the memories. But after learning that Lewandowski had returned to Trump's side, she told CBS News she felt compelled to come forward and tell her story. She said she wanted to "give a voice" to women who may have had similar experiences but can't speak up.

"I want them to feel safe, and I don't want this to happen to anyone else," she said.

She described what happened to her that evening as terrifying and at times during the interview fought back tears. Lewandowski, Odom said, made her feel uncomfortable from the moment she sat down next to him.

"He was targeting just me. His eyes were just on me," she said. He quickly turned the conversation to his workout routines and bragged about his sexual prowess. "He said that I should go work out with him in his bedroom ... and he was saying how large his privates were and saying how long he lasts in bed because of how much he works out."

Soon, according to Odom, Lewandowski began touching her. "He was ... putting his hands, like on my lap," and he attempted to "just caress my leg and like going up my side and like, trying to touch my butt." She said when she left the dinner, Lewandowski followed her through the hotel.

"I felt like I was his prey," she said. "He was very persistent, aggressive." At one point, she said Lewandowski threw his drink at her. When she confronted him about it, "he started laughing," Odom recalled.

Odom, now 35, was exposed to the political world through her now ex-husband, John Odom, a Boise, Idaho, construction executive who gave generously to Trump's reelection effort. But she said she doesn't want her story to be caught up in the political maelstrom.

"I don't want it to be about Trump. I don't want it to be about politics," she said.