

# \$10 MIL SEX SUIT vs. TOP DOG



**RxXX:** Josette Grosso (right) alleges that N.Y. Methodist surgery chief Dr. Leslie Wise (above) expected sex in return for dates and expensive jewelry.

## Secretary slams surgery chief, 76

By KATI CORNELL SMITH

The 76-year-old head of surgery at New York Methodist Hospital is accused of trying to get his secretary into bed by showering her with lavish gifts, forcing himself on her, and threatening to have her fired if she resisted.

Diamond and pearl necklaces and a gold watch might sound like romantic Christmas gifts, but for Josette Grosso, 34, they signaled the start of a series of harrowing encounters with her boss that caused her to lose her job and damaged her mental health, a \$10 million lawsuit filed in Brooklyn Supreme Court claims.

Dr. Leslie Wise, chairman of the department of surgery at the Park Slope, Brooklyn, hospital, gave Grosso the three expensive gifts in December 2004 — just two months after she was hired.

"I was like, 'Oh, my God, Dr. Wise, I can't take these presents,'" Grosso said in an interview. "He said, 'No. You deserve them.' I took them because he insisted ... He was very pushy."

Over the next several months, Wise allegedly wined and dined Grosso and tried to physically force himself on her three times — twice in his car and once in a hospital conference room — according to the suit, which seeks \$10 million and back pay from Wise and the Methodist Hospital.

"He is a predator who has shown a pattern of abusing his position of power to prey on the vulnerable," said high-powered lawyer Joseph Tacopina, who represents Grosso. "And by failing to remove him from that position of power, the hospital has condoned his conduct."

The first alleged physical encounter happened in January 2005, as Wise dropped Grosso off at her house after taking her to visit a school where he wanted her to enroll — and then to an upscale cigar lounge.

"He went to grab me and kiss me. I was sick, sick in my stomach," Grosso recounted.

Then in February 2005, Wise insisted that Grosso accompany him to a French restaurant, where the bill came to \$500.

Afterward, as he drove toward her home, Wise allegedly grabbed Grosso's hand and put it on his privates.

"I just quickly moved it away. I was so scared," Grosso said.

Back at the office, Wise allegedly began criticizing Grosso's work performance, whereas before he had only praised her.

In May 2005, Wise allegedly grabbed Grosso by the head and tried to kiss her in a conference room at Methodist Hospital.

Grosso said she shouted, "Stop! Get off!"

"He said, 'Without me, you won't have a job,'" Grosso recounted.

Grosso claims she developed such severe stress and depression that she had to take a six-month sick leave from her job.

She returned to Methodist Hospital in October, but to a far lower-level position.

Lyn Hill, a hospital spokeswoman, said the hospital takes the issue of sexual harassment very seriously.

"We do not believe the employee has evidence to prove her allegations, and we are confident Dr. Wise will be exonerated."

kati.smith@nypost.com