

Title: Ken Griffin (Citadel), Steven Cohen (Sac Capital) and Goldman Sachs were suspected of being behind the massive "short and distort" attacks that brought down Bear Stearns and Lehman Brothers and that kick-started the 2008 financial crisis.

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But who? According to one vague tale, initially picked up at Lehman Brothers, a group of hedge-fund managers actually celebrated Bear's collapse at a breakfast that following Sunday morning and planned a similar assault on Lehman the next week. True or not, Bear executives repeated the story to the S.E.C., along with the names of the three firms it suspects were behind its demise. Two are hedge funds, Chicago-based Citadel, run by a trader named Ken Griffin and SAC Capital Partners of Stamford, Connecticut, run by Steven Cohen. (A spokesman for SAC Capital said the firm "vehemently denies" any suggestion that it played a role in Bear's demise. A Citadel spokeswoman said, "These claims have no merit.") The third suspect, at least in Bear executives' minds, is one of its main competitors, Goldman Sachs. ("Goldman Sachs was supportive of Bear Stearns," says a Goldman Sachs spokeswoman. "There is no foundation to rumors that we behaved otherwise.")