

# SOUND OFF

Make The Music Industry Safe Report



lift our  
voices



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Punk  
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Therapist



**TRIGGER / ACTIVATION WARNING**

*This report contains numerous accounts of sexual violence.  
Please take measures to protect your mental health.*

# MAKE THE MUSIC INDUSTRY SAFE REPORT:

This comprehensive report chronicles the scathing history and financial impact of decades of sexual abuse and coverups, from the 1950s to the present.



SONY MUSIC



UNIVERSAL MUSIC GROUP

**February 27, 2024**

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*This report is gathered from public information available as of February 22, 2024 and details instances of reported sexual abuse, harassment, and related misconduct within the music industry carried out by artists, executives, managers, producers, and other prominent players. While there are lawsuits identifying some of these alleged perpetrators, many of these allegations have not been fully evaluated in a civil court. Accordingly, the allegations should be considered just allegations and should not be considered proven or substantiated in a court of law. All individuals should be considered innocent until proven guilty.*

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# Executive Summary

For decades, the music industry has condoned, perpetuated, and often marketed a culture of sexual abuse of women and underage girls. Thousands of artists, executives, and shareholders have made billions of dollars in profit – while engaging in and/or covering up criminal sexual behavior. Women who spoke to *Vice* as part of a 2018 investigation into sexual misconduct within the music industry “told stories of powerful men who took advantage of their positions, and explained the risks inherent in speaking out against them. They detailed an industry beset by financial pressure and fierce competition, increasingly reliant on a freelance workforce vulnerable to gaps in labor protections.” The report found that the problem of sexual misconduct in the music industry “doesn't stem from any one of these factors alone—it's a perfect storm that clears a path for sexual abuse to continue unabated. Blocking that path will require reckoning with the very nature of music and the industry and cultures that surround it.”<sup>1</sup>

**“...it's a perfect storm that clears a path for sexual abuse to continue unabated.”**

Ignoring sexual misconduct has been an act of self-preservation for “an industry that has undergone an extraordinary amount of upheaval in the past 20 years. Following a series of mergers dating back to 1998, the ‘Big Six’ major labels that once ruled the industry—Warner Music Group, EMI, PolyGram, Sony Music, MCA, and BMG—are today the ‘Big Three,’” becoming Sony Music Entertainment (SME), Universal Music Group (UMG), and Warner Music Group (WMG).<sup>2</sup> At the end of the third quarter of 2023, those three companies accounted for more than 84 percent of overall market share in the music industry.<sup>3</sup> Together, they had a total market cap of nearly \$192 billion as of January 2024.<sup>4</sup>

Given market value in the hundreds of billions of dollars, there are significant financial risks to these companies from failing to act on sexual misconduct, covering it up, and in some instances, having executives who perpetuate the misconduct. Research published in April 2021 in the *Journal of Corporate Finance* found that the stock price of companies facing a sexual harassment scandal decreased 1.5 percent in the next trading day, and there was a larger decrease when the scandal involved the CEO or if there was high media coverage of the firm's

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<sup>1</sup> [vice.com, March 15, 2018](https://www.vice.com/en/article/2018/03/music-industry-sexual-misconduct-report)

<sup>2</sup> [vice.com, March 15, 2018](https://www.vice.com/en/article/2018/03/music-industry-sexual-misconduct-report)

<sup>3</sup> [billboard.com, October 5, 2023](https://www.billboard.com/article/music-industry-market-share-2023)

<sup>4</sup> [companiesmarketcap.com](https://www.companiesmarketcap.com), accessed January 18, 2024; [companiesmarketcap.com](https://www.companiesmarketcap.com), accessed January 18, 2024; [companiesmarketcap.com](https://www.companiesmarketcap.com), accessed January 18, 2024

scandal.<sup>5</sup> For the “Big Three,” a 1.5 percent decrease in stock value would translate into a \$1.8 billion drop for Sony, \$800 million for UMG, and \$277 million for WMG, based on their market caps as of January 2024.<sup>6</sup>

The music industry has followed a playbook for dealing with sexual abuse that shields predators, including musicians, producers, managers, executives, and other behind-the-scenes players, from liability. In many instances, victims of sexual assault at the hands of artists and industry professionals “are silenced with ironclad NDAs, while powerful male executives are protected against a public airing of allegations against them.”<sup>7</sup> Survivors also face retaliation for coming forward, such as getting sued in court, demoted, fired, and/or blacklisted from working in the industry altogether. Further, even in the wake of the #MeToo movement, “fans and industry professionals have continued to support and elevate the careers of men who are accused of harassment, assault, and abuse.”<sup>8</sup>

Meanwhile, “women are ‘forced out’ of the music industry after becoming victims of sexual harassment while perpetrators ‘move up the workforce,’” according to John Shortell, head of equality, diversity, and inclusion at the Musicians’ Union (MU).<sup>9</sup> *Vice* also reported, “those who weren’t on the end of abuse were often pushed out if they didn’t fall in line.” One individual who worked in dance music but left after ten years said on the condition of anonymity, “I always tried to say something if I wasn’t comfortable, or if I saw something that I didn’t like, but a lot of the time when I did that, I was gaslit. I was kind of worked out of situations because people would just gloss over stuff.”<sup>10</sup>

This report sets out to detail the prevalence of sexual abuse and misconduct in the music industry and how its very culture opens the door to such behaviors. Additionally, this report details how major record companies ignored allegations, silenced victims, and even enabled such abuse. The sections that follow illustrate how this inaction and enabling expose the “Big Three” to substantial financial liability as changes are made to the statute of limitations for filing civil claims of sexual misconduct, including laws creating temporary windows to file time-barred claims. These companies also may face shareholder actions filed by activist investors, such as the election of new directors and shareholder resolutions to address these concerns, and shareholder litigation for breach of fiduciary duties and securities violations. Finally, companies can be targeted by investigations from regulators, including legislative bodies.

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<sup>5</sup> [sciencedirect.com](https://www.sciencedirect.com), April 2021

<sup>6</sup> [companiesmarketcap.com](https://www.companiesmarketcap.com), accessed January 18, 2024; [companiesmarketcap.com](https://www.companiesmarketcap.com), accessed January 18, 2024; [companiesmarketcap.com](https://www.companiesmarketcap.com), accessed January 18, 2024

<sup>7</sup> [rollingstone.com](https://www.rollingstone.com), March 14, 2022; [washingtonpost.com](https://www.washingtonpost.com), August 12, 2020

<sup>8</sup> [vice.com](https://www.vice.com), March 15, 2018; [independent.co.uk](https://www.independent.co.uk), May 24, 2023

<sup>9</sup> [independent.co.uk](https://www.independent.co.uk), May 24, 2023

<sup>10</sup> [vice.com](https://www.vice.com), July 25, 2022

## Changes to Statutes of Limitations

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**The creation of window statutes (i.e., lookback periods, to file time-barred claims of sexual abuse and misconduct) and the elimination of certain statutes of limitations has exposed the music industry to significant legal liability.**

In order to hold the music industry accountable for “enabling and profiting off sexual predators,” survivors and advocates have “pointed to recent laws in New York and California that dropped the statute of limitations on sexual misconduct crimes and allowed people to sue their alleged abuser regardless of when the alleged assault took place.” These laws, which may be extended as additional states continue to consider, allow survivors to file civil claims of sexual abuse for actions that occurred when they were adults and/or children.<sup>11</sup>

In New York, there were over 3,800 civil suits filed under the Adult Survivors Act ahead of the closure of the one-year window on Thanksgiving 2023, including a “flurry of attention-grabbing suits” filed against prominent figures in the music industry. *The New York Times* reported that as the sunset date approached, “the number of lawsuits filed — both in State Supreme Court and in the Court of Claims — steadily increased after a campaign to alert people to the deadline. The number of cases filed in State Supreme Court alone rose from 803 on Oct. 31 to 1,397 as of Nov. 22.”<sup>12</sup>

The week before the window closed “brought forward one of the widest sets of allegations to hit the [music] industry in years as renowned artists and executives including Axl Rose, Sean ‘Diddy’ Combs, L.A. Reid, and Jimmy Iovine all faced lawsuits that detailed allegations of sexual abuse.”<sup>13</sup> Combs faced multiple lawsuits, including one filed by his ex-girlfriend, the singer Cassie Ventura, who alleged he “raped, physically abused and sex trafficked her during their decade-long relationship.”<sup>14</sup> Two additional women filed suit against Combs ahead of the deadline, detailing “acts of sexual assault, beatings and forced drugging.”<sup>15</sup> Another lawsuit accused Harve Pierre, former president of Combs’s Bad Boy Entertainment, of sexual harassment, sexual assault, and grooming, and named Bad Boy Entertainment, Bad Boy Records, and Combs Enterprises “as co-defendants, accusing the companies of negligence and gender violence.”<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> [rollingstone.com, February 4, 2023](https://www.rollingstone.com/music/music-news/rollingstone-combats-sexual-abuse-lawsuits-2023-02-04/)

<sup>12</sup> [nytimes.com, November 27, 2023](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/27/nyregion/survivors-act-lawsuits.html); [gothamist.com, December 3, 2023](https://www.gothamist.com/story/2023-12-03/survivors-act-lawsuits/)

<sup>13</sup> [rollingstone.com, November 29, 2023](https://www.rollingstone.com/music/music-news/rollingstone-combats-sexual-abuse-lawsuits-2023-11-29/)

<sup>14</sup> [cbsnews.com, December 6, 2023](https://www.cbsnews.com/news/sexual-abuse-lawsuits-against-sean-diddy-combs-2023-12-06/)

<sup>15</sup> [cbsnews.com, November 24, 2023](https://www.cbsnews.com/news/sexual-abuse-lawsuits-against-sean-diddy-combs-2023-11-24/)

<sup>16</sup> [rollingstone.com, November 22, 2023](https://www.rollingstone.com/music/music-news/rollingstone-combats-sexual-abuse-lawsuits-2023-11-22/)



In an open letter to Combs addressing Ventura’s allegations against him, singer-songwriter Tiffany Red wrote, “Recent events, such as the unveiling of accusations against numerous former record label CEOs and artists for sexual assault due to the Adult Survivors Act in New York, underscore the gravity of the situation. The systemic issues of rape culture and misogyny deeply entrenched in the music industry pose a real threat to so many people’s safety every day in this business. How can we expect meaningful change when senior leadership and superstars face accusations of these crimes?”<sup>17</sup>

## **“The systemic issues of rape culture and misogyny deeply entrenched in the music industry pose a real threat to so many people’s safety...”**

Since the window closed in 2023, Assemblywoman Linda Rosenthal (D-67), one of the sponsors of the Adult Survivors Act, said that “the focus is shifting to new legislation that could create another window for lawsuits or make permanent the ability to file civil lawsuits for sexual assault beyond the statute of limitations in New York State.” State Sen. Brad Hoylman-Sigal, sponsor of the bill in the Senate, echoed this statement, and “Will Barclay, the Republican minority leader in the Assembly, said that since Republicans had supported the original bill, which brought ‘alarming cases to light and provided victims with a path to justice,’ they would consider an expanded window.” Mallory Allen, a partner at PCVA Law who represented clients under the Adult Survivors Act, said that while “a one-year window was a good step, it did not provide enough time to capture everyone who could have a civil claim.”<sup>18</sup>

Some attorneys argued that “reopening the window in New York is necessary particularly because of the lack of awareness around the bill until high-profile suits,” such as the one against Sean “Diddy” Combs, were filed. Mariann Wang, an attorney at Cuti Hecker Wang LLP who represented Cassie Ventura in her lawsuit against Combs, said of the window deadline, “We were fielding and [sic] dozens in the final days, sometimes even in the final hours.” Susan Crumiller, who “filed about a dozen claims through the Survivors Law Project,” also said “her firm has gotten ‘10 times as many calls’” in the week leading up to the closing of New York’s window “compared to the several months before.”<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> [rollingstone.com](https://www.rollingstone.com), December 7, 2023

<sup>18</sup> [nytimes.com](https://www.nytimes.com), November 27, 2023

<sup>19</sup> [rollingstone.com](https://www.rollingstone.com), November 29, 2023; [pbs.org](https://www.pbs.org), December 12, 2023

Previously, New York extended the Child Survivors Act, a similar law that created a one-year window to file time-barred claims if the abuse took place as a minor. The “number of lawsuits filed under that law more than doubled in the second year, from 4,241 to 10,857, according to an analysis by the Sean P. McIlmail Statute of Limitations Research Institute. About 3,500 suits were brought in just the final month — almost the total number of claims filed under the Adult Survivors Act in the past 12 months combined, according to the state Office of Court Administration.”<sup>20</sup>

At the start of 2023, legislation in California created two separate windows for filing claims of time-barred sexual abuse as an adult. One window, which closed at the end of 2023, waived “the statute of limitations entirely” and allowed “survivors to sue specifically over sexual misconduct claims that are tied to allegations of cover-up from other entities such as companies,” as well as “specific employees accused of cover-up.” There were “a string of high-profile California lawsuits filed ahead of the expiration,” including against Jackson 5 member Jermaine Jackson and Mötley Crüe drummer Tommy Lee. A second window allowed survivors to file “misconduct claims dating back to 2009, with accusers having until the end of 2026 to file suit.”<sup>21</sup>

Other states have followed New York and California’s lead in making changes to their statutes of limitations. Effective October 2023, Maryland eliminated the statute of limitations for filing civil claims over sexual abuse perpetuated against minors.<sup>22</sup> Michigan Rep. Julie Brixie introduced a package of bills that “would extend the statute of limitations for criminal sexual conduct damage claims from age 28 to 52,” eliminate the statute of limitations “should the perpetrator be convicted of criminal sexual conduct,” and create “a one-time two year window” to file time-barred claims.<sup>23</sup> California also eliminated the statute of limitations to file claims of child sexual assault for offenses that occur after “the bill takes effect at the start of 2024.”<sup>24</sup>

### **Additional legal venues are opening for survivors to hold perpetrators accountable through changes to statutes of limitations and creating additional protections for survivors.**

Outside of these window statutes, there are also other new legal avenues for survivors to file litigation. In 2021, New York City passed the Gender-Motivated Violence Act, granting survivors until March 2025 to bring a time-barred “civil lawsuit against someone who they say committed violence against them because of their gender.”<sup>25</sup> In December 2023, a lawsuit was filed against

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<sup>20</sup> [gothamist.com](https://gothamist.com), December 3, 2023

<sup>21</sup> [rollingstone.com](https://rollingstone.com), November 29, 2023; [npr.org](https://npr.org), December 30, 2023

<sup>22</sup> [thedailyrecord.com](https://thedailyrecord.com), October 1, 2023

<sup>23</sup> [gand1onews.com](https://gand1onews.com), December 6, 2023

<sup>24</sup> [sfchronicle.com](https://sfchronicle.com), October 10, 2023

<sup>25</sup> [gothamist.com](https://gothamist.com), December 3, 2023

Sean “Diddy” Combs and former Bad Boys president Harve Pierre under this law. The unnamed Jane Doe accused the men “of gang raping her [at Combs’s music studio] in 2003 when she was 17 years old.” The lawsuit “included multiple pictures of Doe in what is allegedly [Combs's] studio, including a picture of her sitting on Combs' lap on the night of the alleged sexual assault.”<sup>26</sup>

In 2023, New York Gov. Kathy Hochul also signed a bill that extended the statute of limitations for filing administrative complaints over discrimination, including gender and racial discrimination, from one to three years.<sup>27</sup> For the 2024 legislative session, a package of bills was introduced to make “it easier for sexual assault survivors to seek justice.” One bill would eliminate the statute of limitations for filing civil claims of sexual abuse that occurred as a child, and another would create a one-year window statute for filing civil claims related to sex trafficking and increase the statute of limitations for that offense.<sup>28</sup>

**“...the onus of prevention — creating safe work environments in the first place — lies with employers.”**

In December 2023, Menaka Fernando, a California attorney focused “on gender-based issues in the workplace,” wrote about how California “passed a range of legal protections and opened new avenues for accountability,” which led to lawsuits against “three major music executives.” Fernando added, “California’s workplace discrimination policies and protections are arguably the strongest in the nation. In addition, in 2022, President Biden signed into law a federal bill that ended forced arbitration for sexual harassment and sexual assault claims. Combined, these laws create important protections that can enable survivors to come forward and get justice after the fact, but the onus of prevention — creating safe work environments in the first place — lies with employers.”<sup>29</sup>

## Shareholder Activism

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**Music companies can be targeted by shareholder activism to hold them accountable for failing to act on sexual misconduct and force changes to corporate culture.**

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<sup>26</sup> [cbsnews.com, December 6, 2023](https://www.cbsnews.com/news/diddy-combs-sexual-assault-lawsuit/)

<sup>27</sup> [workforcebulletin.com, December 1, 2023](https://www.workforcebulletin.com/news/new-york-bill-extends-statute-of-limitations-for-discrimination-complaints/)

<sup>28</sup> [spectrumlocalnews.com, December 19, 2023](https://www.spectrumlocalnews.com/news/legislation/2023/12/19/new-york-bill-extends-statute-of-limitations-for-discrimination-complaints/); [gothamist.com, December 19, 2023](https://www.gothamist.com/news/legislation/2023/12/19/new-york-bill-extends-statute-of-limitations-for-discrimination-complaints/)

<sup>29</sup> [siliconvalley.com, December 20, 2023](https://www.siliconvalley.com/news/legislation/2023/12/20/new-york-bill-extends-statute-of-limitations-for-discrimination-complaints/)

As a result of growing exposure to sexual misconduct claims, the “Big Three” music companies may be subject to shareholder activism, including the election of new directors and passage of shareholder resolutions. In November 2022, Dan McDermott, an adjunct professor of shareholder activism at the University of Pennsylvania Carey School of Law, wrote, “The #MeToo movement, shareholder activism, and the powerful empire of music are about to collide.” McDermott was referring to Dorothy Carvello’s nomination of herself to the board of Warner Music Group (WMG) under a new SEC rule that “allows for shareholders to nominate themselves as directors for election on public company boards – on the same slate as the incumbent directors – rather than separate board slates required previously.” McDermott noted that the change “has far-reaching consequences to shareholder activism and corporate accountability to shareholders.”<sup>30</sup>

## **“The #MeToo movement, shareholder activism, and the powerful empire of music are about to collide.”**

As McDermott wrote, “Carvello is seeking to become WMG’s agitator-in-chief. For years she has alleged sexual assault by current and former WMG executives against herself, other former Warner employees and WMG female artists.” According to McDermott, “Her thesis is simple: Warner Music Group cannot attract top female artists or employees in a corporate culture that she believes is beyond broken. She contends that change must happen from within, not from silencing victims with NDAs and hush money.” Her campaign sought “to force WMG to fix a culture she says is broken.”<sup>31</sup>

Prior to launching her campaign, Carvello and other former employees at WMG’s Atlantic Records accused the label’s founder Ahmet Ertegun of sexual assault and harassment. In December 2022, Carvello filed a lawsuit against WMG, Atlantic Records, Ertegun, former Atlantic co-CEO and chairman Doug Morris, and former A&R executive Jason Flom. Her lawsuit alleged that at a concert in 1988, in the presence of Flom, Ertegun “forcibly pulled down her underwear and exposed her vagina to all present at the club,” and then, he “grabbed her genitals, causing her significant physical pain.”<sup>32</sup> She also claimed “Morris would ‘forcibly kiss’ her on the face and touch her inappropriately on a daily basis,” and “both Morris and Ertegun would suggest that Atlantic would pay for her to get breast augmentation surgery.”<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> [icrinc.com](https://icrinc.com), November 30, 2022

<sup>31</sup> [icrinc.com](https://icrinc.com), November 30, 2022

<sup>32</sup> [japps.courts.state.ny.us](https://japps.courts.state.ny.us), Case No. 952006/2022, filed December 4, 2022

<sup>33</sup> [billboard.com](https://billboard.com), December 5, 2022

In a lawsuit filed in November 2022, Jan Roeg, a former Atlantic talent scout from the mid-1980s to the early 2000s, alleged that Ertegun “sexually harassed and assaulted her throughout her time at the label, masturbating in front of her numerous times, forcing her head to his crotch in attempts to engage in oral sex, digitally penetrating her and, during a dinner in 1990, drugging her, resulting in her getting her stomach pumped.”<sup>34</sup> She said that Atlantic “was aware of Ertegun’s alleged behavior of sexual harassment and assault toward female employees at the company, as well as female business associates, [...] ‘yet the label allowed and enabled it to continue for decades, imposing suffering on and hampering the careers of countless women within and outside the company.’”<sup>35</sup>

Furthermore, Carvello’s lawsuit alleged that when sexual assault or violence “was reported, their victims were routinely paid settlements with corporate funds in exchange for signed non-disclosure agreements.” As an assistant to Ertegun, Carvello said she would regularly open mail to “find Polaroid photographs of him naked, engaged in various sex acts with women, along with letters from women blackmailing [Ertegun].” Following protocol, Carvello would then hand over the blackmail “to another Atlantic Records executive who would make arrangements for the blackmailers to receive cash payments (taken from a safe in Atlantic Records’ office) in exchange for entering into nondisclosure agreements concerning the women’s interactions.”<sup>36</sup>

While Carvello’s nomination was blocked for failing to meet company bylaws, her “novel attempt could set the stage for future bids by activists aiming to bring attention to causes not often discussed in the staid corporate arenas of annual shareholder meetings,” according to *Billboard*. Carvello also said she planned to nominate herself again in the future.<sup>37</sup> Writing about Carvello, McDermott argued, “Corporate boards need to be proactively listening to their shareholders and responding to their concerns. It’s entirely possible that a self-nominated, minority shareholder will be elected.”<sup>38</sup>

**“It’s entirely possible that a self-nominated, minority shareholder will be elected.”**

**Shareholders can publicly air concerns about financial liabilities and request corporate records to investigate corporate wrongdoing.**

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<sup>34</sup> [theguardian.com](https://www.theguardian.com), November 29, 2022; [rollingstone.com](https://www.rollingstone.com), November 28, 2022

<sup>35</sup> [iapps.courts.state.ny.us](https://www.iapps.courts.state.ny.us), Case No. 952003/2022, filed November 28, 2022

<sup>36</sup> [iapps.courts.state.ny.us](https://www.iapps.courts.state.ny.us), Case No. 952006/2022, filed December 4, 2022

<sup>37</sup> [billboard.com](https://www.billboard.com), January 3, 2023

<sup>38</sup> [icrinc.com](https://www.icrinc.com), November 30, 2022

Shareholders can take other actions to bring attention to the failure of music companies to act on claims of sexual misconduct. For instance, before nominating herself to WMG’s board, Carvello sent a letter to WMG’s board of directors “requesting records relating to the company’s investigations into previously-reported sexual misconduct claims and royalties accounting at the label.” The letter said that Carvello had “concerns that WMG’s management is not doing enough to investigate and act upon allegations of sexual misconduct at the company, and not monitoring the distribution of artist royalties in a manner that ensures sound accounting and payment. Both issues have the potential to expose the company to substantial liability and cause great reputational harm to WMG ... [and] raise serious concerns about the truthfulness and accuracy of the company’s statements to investors.”<sup>39</sup>

**“...issues have the potential to expose the company to substantial liability...”**

Carvello filed her request under Section 220 of Delaware’s corporate law. In Delaware, where WMG is incorporated, shareholders can file Section 220 actions “to inspect corporate books and records to investigate possible corporate wrongdoing or mismanagement.” Material received through these requests can be used by shareholders to decide “whether to bring litigation” and “has provided a basis for more particularized allegations, which has resulted in more cases surviving the pleading stage of litigation.” Previously, a shareholder “sued Activision for access to certain documents after filing a 220 complaint last October [2021] following allegations of sexual harassment and workplace misconduct.” Carvello also said she was “exploring other legal options to file similar requests” at Sony Music and UMG.<sup>40</sup>

## Shareholder Litigation

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**Music companies may be subjected to shareholder litigation for enabling and perpetuating sexual misconduct, as other companies have been in the wake of #MeToo.**

The music industry’s failure to act on claims of sexual misconduct, and in some cases where executives perpetuate it, places these companies at risk of shareholder litigation for breach of fiduciary duties and violations of securities laws. Law professors writing in the *Columbia Law Review* found that from January 2017 to August 2018, in the wake of the #MeToo movement,

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<sup>39</sup> [billboard.com](https://www.billboard.com), September 13, 2022

<sup>40</sup> [rollingstone.com](https://www.rollingstone.com), September 13, 2022; [corpgov.law.harvard.edu](https://corpgov.law.harvard.edu), October 3, 2022; [sec.gov](https://sec.gov), accessed December 22, 2023

there were lawsuits filed by shareholders at eight publicly traded companies “against corporate directors and officers on grounds related to reported sexual misconduct.” They argued, “What a CEO does behind closed doors *is* the board’s business [emphasis in original],” and concluded “that corporate and securities law can publicize the scope and severity of sexual harassment, incentivize proactive and productive interventions by corporate fiduciaries, and punish individuals and entities that commit, conceal, and abet sexual misconduct in the workplace.”<sup>41</sup>

## **“What a CEO does behind closed doors is the board’s business...”**

There have been indications that shareholder litigation may target the “Big Three” over sexual misconduct. In January 2023, after Carvello’s sexual harassment and assault lawsuit was filed against WMG and former WMG executives, at least one law firm announced an investigation into “whether members of Warner Music’s board of directors or senior management failed to manage Warner Music in an acceptable manner, in breach of their fiduciary duties, and whether Warner Music and its shareholders have suffered damages as a result.”<sup>42</sup> Along the same lines, in the wake of the #MeToo movement, Twenty-First Century Fox settled shareholder claims over sexual harassment at Fox News, and CBS settled a securities class action alleging the company “lost money when harassment claims surfaced against ousted CEO Leslie Moonves.”<sup>43</sup>

### **Record companies have continued to work with artists publicly accused of sexual abuse and artists who publicly admitted to misconduct, allowing abuse to continue.**

High-profile cases in recent years show that record companies continued to work with artists publicly accused of sexual misconduct. For instance, according to a *Washington Post* investigation published in May 2018, “For more than two decades, the recording industry turned a blind eye to [R. Kelly’s] behavior as his career continued to thrive and he was afforded every luxury of a chart-topping superstar.” The disregard for Kelly’s sexual misconduct “played out on many levels, from the billionaire record executive who first signed the dynamic young vocalist in the early 1990s to the low-paid assistants who arranged flights, food and bathroom breaks for his traveling entourage of young women.”<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> [chicagounbound.uchicago.edu](http://chicagounbound.uchicago.edu), October 2018

<sup>42</sup> [businesswire.com](http://businesswire.com), January 18, 2023

<sup>43</sup> [reuters.com](http://reuters.com), November 20, 2017; [hollywoodreporter.com](http://hollywoodreporter.com), April 18, 2022

<sup>44</sup> [washingtonpost.com](http://washingtonpost.com), May 4, 2018; [variety.com](http://variety.com), January 18, 2019; [billboard.com](http://billboard.com), April 28, 2023

Despite over 20 years of alleged “sexually abusive behavior by Kelly toward young women” and minors, “RCA — Kelly’s label home for the entirety of his solo career, both directly and as part of its partnership with Jive Records (which merged with RCA in 2007) — has stood by the singer, primarily, sources tell *Variety*, because he has never been convicted of a crime and has steadfastly maintained his innocence.”<sup>45</sup> In 2002, as “police were investigating a sex tape that appeared to show the R&B superstar with a 14-year-old girl,” David McPherson, an executive at Sony’s Epic Records, willfully ignored the sex tape. Rocky Bivens, an assistant to Kelly, recalled telling McPherson, “if I watch the tape and that’s him, I’m gone and you’re not getting those records. [...] I’m glad you did not watch those tapes.” Larry Khan, then a senior vice president for marketing at Jive, also “said he had no problem working with Kelly even after seeing a clip of the singer’s sex tape.”<sup>46</sup>

**“...if I watch the tape and that’s him, I’m gone and you’re not getting those records.”**

Record labels also continued working with artists who openly admitted to having sexual relationships with underage girls. In 2011, Steven Tyler wrote about “a relationship with an underage girl both in his own memoir and in Aerosmith’s autobiography.” Julia Holcomb, Tyler’s victim, filed suit against Tyler for the sexual assault in December 2022 in California under the state’s window statute for childhood sexual abuse, noting she was 16 years old when their three-year relationship started. She also alleged he convinced her “mother to grant him guardianship over her,” allowing her to live with him and “more easily travel with her without criminal prosecution.”<sup>47</sup>

In another case, Anthony Kiedis of the Red Hot Chili Peppers was convicted of misdemeanors for sexual battery and indecent exposure in 1989 after he “exposed himself and touched his crotch to a woman’s face against her wishes” at a concert.<sup>48</sup> He also admitted in his 2004 autobiography to “having sex with a 14-year-old fan in Louisiana, even after he knew she was underage.” He claimed the girl told him “her father was chief of police in her hometown and ‘the entire state of Louisiana is looking for me.’” Nevertheless, Kiedis claimed, “I wasn’t incredibly scared.”<sup>49</sup> In 2016, former Epic Records executive Julie Farman described the industry’s disregard for allegations of sexual misconduct against Kiedis and the Red Hot Chili Peppers. She

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<sup>45</sup> [bbc.com, February 24, 2023](https://www.bbc.com/news/entertainment-arts-57111111)

<sup>46</sup> [washingtonpost.com, May 4, 2018](https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/local/2018/05/04/rca-kelly-reynolds-sex-tape/2018/05/04/)

<sup>47</sup> [rollingstone.com, December 29, 2022](https://www.rollingstone.com/music/news/steven-tyler-sexual-assault-lawsuit-2022-12-29/); [rollingstone.com, December 29, 2022](https://www.rollingstone.com/music/news/steven-tyler-sexual-assault-lawsuit-2022-12-29/); [theguardian.com, September 13, 2021](https://www.theguardian.com/music/2022/09/13/steven-tyler-sexual-assault-lawsuit); [Los Angeles County Superior Court](https://www.losangelescourts.org/cases/22TRCV01604), Case No. 22TRCV01604, filed February 1, 2023

<sup>48</sup> [faroutmagazine.co.uk, November 5, 2021](https://www.faroutmagazine.co.uk/news/anthony-kiedis-sexual-battery-1989); [washingtonpost.com, May 13, 1990](https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/local/1990/05/13/kiedis-sexual-battery-1989/)

<sup>49</sup> [nj.com, August 18, 2022](https://www.nj.com/news/entertainment/2022/08/anthony-kiedis-sexual-battery-1989.html); Kansas City Star, May 11, 2006



wrote, “No one in the music industry really gave a shit — as their legal issues made headlines, they left EMI, and every label wanted to sign them. Including Epic. I was horrified.”<sup>50</sup>

## Investigations by Regulators

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### **Music companies may be subjected to regulatory investigations over sexual harassment and misconduct, with executives being called to testify before legislative bodies.**

The music industry could become the target of investigations examining sexual misconduct, which the sporting world has seen in recent years. For instance, in January 2018, the U.S. Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee “opened an investigation into USA Gymnastics (USAG), the US Olympic Committee (USOC) and Michigan State University (MSU).” The investigation was centered on “the USOC’s systemic failures to protect athletes from sexual abuse and the reported filing of a non-disclosure agreement (NDA) to silence a victim of abuse in relation to the Larry Nassar abuse case.”<sup>51</sup>

In the United Kingdom, the House of Commons Women and Equalities Select Committee opened an inquiry in June 2022 focused on misogyny specifically in the music industry “as part of its body of work looking into how policies and attitudes in society can change to help tackle Violence Against Women and Girls.” John Shortell, head of equality, diversity, and inclusion at the Musicians’ Union (MU), testified before the committee in May 2023 that “women are ‘forced out’ of the music industry after becoming victims of sexual harassment while perpetrators ‘move up the workforce.’” Shortell said that “‘fear’ of workers losing their jobs has made ‘sexual harassment more likely and under-reported in the music industry.’”<sup>52</sup> For example, a 2019 report from the Musicians’ Union found that about half of musicians were “forced to endure sexual harassment in the workplace” but 85 percent did not report it, “predominantly due to the ‘culture of the industry’.”<sup>53</sup>

In one hearing, senior executives at the UK divisions of Sony Music, WMG, and UMG were pressed on their companies’ responses to sexual misconduct, including what Dame Caroline Dinenage, a Member of Parliament (MP), characterized as the “enormous disconnect between what you are telling us and what we have heard.” When asked about the number of sexual harassment claims, the UMG executive claimed there was one report in five years, WMG said

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<sup>50</sup> [thegrayishcarpet.com](http://thegrayishcarpet.com), April 20, 2016

<sup>51</sup> [moran.senate.gov](http://moran.senate.gov), accessed August 4, 2023

<sup>52</sup> [committees.parliament.uk](http://committees.parliament.uk), June 9, 2022; [independent.co.uk](http://independent.co.uk), May 24, 2023

<sup>53</sup> [independent.co.uk](http://independent.co.uk), October 23, 2019

there were four in seven years, and the Sony executive cited five in 10 years. Dinenage observed that this was “very low compared to the levels that we have had reported to us.” All of the UK executives also denied that their companies used NDAs for sexual harassment. MP Jackie Doyle-Price concluded, “given what we are seeing here is a disconnect between what you are telling us and what we are getting from the industry, it does need to be driven at the highest level. I ask you to take that back to your boards before we finish our report.”<sup>54</sup>

Furthermore, WMG’s UK executive continued to deny knowledge of details about NDAs and said she “cannot speak about individual cases” when pressed about Samantha Maloney’s sexual harassment accusation against WMG CEO Stephen Cooper.<sup>55</sup> Maloney, a former vice president of A&R at Warner Records, claimed in a letter to Warner that “she’d been propositioned by WMG chief executive Stephen Cooper.” She received a \$240,000 settlement from WMG and signed an NDA in 2017 “that would perpetually silence her regarding speaking out about a sexual harassment incident she allegedly experienced while working at Warner Music Group’s flagship record label.”<sup>56</sup> At a subsequent UK hearing, when questioned about denials by these executives, singer Rebecca Ferguson said, “NDAs are very common in the music industry,” and she called for banning the use of NDAs, saying, “the British court system is being used against women.”<sup>57</sup>

At a hearing as part of this inquiry, former BBC Radio DJ Annie Macmanus further pushed back on the claims made by executives, saying, “The people I spoke to felt infuriated to the point where they wanted me to say this here—to say that they did not experience a lot of what these women were saying.” Macmanus testified that “there is a ‘tidal wave’ of revelations about sexual assault in the music industry waiting to be told,” adding, “the system is kind of rigged against women.” Singer Rebecca Ferguson said, “Misogyny in music is the tip of the iceberg of the things that are happening behind the scenes. If you read the unredacted version of my written evidence, you will see how sinister music has become.”<sup>58</sup>

**“...there is a ‘tidal wave’ of revelations about sexual assault in the music industry waiting to be told...”**

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<sup>54</sup> [committees.parliament.uk](https://committees.parliament.uk), June 28, 2023

<sup>55</sup> [committees.parliament.uk](https://committees.parliament.uk), June 28, 2023

<sup>56</sup> [rollingstone.com](https://www.rollingstone.com), March 14, 2022

<sup>57</sup> [committees.parliament.uk](https://committees.parliament.uk), September 13, 2023

<sup>58</sup> [committees.parliament.uk](https://committees.parliament.uk), September 13, 2023; [BBC News](https://www.bbc.com/news), September 13, 2023

## **Investigations and other public pressure may lead to calls for additional protections for artists and employees and regulatory changes in the music industry.**

New York passed “one of the country’s first #metoo statutes” that limited the use of nondisclosure agreements in sexual harassment settlements, and this law was expanded over the years to increase protections. In November 2023, amendments to the law restricted the use of nondisclosure agreements “involving claims of harassment or retaliation in violation of laws prohibiting discrimination.” The amendments also prohibited agreements that require victims to sign a non-disparagement clause and pay damages or forfeit the settlement for violations.<sup>59</sup> In 2019, legislation in California also “went into effect that prevented employers from imposing non-disclosure agreements (NDAs) as a condition of settlement of a civil or administrative action in which claims of sexual harassment or discrimination based on sex had been asserted.”<sup>60</sup>

In her testimony in the UK, singer Rebecca Ferguson said, “Music has become that unregulated that people feel they can threaten people’s lives. They feel like they can use violence. They feel like they can use sexual violence.” She called for licensing of people within the industry, pointing out that her husband who is a football and cricket agent is required to have a license, sit through exams, and pass those exams to be a manager. She said, “Music does not have that, and I find that really concerning and very odd.” She also pointed out lobbying by the music industry when legislative changes were being considered, such as one bill to increase pay for musicians. As stated in Ferguson’s opening remarks, “What is scary is that it will only get worse if the Government doesn’t act.”<sup>61</sup>

**“Music has become that unregulated that people feel they can threaten people’s lives.”**

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<sup>59</sup> [natlawreview.com](https://natlawreview.com), January 8, 2024

<sup>60</sup> [ebglaw.com](https://ebglaw.com), November 19, 2021

<sup>61</sup> [committees.parliament.uk](https://committees.parliament.uk), September 13, 2023

# **Abuse by Artists & Musicians**

# Ryan Adams

## Allegations

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**In 2019, the *New York Times* published an investigation detailing singer Ryan Adams’s alleged pattern of manipulation that involved dangling career opportunities before female artists while pursuing sexual relationships with them.**

In February 2019, the *New York Times* published an investigation detailing sexual misconduct claims against singer Ryan Adams. Speaking with the *New York Times*, “seven women and more than a dozen associates described a pattern of manipulative behavior in which Adams dangled career opportunities while simultaneously pursuing female artists for sex. In some cases, they said, he would turn domineering and vengeful, jerking away his offers of support when spurned, and subjecting women to emotional and verbal abuse, and harassment in texts and on social media. The accounts have been corroborated by family members or friends who were present at the time, as well as by correspondence from Adams reviewed by *The New York Times*.”<sup>62</sup>

**Adams pursued an online relationship with an aspiring teenage bass player who was a minor and engaged in graphic phone sex with her on video calls. Reportedly, Adams, who was nearly 40 years old at the time, dangled lucrative career opportunities before his victim.**

Adams, who regularly communicated with fans via social media, met an aspiring bass player named Ava on Twitter when she was 14 years old and he was nearly 40. Ava “excitedly messaged him to say hello after she followed him and he followed her back.” In online conversations, Adams “floated big ideas about her career prospects in their earliest messages, eventually suggesting that she and another teenager start a band that he could produce.”<sup>63</sup>

However, “their correspondence about music turned into graphic texting. Eventually, Ava said, they conducted video calls on Skype, where Adams exposed himself during phone sex.” In text messages during a nine-month period when Ava was between 15 and 16, “Adams questioned Ava repeatedly about her age, and sometimes she said she was older than she was. Though he did not seem convinced, their sexual conversations continued. ‘i would get in trouble if someone knew we talked like this,’ Adams wrote to her in November 2014.”<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> [nytimes.com, February 13, 2019](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/02/13/nyregion/ryan-adams-sexual-misconduct.html)

<sup>63</sup> [nytimes.com, February 13, 2019](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/02/13/nyregion/ryan-adams-sexual-misconduct.html)

<sup>64</sup> [nytimes.com, February 13, 2019](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/02/13/nyregion/ryan-adams-sexual-misconduct.html)

A constant theme in their conversations “was Adams fretting about Ava’s age — and asking to keep their exchanges secret — while also indulging in sexual scenarios. ‘I never see pics of you anymore,’ Adams wrote in November 2014, when he had just turned 40 and Ava was newly 16. ‘You were blowing my mind.’ He had pet names for her body parts. Days later, Adams expressed anxiety: ‘If people knew they would say I was like R Kelley lol,’ he wrote. Yet within 10 minutes, the conversation again turned explicit. ‘I just want you to touch your nipple,’ he texted, before again asking about her age. ‘And tell me that your mom is not gonna kill me if she finds out we even text.’” Adams pled that Ava “tell him she was 18 — ‘You have to convince me,’ he wrote — Ava at times said she was. Sometimes he asked to see identification — ‘in the hottest way that has ever been done Lol.’ She never showed him any ID.”<sup>65</sup>

Ava told the *New York Times* that as their communication went on, “she grew uneasy about their unequal dynamic. Once, she said, the two agreed to video chat, but when they connected on Skype, Adams was already naked. ‘It was just sexual power,’ Ava said. As their relationship waned, Adams returned to the possibility of recording together. But for Ava, the idea that she would be objectified or have to sleep with people to get ahead ‘just totally put me off to the whole idea’ of being a musician, she said. She never played another gig.”<sup>66</sup>

## Retaliation Against Victims

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**Adams reportedly pursued aspiring female artists with intense flattery, mixing professional opportunities with sexual pursuits. When relationships did not progress, Adams harassed female artists and threatened professional retaliation.**

Singer Phoebe Bridgers was among the women, according to the *New York Times*, who “were subjected to Adams’s intense flattery and a bait and switch in which professional opportunities would be commingled with sexual come-ons.” When she was 20, “Adams invited her to the Pax-Am studio one night in fall 2014. ‘There was a mythology around him,’ she said. ‘It seemed like he had the power to propel people forward.’” After she performed a song for Adams, he “gave her a pricey vintage guitar, she said, and told her to return to record with him the next day. Beguiled by Adams’s energy and enthusiasm, Bridgers brought her best songs. Adams proposed putting them out as a 7-inch vinyl single on his label, setting her on a professional path.”<sup>67</sup>

As they discussed Bridgers’s potential record, “Adams started sending Bridgers flirty texts, she said, and a whirlwind romance commenced. Bridgers said the singer began discussing marriage

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<sup>65</sup> [nytimes.com, February 13, 2019](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/02/13/nytimes.com)

<sup>66</sup> [nytimes.com, February 13, 2019](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/02/13/nytimes.com)

<sup>67</sup> [nytimes.com, February 13, 2019](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/02/13/nytimes.com)

less than a week into their relationship, and insisted that she open for him on his European tour in a few weeks — ‘a golden pillar of success,’ she recalled. Adams told Bridgers’s mother that it was a ‘once-in-a-lifetime opportunity’ to have someone like him looking out for her.”<sup>68</sup>

However, “Adams’s attention turned obsessive and emotionally abusive, Bridgers said. He began barraging her with texts, insisting that she prove her whereabouts, or leave social situations to have phone sex, and threatening suicide if she didn’t reply immediately.” Eventually, Bridgers broke off her relationship with Adams, who “became evasive about releasing the music they had recorded together and rescinded the offer to open his upcoming concerts.”<sup>69</sup>

Even after their relationship ended, Bridgers said “Adams continued to tease opportunities while pursuing her. He offered her a few dates opening for him on tour in 2017, and after much discussion with her manager about Adams’s behavior, Bridgers said she accepted because it was a big opportunity before the release of her debut album.” On the first day on tour, Bridgers said Adams asked her to bring something to his hotel room. Bridgers told the *New York Times*, “I came upstairs and he was completely nude.”<sup>70</sup>

Like Bridgers, two other “female singer-songwriters, who declined to be identified for fear of retribution, described a similar pattern of behavior from Adams: raving about their work and offering tour spots amid aggressive romantic pursuit, followed by harassing messages and threats of professional retaliation when the relationships did not progress as he wanted.”<sup>71</sup>

## Continued Profit for UMG

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**Adams’s Pax-Am label was connected to UMG’s Capitol Music Group but was dropped following sexual misconduct allegations. However, Adams’s music remains available on major streaming platforms where his records continue to generate royalties for UMG.**

Adams’s “Pax-Am label was connected to Capitol Music Group, a major conglomerate, and an opening slot on one of his sold-out tours could introduce an emerging artist to fans and business partners.” Notably, Capitol Music Group is “a subsidiary of Universal Music Group.” Until 2018, Adams was managed by John Silva for over a decade, “who has worked with Nirvana, Beck and St. Vincent.”<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> [nytimes.com, February 13, 2019](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/02/13/arts/music/bridgeters-adams.html)

<sup>69</sup> [nytimes.com, February 13, 2019](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/02/13/arts/music/bridgeters-adams.html)

<sup>70</sup> [nytimes.com, February 13, 2019](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/02/13/arts/music/bridgeters-adams.html)

<sup>71</sup> [nytimes.com, February 13, 2019](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/02/13/arts/music/bridgeters-adams.html)

<sup>72</sup> [nytimes.com, February 13, 2019](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/02/13/arts/music/bridgeters-adams.html); [universalmusic.com](https://www.universalmusic.com), accessed August 30, 2023

Capitol “dropped Adams’ indie label, Pax Am, from a distribution deal” following his sexual misconduct scandal. However, as of January 2024, Adams’s music was still available on streaming services such as Spotify, Apple Music, and Amazon Music where it was generating royalties for UMG.<sup>73</sup>

## Jimmie Allen

### Allegations & Criminal Complaint

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**Country singer Jimmie Allen allegedly raped and sexually abused a woman who worked as his travelling assistant. Allen’s victim alleged that he made sexually charged comments about her in front of label representatives.**

In a May 2023 lawsuit, a woman who worked as a member of singer Jimmie Allen’s management team alleged that “the country star subjected her to a ‘torrential cycle’ of ongoing abuse and harassment. Her lawsuit claims that Allen ‘made clear her job was dependent on her staying silent about his conduct.’”<sup>74</sup>

According to the woman’s lawsuit, who was not named to protect her identity, “Allen raped her and repeatedly subjected her to sexual abuse and harassment over a period of 18 months.” Prior to a May 2021 appearance on “The Ellen DeGeneres Show” to promote his children’s book, “Allen allegedly assaulted this woman as they traveled together, groping her breasts on the plane, pushing his erect penis against her body in public and masturbating in front of her at the hotel where they were both staying, the woman told *Variety*. Once they left the taping and got into the car, she says he forced his fingers into her vagina while she tried to yank his hand away.”<sup>75</sup>

Additionally, “Allen allegedly raped this same woman during a different work trip to Los Angeles, in March 2021, when he was filming an episode of ‘American Idol’ as a celebrity guest.” In her lawsuit, the woman claimed “that following a business dinner after the ‘Idol’ taping, she woke up naked in her hotel room in severe pain and bleeding vaginally, having remembered nothing of what happened the night before. She says Allen was laying next to her in bed, and

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<sup>73</sup> Streaming Services: Amazon Music, Apple Music, & Spotify, accessed January 16, 2024; [variety.com](https://www.variety.com), [June 3, 2022](https://www.variety.com)

<sup>74</sup> [variety.com](https://www.variety.com), [May 11, 2023](https://www.variety.com); [uscourts.gov](https://www.uscourts.gov), Case No. 3:2023cv00477, filed May 11, 2023

<sup>75</sup> [variety.com](https://www.variety.com), [May 11, 2023](https://www.variety.com)



insisted she take a Plan B pill. She realized she had lost her virginity through no choice of her own and felt she had betrayed her faith.”<sup>76</sup>

In her lawsuit, the woman alleged “that Allen raped her while choking her, sexually abused her at red lights when she drove him to and from business events and looked at porn on her work computer. Jane Doe tells *Variety* that she said ‘no’ and tried to push Allen away during many sexual interactions, and after she had been allegedly coerced and forced to have sexual intercourse with Allen, she would regularly bleed, cry uncontrollably and run to the bathroom to vomit. Despite these signs, she says Allen failed to acknowledge her physical and emotional pain.”<sup>77</sup>

In one instance, “Allen allegedly made comments loudly in front of representatives from his label, BBR Music Group, about whether Jane Doe was on birth control. The suit says that during a phone call in May 2020, just one month after Jane Doe was hired to work with Allen, the singer asked if she was a virgin.”<sup>78</sup>

**Allen was accused of sexually assaulting another woman he met on a flight during a trip to Las Vegas. Allen allegedly recorded the assault in secret.**

In June 2023, a second lawsuit was filed against Allen by “a woman who said she met Allen on a plane. She alleged that Allen secretly filmed her on his phone during a sexual assault. After discovering the phone, she said she took it from the hotel room and reported the incident to police.”<sup>79</sup>

According to her complaint, the woman met Allen in May 2022 on a flight to Nashville. After she exited the plane, Allen’s bodyguard, Charles Hurd, approached her and “said that Allen wanted Plaintiff’s phone number and suggested they could meet that evening in Nashville.” Over the next two months, the woman and Allen “spoke via FaceTime or exchanged text messages several times per day. Over time, Allen expressed his love for her and told her he could see a future together. He told her he wanted to have children together and that he could see she would make a good stepmother for his children.”<sup>80</sup>

After maintaining a long-distance relationship, the woman agreed to meet with Allen in person in Las Vegas “where he was scheduled for several public appearances.” In Las Vegas, the woman met Allen in his hotel suite, where she “willingly joined Allen in the bedroom.” She “told Allen

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<sup>76</sup> [variety.com, May 11, 2023](https://www.variety.com/2023/05/11/entertainment/news/justin-bieber-accused-sexual-assault-1235858801/)

<sup>77</sup> [variety.com, May 11, 2023](https://www.variety.com/2023/05/11/entertainment/news/justin-bieber-accused-sexual-assault-1235858801/)

<sup>78</sup> [variety.com, May 11, 2023](https://www.variety.com/2023/05/11/entertainment/news/justin-bieber-accused-sexual-assault-1235858801/)

<sup>79</sup> [apnews.com, June 12, 2023](https://www.apnews.com/2023/06/12/justin-bieber-accused-sexual-assault-1235858801/)

<sup>80</sup> [uscourts.gov](https://uscourts.gov/cases/3:2023cv00582), Case No. 3:2023cv00582, filed June 9, 2023

she was not on birth control and repeatedly told him she did not want him to ejaculate inside her. He told her he would respect her request. Yet, as their encounter progressed, Allen penetrated Plaintiff during sex with his penis and without a condom. Allen told Plaintiff he wanted to get her pregnant. Plaintiff said no. Plaintiff told Allen to pull out before he ejaculated, again repeating that she was not on birth control, and she did not want to get pregnant. He refused. She repeatedly told him to pull out, but he did not and instead ejaculated inside her.”<sup>81</sup>

Following their encounter, the woman got up to leave the hotel room in distress, while Allen passed out. According to her complaint, “As she walked past the closet in the bedroom, she was surprised when the interior light came on inside the closet. The closet door was a sliding door with slats and was partially open. She opened the closet door and found a cell phone focused on the bed, recording the scene.” When the woman could not awaken Allen to delete the video, she “took the phone with her.” Upon returning to Nashville, Jane Doe 2 “reported the assault and the surreptitious recording. The local police department told her they would report the incident to the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police.”<sup>82</sup>

## Silencing & Retaliation Against Victims

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**After one of Allen’s victims told her employer, management firm Wide Open Music, about her sexual assault and harassment allegations, the company dropped the singer. However, they also fired the victim.**

In addition to Allen, one woman who accused Allen of rape also sued her former employer, Wide Open Music, and its founder, Ash Bowers, “for gross negligence and participating in a venture engaged in sex trafficking, among other counts.” In 2016, Bowers discovered Allen, “and with his management firm, he helped catapult the performer to country music superstardom. He is also credited as a producer and songwriter on all of his albums. In two conversations with *Variety*, and in the lawsuit, the woman claims she was manipulated and groomed by Allen into a sexually abusive relationship that lasted for over a year and a half.” The lawsuit alleged that despite being aware of Allen’s behavior, the company assigned the woman “to be his Day-to-Day Manager anyway. Wide Open Music did not adequately warn or prepare Plaintiff for, or protect her from, the extreme sexual harassment, abuse, grooming, and manipulation she would endure in order to keep her job.”<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> [uscourts.gov](https://uscourts.gov), Case No. 3:2023cv00582, filed June 9, 2023

<sup>82</sup> [uscourts.gov](https://uscourts.gov), Case No. 3:2023cv00582, filed June 9, 2023

<sup>83</sup> [variety.com](https://variety.com), [May 11, 2023](https://variety.com)

The woman’s lawsuit alleged that Bowers was aware of Allen’s behavior, even warning during her hiring process that the singer “could be challenging by pushing inappropriate boundaries.” Bowers told her “that Allen was promiscuous but ‘harmless,’ implying that it was inevitable that Allen would make sexual advances” towards her.<sup>84</sup>

After nearly 18 months of abuse, the woman met with Bowers in October 2022 “to disclose that ‘she had been raped and sexually abused,’ the lawsuit says, and ‘told him she could not put up with Allen’s abuse any longer, and asked that she be reassigned.’ (This was the first time she informed Bowers of any alleged physical assault.) As she was sharing her allegations of continuous abuse on the job, Bowers suddenly excused himself from the meeting, the suit claims, telling Jane Doe, ‘I can’t hear any more of this.’” Rather than being reassigned, Wide Open Music placed the woman “on leave and then fired her.”<sup>85</sup>

Furthermore, the woman claimed she was “not the first female employee to be terminated from Wide Open Music after speaking up about Allen’s alleged conduct. Before Jane Doe was hired as Allen’s day-to-day manager, the company had fired Allen’s previous day-to-day manager after she ‘defended another woman who was the target of Allen’s sexual advances,’ the suit claims. Given that Wide Open Music had fired Allen’s previous manager (who was later rehired at the company in another division), Jane Doe ‘understood that her job was dependent on tolerating Allen’s misconduct,’ her attorney writes.”<sup>86</sup>

**A hair and makeup assistant who witnessed Allen’s misconduct was fired after she reported his behavior to his management company. Allen subsequently required his staff to sign non-disclosure agreements.**

According to Jane Doe’s complaint against Allen alleging sexual misconduct, in April 2021, Allen “opened a pornography website on” her work-issued computer. The incident was witnessed by Allen’s hair and makeup assistant who reported it to Bowers, Jane Doe’s supervisor. Subsequently, the makeup assistant “was fired for being a ‘snitch.’” Allen then “required anyone that he hired to sign a non-disclosure agreement.”<sup>87</sup>

**Allen allegedly videotaped sexual encounters with his victims to use as blackmail.**

According to a lawsuit filed by one of Allen’s victims in May 2023, she alleged that Allen “videotaped multiple sexual encounters in order to blackmail her to stay silent.”<sup>88</sup> Another

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<sup>84</sup> [uscourts.gov](https://uscourts.gov), Case No. 3:2023cv00477, filed May 11, 2023

<sup>85</sup> [variety.com](https://variety.com), May 11, 2023; [uscourts.gov](https://uscourts.gov), Case No. 3:2023cv00477, filed May 11, 2023

<sup>86</sup> [variety.com](https://variety.com), May 11, 2023

<sup>87</sup> [uscourts.gov](https://uscourts.gov), Case No. 3:2023cv00477, filed May 11, 2023

<sup>88</sup> [uscourts.gov](https://uscourts.gov), Case No. 3:2023cv00477, filed May 11, 2023

victim, who Allen met on a flight, alleged that he assaulted her in a Las Vegas hotel room. When leaving the hotel room, the victim alleged in a lawsuit that “she discovered that Allen had surreptitiously and, without her consent, placed his cell phone in the closet facing the bed and had been videotaping the entire event.” The woman “had not consented to being recorded and did not know what he intended to do with the recording.” The woman could not wake Allen, who passed out after the assault, so she “took the cell phone, turned it into the police when she returned home, and made a police report.”<sup>89</sup>

### **Months after Allen’s victims came forward, the country singer filed counterclaims against them.**

In July 2023, Allen “filed counterclaims against both of his accusers.” Allen “said in a statement that his goal in responding to the women in court is to ‘protect my reputation and refute these claims that have caused severe damage to my family, mental health and business.’”<sup>90</sup>

In a statement to *People*, Beth Fegan, the attorney representing Allen’s accusers, said “that Allen’s filings are ‘what we’d expect — claims that all his encounters with Jane Doe 1 and Jane Doe 2 were consensual.’” Fegan noted, “It is becoming increasingly common for perpetrators to countersue their victims, claiming defamation. This is a concerning trend, one designed to convince victims that if they speak out, they will be the target of spurious litigation.”<sup>91</sup>

## **Continued Profit for BBR**

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### **Allen was dropped by his record label, BBR Music Group, and agency after public accusations of rape and sexual assault were made against him. However, his music remains on major streaming platforms where they continue to generate royalties.**

Following the public accusations of sexual assault and harassment, Allen was “was dropped by his record label, BBR Music Group, his agency, UTA, and his publicity firm Full Coverage Communications. He was also removed from the performer lineup at CMA Fest in June [2023].”<sup>92</sup> However, as of January 2024, Allen’s music was still available on streaming services such as Spotify, Apple Music, and Amazon Music where it was generating royalties for BBR Music Group.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> [uscourts.gov](https://uscourts.gov), Case No. 3:2023cv00582, filed June 9, 2023

<sup>90</sup> [people.com](https://people.com), July 13, 2023

<sup>91</sup> [people.com](https://people.com), July 13, 2023

<sup>92</sup> [people.com](https://people.com), July 13, 2023

<sup>93</sup> Streaming Services: Amazon Music, Apple Music, & Spotify, accessed January 16, 2024; [variety.com](https://variety.com), June 3, 2022

# Nick Carter

## Allegations & Criminal Complaint

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**A former member of 2000s girl group Dream, Melissa Schuman alleged Nick Carter raped her in 2002. She said she was first introduced to Carter when she was a minor, and their management teams encouraged them to date.**

In April 2023, Melissa Schuman, “a former member of the 2000s girl group Dream,” sued Backstreet Boys singer Nick Carter “for alleged sexual assault and battery,” according to the *Los Angeles Times*. In the lawsuit, Schuman accused “Carter of sexually assaulting her in 2002 in Santa Monica when he was 22 and she was 18.” Schuman alleged “that Carter drugged her and raped her after she told him ‘over and over’ that she didn’t want to have sex until marriage. She also claims that Carter performed oral sex on her ‘against her will’ and ‘demanded’ she perform oral sex on him after she refused to do so.” In addition to Carter, Schuman filed suit against unnamed defendants that included “agents, representatives and/or employees” of Carter.<sup>94</sup>

Notably, Schuman’s lawsuit came “five years after Los Angeles County prosecutors declined to file charges against the Backstreet Boys singer.” In 2018, Schuman reported to Santa Monica police “that Carter raped her, but prosecutors opted not to pursue the case because the statute of limitations for the alleged crime expired in 2013.” With her 2023 lawsuit, “she is now able ‘for the first time in over a decade’ to take legal action against Carter because the statute of limitations window for adult survivors of sexual assault opened this year.”<sup>95</sup>

At the time of the alleged rape, Schuman’s group Dream was a “multi-platinum girl group,” which was signed to Sean “Puffy” Combs’s label, Bad Boy Records. According to the complaint in the case, Schuman “spent her high school years on the road performing throughout the United States and overseas with” the band. Dream’s production company “had control of the girls’ everyday lives. They had a tutor who traveled with them, and they rarely had more than a few days off at a time.” As Dream’s success continued, the group “became a staple of MTV’s juggernaut Total Request Live (TRL) and were often referred to as ‘P. Diddy’s Dream Team.’”<sup>96</sup>

In February 2001, when Schuman was 16, Dream “filmed a video for their song ‘This is Me (Remix).’” During the filming, Schuman’s “managers told her that Defendant Nick Carter, who

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<sup>94</sup> [latimes.com](https://www.latimes.com), April 12, 2023; [lacourt.org](https://www.lacourt.org), Case No. 23SMCV01577, filed April 11, 2023

<sup>95</sup> [latimes.com](https://www.latimes.com), April 12, 2023

<sup>96</sup> [lacourt.org](https://www.lacourt.org), Case No. 23SMCV01577, filed April 11, 2023

was age 21, thought she was ‘cute’ and that he ‘wanted to talk to her.’” Schuman’s management team and Carter’s team arranged for him “to call [Schuman] to speak to him on the phone during the video shoot.” However, Schuman was not interested in “Carter romantically and told her management team that she had a boyfriend.” Even though Schuman was a minor at the time, her “management made it clear that they were in favor of [Schuman] ‘dating’ [Carter].”<sup>97</sup>

**Carter was sued by a fan for sexually assaulting her as a minor after a concert when he invited her on the tour bus and gave her what she believed was alcohol.**

In December 2022, Shannon “Shay” Ruth, who is autistic and has cerebral palsy, “filed a civil sexual battery lawsuit accusing Backstreet Boys singer Nick Carter of assaulting her and infecting her with HPV when she was 17 and he was 21.” Ruth’s attorney “said that Carter sexually assaulted his client in February 2001 after a Backstreet Boys concert in Tacoma, Wash. — a claim that matched the allegations outlined in the lawsuit.” The sexual battery lawsuit was filed in Clark County, Nevada.<sup>98</sup>

The complaint in the case claimed “that after Ruth attended the Backstreet Boys concert and lined up for autographs, Carter invited her to join him on a tour bus, where he allegedly served her a beverage he called ‘VIP juice,’ according to TMZ. She said she believes the drink was a mix of alcohol and cranberry juice.” Ruth alleged “that after she drank the ‘juice,’ Carter took her to the bus bathroom and ordered her to perform oral sex on him, according to TMZ. He then allegedly took Ruth to a bed in the back of the bus and continued to sexually assault her while she begged him to stop.” During a December 2022 press conference, “Ruth consistently characterized the alleged assault as rape.”<sup>99</sup>

**In 2006, Carter was accused of sexually assaulting a 20-year-old fan in Key West, Florida. A police report was filed by the victim, though Carter refused to speak with authorities and was not charged.**

*Radar* reported that Carter “was accused of sexually assaulting a woman during a booze-fueled house party” and “was investigated for sexual assault against a 20-year-old fan in 2006.” According to the incident report with the West Allis Police Department in Wisconsin, “an officer spoke with the alleged victim...at West Allis Memorial Hospital, regarding an alleged incident that took place on March 26, 2006 and March 27, 2006.” *Radar* noted that the website chose not to identify the victim “to respect her privacy.”<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> [lacourt.org](https://lacourt.org), Case No. 23SMCV01577, filed April 11, 2023

<sup>98</sup> [clarkcountycourts.us](https://clarkcountycourts.us), Case No. A-22-862259-B, filed December 8, 2022; [latimes.com](https://latimes.com), [December 8, 2022](https://latimes.com); [rollingstone.com](https://rollingstone.com), [December 8, 2022](https://rollingstone.com)

<sup>99</sup> [latimes.com](https://latimes.com), [December 8, 2022](https://latimes.com)

<sup>100</sup> [radaronline.com](https://radaronline.com), accessed July 24, 2023

According to the police report, “the woman told the officer that her cousin was an acquaintance of Carter, 37, and that he offered to fly the two women to Key West, Florida from Saturday to Monday. A friend of Carter’s picked up the women from the airport and brought them to his home to drop off their luggage. From there, the women were brought to a Denny’s restaurant where they met Carter and his friend Rob Kalouch. The group then spent several hours with a real estate agent looking for houses for Carter before going out to dinner at another restaurant.”<sup>101</sup> The report stated, “The woman indicated that during dinner and back at the house, Rob continuously placed his hands on her shoulders and back.” It added, “Initially, she felt this was harmless, but as it continued she would move her body away from Rob to remove his hands from her body.”<sup>102</sup>

After dinner, “the group returned to Carter’s friend’s house, [and] they began drinking. After downing six shots, the woman claimed she felt ‘buzzed,’ but was not intoxicated.” *Radar* reported, “Carter told her he wanted a picture of her a\*\*,’ the report read. ‘The woman turned around and Carter approached her, pulled down her pants and someone took a picture of the woman.’ The woman and her cousin then went to a bedroom in the residence, where Kalouch attempted to kiss the woman. She told him that she had a boyfriend and did not want to kiss. ‘At one point, Carter and Rob pulled the victim’s tube top off her and both males touched her breasts,’ the report read. ‘She continued to tell them that she was not that kind of girl, has a boyfriend and wants to save herself for marriage.’ But Kalouch ‘continued to rub on her stomach and underneath her shirt.’ Then Carter allegedly ‘unbuttoned her jeans and slid his hand down her jeans and underpants. The woman indicated Carter briefly inserted his fingertips into her vagina.’ When Carter pulled his hand out of her pants, he reportedly told her, ‘You’re lying, you are not a virgin.’”<sup>103</sup>

The victim, according to the report, “then went into the bathroom, where Kalouch followed her. She claimed he ‘pushed her to her knees and exposed his penis.’ ‘Rob pushed the woman’s head towards his penis and inserted his penis into her mouth,’ the report continued. ‘Rob used his hands to push the woman’s mouth back and forth on his penis.’ The woman cried, but did not take any other action because she was afraid, according to the report. Carter then entered the bathroom and exposed his penis.”<sup>104</sup>

The victim “went to the airport the next morning and was brought to the hospital by her sister. She did not sustain any injuries from the alleged attacks. The West Allis Police Department

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<sup>101</sup> [radaronline.com](http://radaronline.com), accessed July 24, 2023

<sup>102</sup> [radaronline.com](http://radaronline.com), accessed July 24, 2023

<sup>103</sup> [radaronline.com](http://radaronline.com), accessed July 24, 2023

<sup>104</sup> [radaronline.com](http://radaronline.com), accessed July 24, 2023

collected the woman's clothes and a sexual assault examination kit was completed. Carter and Kalouch refused to speak with investigators regarding the incident. No charges were brought against either Carter or Kalouch, and the case was closed in June 2006." A detective from the Key West Police Department wrote, "The case has been thoroughly investigated, but because of your desire not to pursue or file charges, or due to other arrangements made with the suspect, no further action will be taken by us at this time."<sup>105</sup>

**A third woman filed suit against Carter alleging that he forced her to perform sexual acts in Florida in 2003 when she was 15 years old. She claimed she was drunk during at least two of the incidents.**

In August 2023, a third woman filed suit against Carter in Clark County, Nevada alleging sexual abuse. In the lawsuit, "a Pennsylvania woman, only identified by the initials A.R., claimed that in August 2003, Carter raped her in the cabin of a yacht in Florida when she was 15 years old. She claims she was drunk at the time and that he told her to keep the incident a secret. A few days later, the lawsuit claims Carter and his sister Angel encouraged her to meet him at a bus on their Florida property. When she arrived, she said Carter made her perform a sexual act on him. The lawsuit lists a third incident that happened in October 2003 where a party was being held on boats that Carter owned. [...] According to the lawsuit, she became drunk and was taken to a yacht cabin where Carter allegedly allowed three other men watch him have sex with her. She states she asked him to stop several times."<sup>106</sup>

The woman claimed that as a result of the alleged assaults, "she contracted the human papillomavirus, also known as HPV. The woman states she told her mother about the assaults after the third incident and it was reported to Southern York County law enforcement in Pennsylvania in December 2003."<sup>107</sup>

Carter's attorneys responded to the lawsuit in a statement, "Nick is pleased with A.R.'s recent filing as it will ensure that all of the known co-conspirators will be brought to justice together. Anyone credulously covering these ridiculous claims should know that when A.R. first accused Nick Carter almost two decades ago, authorities listened and thoroughly investigated – and then informed A.R. that her allegations were meritless. In fact, at the conclusion of the police investigation into A.R.'s claims, law enforcement concluded that A.R. 'could herself have been charged with a crime.' Subsequently, in a separate incident, A.R was threatened with criminal charges for filing a false police report."<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> [radaronline.com](https://www.radaronline.com), accessed July 24, 2023

<sup>106</sup> [ktnv.com](https://www.ktnv.com), August 29, 2023

<sup>107</sup> [ktnv.com](https://www.ktnv.com), August 29, 2023

<sup>108</sup> [ktnv.com](https://www.ktnv.com), August 29, 2023



## Intimidation & Retaliation Against Victims

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**Carter allegedly harassed Melissa Schuman who accused him of sexual assault while her manager discouraged her from going to police to not jeopardize her career.**

In her complaint against Carter, Melissa Schuman alleged that “Carter began to manipulate and torment her” after he raped her in 2000. In a 2017 blog post, Melissa Schuman wrote that shortly after the assault, Carter “called me. He called me over and over and over again and I wouldn’t pick up. I didn’t want to hear his voice. He jammed my phone with calls for weeks, leaving me messages demanding I speak with him. Then he finally left me one last nasty, angry message and he never called me again.”<sup>109</sup>

Schuman alleged that her “manager highly discouraged [Schuman] from going to the police to file a police report, telling her that Defendant Carter has one of the most powerful litigators in the country, and that her coming forward would ruin her career.” Schuman and Carter were set to appear in the film “The Hollow” and were scheduled to appear in scenes together according to the complaint. However, Schuman’s “manager said he would work with ‘The Hollow’ production team to make sure she would otherwise not have to be near Defendant Carter on set.” The following image is a screenshot of a scene from the made-for-TV movie “The Hollow,” featuring both Schuman and Carter.<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> [melissaexplainsitall.wpcomstaging.com](https://melissaexplainsitall.wpcomstaging.com), accessed July 24, 2023; [lacourt.org](https://lacourt.org), Case No. 23SMCV01577, filed April 11, 2023

<sup>110</sup> [lacourt.org](https://lacourt.org), Case No. 23SMCV01577, filed April 11, 2023



However, after filming of “The Hollow” was complete, “Carter contacted [Schuman] by phone repeatedly, demanding to speak with her.” Schuman “did not take his calls, but he would not let up.” Finally, Schuman took one of Carter’s calls, during which he “sounded nonchalant, until she asked him about the night she was at his apartment.” Carter denied having sex with Schuman and “exploded in anger and called her a ‘manipulative bitch’, and yelled at her.” Schuman alleged that she changed her telephone number “to stop the harassment” from Carter.<sup>111</sup>

**After rape accusations against Carter became public in 2017, he allegedly hired a fan engagement firm to mount a cyberbullying and harassment campaign against his victim.**

In November 2017, in the wake of the #MeToo social justice movement, Schuman decided to go public with her allegations against Carter in a blog post posted on her website titled “Don’t worry, I won’t tell anybody.” Subsequently, Schuman’s allegations against Carter were highly publicized. In her complaint, Schuman alleged that after she came forward with her allegations, “a highly strategized cyber-stalking and harassment campaign against [Schuman] unfolded through a web of individuals associated with Defendant Carter.”<sup>112</sup>

Following Schuman’s public allegations, Carter hired Wonderful Union, a fan engagement company which was “acquired by the entertainment agency Endeavor in 2018 and now called Please & Thank You.” Notably, “Wonderful Union was founded by Eddie Meehan, a personal friend of Defendant Carter.” Carter turned to “his Wonderful Union’s fan engagement team to

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<sup>111</sup> [lacourt.org](https://www.lacourt.org), Case No. 23SMCV01577, filed April 11, 2023

<sup>112</sup> [lacourt.org](https://www.lacourt.org), Case No. 23SMCV01577, filed April 11, 2023

encourage Defendant Carter’s dedicated fan base to engage in internet intimidation in [an] effort to intimidate, blame, harass and discredit [Schuman] online.” According to *People*, Eddie Meehan “has worked with the Backstreet Boys for years.” Meehan’s Wonderful Union handled “VIP ticketing initiatives, exclusive meet-and-greets and more” for the Backstreet Boys 2017 Las Vegas residency.<sup>113</sup>

According to Schuman’s complaint, “The online intimidation by Defendant Carter’s friends, associates and/or agents is an organized attempt to intimidate, blame, harass and discredit Plaintiff and her allegations of sexual assault in the court of public opinion.” Her complaint noted that “online intimidation by Defendant Carter’s friends, associates and/or agents is ongoing and continues to this day.”<sup>114</sup>

**Carter countersued two of his alleged victims, claiming that they sought to ruin his reputation for personal and financial gain.**

In February 2023, *Vice* reported that Carter was “countersuing two women who’ve accused the Backstreet Boys singer of sexual assault, claiming they took advantage of the #MeToo movement to ruin his reputation.” The countersuit, according to *People*, claimed that Shannon Ruth and Melissa Schuman “took advantage of the #MeToo movement and used it to launch a five-year conspiracy to ‘defame and vilify Carter and otherwise ruin his reputation for the purposes of garnering attention and fame and/or extorting money from Carter.’” Additionally, the countersuit claimed that “Schuman and her father Jerome Schuman groomed Ruth, who ‘was a vulnerable and highly impressionable individual, craving attention and desperate to fit in.’” Notably, Ruth “has autism and cerebral palsy.” Carter’s countersuit also alleged “that Schuman took advantage of his late brother Aaron Carter, who died in November [2022].” According to *Newsweek*, Aaron Carter initially sided “with Melissa Schuman after she accused Nick of rape.”<sup>115</sup>

In response to Carter’s countersuit, Ruth “alleged that the Backstreet Boys member [was] using his wealth and popularity to ‘harass and silence’ her after filing a lawsuit against him.” In a separate lawsuit filed in February 2023, Ruth “said Carter’s move in filing a countersuit was only submitted to harass and intimidate her even more. She added that the singer uses his celebrity status and wealth to ‘outlast plaintiff,’ Ruth’s lawyer added.”<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>113</sup> [lacourt.org](https://lacourt.org), Case No. 23SMCV01577, filed April 11, 2023; [people.com](https://people.com), [September 4, 2018](https://nextconf.eu); [nextconf.eu](https://nextconf.eu), accessed July 27, 2023

<sup>114</sup> [lacourt.org](https://lacourt.org), Case No. 23SMCV01577, filed April 11, 2023

<sup>115</sup> [people.com](https://people.com), [February 3, 2023](https://newsweek.com); [newsweek.com](https://newsweek.com), [November 7, 2022](https://newsweek.com)

<sup>116</sup> [musictimes.com](https://musictimes.com), [February 27, 2023](https://musictimes.com)

In March 2023, District Judge Nancy Allf “declined to dismiss Nick Carter’s claim that a woman who accused him of sexual assault had defamed him.” Additionally, Judge Allf “allowed the singer’s counterclaim to move forward.”<sup>117</sup>

**Shortly after the 2002 rape of a singer, Carter’s manager, Kenneth Crear, allegedly tanked a potentially lucrative opportunity for Carter’s victim. Subsequently, the singer’s career stalled.**

After being assaulted by Carter in 2002, Schuman’s “solo career never took off.” According to *Rolling Stone*, “she questioned if Carter had interfered with her career by influencing Kenneth Crear – who managed both Carter and Schuman – to slowly ice her out.” Schuman wrote in her blogpost that she “later signed with [Carter’s] manager, Kenneth Crear.” According to *Variety*, Crear “managed Janet Jackson and the Backstreet Boys.” Schuman stated, “Kenneth Crear was a very powerful manager who I thought could help me make my mark as a recording artist. I quickly learned that Kenneth was thick as thieves with my abuser.”<sup>118</sup>

Schuman told “*The Daily Beast* that Crear actually sought her out. ‘I knew that [Carter] was on the same roster,’ she continued, ‘but it’s very common for an agent or manager to have a whole roster of people. It doesn’t mean that their roster will ever meet or even talk to each other. So I didn’t know that by signing with this manager, that I was going to be putting myself in a position where I couldn’t continue to maintain the distance that I had worked so hard to maintain.’”<sup>119</sup>

Schuman wrote, “Kenneth set up a showcase for me for a major label. We recorded a few songs, one of them was a duet with my abuser. We never recorded together. He had pre-recorded his part and I went in and recorded mine. Again, what was I supposed to do? I [couldn’t] tell my manager that his best friend had raped me so I won’t record this song. I tried to justify that maybe something good to come out of something very bad. Maybe this song might help me get signed as a solo artist and I could move on and put everything behind me. Kenneth asked my abuser if he would be willing to sing the duet with me live at my showcase and he agreed.”<sup>120</sup>

Schuman said that following the showcase performance with Carter, the record label executive “mentioned the duet I did with Nick sounded amazing and that he could easily attach it to a movie soundtrack.” The executive said, “We’ll be in touch.” Yet, Schuman wrote, “Weeks [passed] and I heard nothing. No word from Kenneth despite calling for weeks, he was too busy

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<sup>117</sup> [reviewjournal.com, March 29, 2023](https://www.reviewjournal.com/march-29-2023/)

<sup>118</sup> [melissaexplainsitall.wpcomstaging.com](https://melissaexplainsitall.wpcomstaging.com), accessed July 24, 2023; [rollingstone.com, April 12, 2023](https://www.rollingstone.com); [variety.com, September 13, 2012](https://www.variety.com); [thedailybeast.com, August 16, 2018](https://www.thedailybeast.com)

<sup>119</sup> [melissaexplainsitall.wpcomstaging.com](https://melissaexplainsitall.wpcomstaging.com), accessed July 24, 2023; [variety.com, September 13, 2012](https://www.variety.com); [thedailybeast.com, August 16, 2018](https://www.thedailybeast.com)

<sup>120</sup> [melissaexplainsitall.wpcomstaging.com](https://melissaexplainsitall.wpcomstaging.com), accessed July 24, 2023

to take my call. When we finally spoke, I was surprised to hear the feedback from the same label head I had spoke[n] to before.” Crear told Schuman that the label executive “isn’t interested in signing you. He told me your vocals were weak in the duet and that he was interested in the song only. Nick will be moving forward with the song elsewhere.” Schuman said, “I could tell by his tone that he was no longer interested in working for me and I couldn’t help but wonder if Nick had any influence in it.”<sup>121</sup>

## Continued Work with Sony

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**In 2018, months after Schuman went public with her rape allegations against Carter, the Backstreet Boys signed with Sony Music Entertainment’s RCA Records and announced a new album that debuted at No. 1 on the Billboard 200.**

In 2018, the same year which Melissa Schuman went public with her sexual assault allegations against Nick Carter, the Backstreet Boys signed “a new record deal with Sony’s RCA label.” Until 2011, the Backstreet Boys were signed to Jive Records. In 2004, Jive “became part of the Zomba Label Group, a unit of Sony BMG Music Entertainment. Since 2008 it has been a label of the Jive Label Group and RCA/Jive Label Group under Sony Music Entertainment.”<sup>122</sup>

As part of their new deal with Sony’s RCA Records, the Backstreet Boys announced a new single titled “Don’t Go Breaking My Heart.” The single was released ahead of the band’s album “DNA,” which was set to come out in January 2019. The recording “rose to No. 63 on the Hot 100, becoming the group’s highest-ranking solo single on the listing in 13 years.”<sup>123</sup>

Subsequently, *Forbes* reported in January 2019, “In a surprising and fairly stunning show of sustained popularity, vocal group the Backstreet Boys debut their new album DNA at No. 1 on the Billboard 200. Their new full-length kicks off with 234,000 equivalent units, of which 227,000 are actual sales.” DNA became “the Backstreet Boys’ third No. 1 album in the U.S., and their first in well over a decade.” They topped the Billboard 200 with Millennium in 1999, which “opened with 1.134 million copies, making it one of the largest first weeks in history.”<sup>124</sup>

In December 2022, the Backstreet Boys filmed a Christmas special in Los Angeles titled “A Very Backstreet Christmas.” However, ABC confirmed that it would no longer air the special “amid

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<sup>121</sup> [melissaexplainsitall.wpcomstaging.com](https://melissaexplainsitall.wpcomstaging.com), accessed July 24, 2023

<sup>122</sup> [completemusicupdate.com](https://completemusicupdate.com), May 18, 2018; [discogs.com](https://discogs.com), accessed August 7, 2023

<sup>123</sup> [completemusicupdate.com](https://completemusicupdate.com), May 18, 2018; [twitter.com](https://twitter.com), May 14, 2018; [usatoday.com](https://usatoday.com), November 9, 2018; [forbes.com](https://forbes.com), February 3, 2019; [allmusic.com](https://allmusic.com), accessed August 2, 2023

<sup>124</sup> [forbes.com](https://forbes.com), February 3, 2019

allegations that singer Nick Carter raped a 17-year-old girl during the band’s 2001 tour.”<sup>125</sup> The special was set to feature Carter, along with other members of the Backstreet Boys “as they celebrate the season and perform hits from their 10th album ‘A Very Backstreet Christmas.’ Seth Rogen, Meghan Trainor, Rob Riggle, Nikki Glaser, Ron Funches and Atsuko Okatsuka were scheduled to appear.”<sup>126</sup>

## Danny Elfman

### Allegations & Criminal Complaint

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**Composer Danny Elfman allegedly exposed himself in front of a fellow composer, Nomi Abadi, which she reported to police. Prior to the misconduct, she hoped that Elfman would serve as her mentor and help launch her career.**

In a November 2017 police report, composer Nomi Abadi “went to the LAPD with allegations against Elfman that the report categorized as ‘indecent exposure.’” Abadi “claimed to the police that over the course of nearly a year, Elfman allegedly exposed himself and masturbated multiple times in front of her without her consent.”<sup>127</sup>

According to *Rolling Stone*, which reviewed Abadi’s police report, “Abadi first met Elfman in Denver in 2015. The day after they met, according to the police report, ‘Elfman asked an acquaintance for Abadi’s email address and the two began communicating about music.’ Abadi — who grew up idolizing Elfman and his music — was excited, multiple friends of hers recall, hoping he’d take her on as a mentee and be a launchpad for her career. Abadi visited Elfman at his recording studio several times over the year, where Abadi’s misconduct claims were alleged to have taken place.”<sup>128</sup>

Within a year of meeting, Abadi claimed that “Elfman’s demeanor turned from ostensibly friendly to inappropriate.” According to her police report, “Elfman ‘would answer the door [at his recording studio] in a robe with no clothes underneath.’ ‘Elfman explained this was how he liked to work and would always justify his behavior,’ the report said. Elfman, according to the report, allegedly masturbated in front of her without consent three times that year. ‘This made

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<sup>125</sup> [variety.com, December 8, 2022](https://www.variety.com/2022/12/08/nick-carter-backstreet-boys/)

<sup>126</sup> [variety.com, December 8, 2022](https://www.variety.com/2022/12/08/nick-carter-backstreet-boys/)

<sup>127</sup> [rollingstone.com, July 19, 2023](https://www.rollingstone.com/2023/07/19/nomi-abadi-danny-elfman/)

<sup>128</sup> [rollingstone.com, July 19, 2023](https://www.rollingstone.com/2023/07/19/nomi-abadi-danny-elfman/)

Abadi very uncomfortable,’ the report alleges, ‘but she would just look away because Elfman insisted it help[ed] with his creativity.’”<sup>129</sup>

In a statement to *Rolling Stone*, “Elfman provided a starkly different account of the nature of his and Abadi’s relationship.” Elfman stated, “Abadi’s allegations are simply not true. I allowed someone to get close to me without knowing that I was her ‘childhood crush’ and that her intention was to break up my marriage and replace my wife. When this person realized that I wanted distance from her, she made it clear that I would pay for having rejected her. I allowed an ill-advised friendship to have far-reaching consequences, and that error in judgment is entirely my fault. I have done nothing indecent or wrong, and my lawyers stand ready to prove with voluminous evidence that these accusations are false. This is the last I will say on this subject.”<sup>130</sup>

**A second woman filed suit against Elfman after she read about Abadi’s complaint and reportedly found her experience to be strikingly similar, including that he treated her as a protégé and then began exposing his genitals in front of her regularly.**

In October 2023, “a 47-year-old woman in Maryland going by Jane Doe XX” filed suit against Elfman in Los Angeles Superior Court, “alleging that Elfman sexually abused her from 1997 to 2002. She is suing Elfman and his company, Musica de la Muerta, for sexual assault, gender violence, intentional infliction of emotional distress, sexual harassment and negligence.” Her complaint stated that she first “met Elfman at a party in April of 1997 while she was a 21-year-old student at the New York Film Academy and Elfman was 47, and he began inviting her to industry events, asking her opinions on films and music and treating her as ‘a consultant and protégé.’”<sup>131</sup>

However, during the next five years, “when the plaintiff and Elfman were alone together, Elfman ‘removed all of his clothing until he was completely nude, and walked around nude in front of Plaintiff, exposing his genitals. Defendant Elfman expressed to Plaintiff that this was the only way he could work, be creative, and successful.’ Due to Elfman’s prominence in the entertainment industry, the plaintiff felt ‘she had no choice but to always comply with his requests, and Plaintiff felt this was a condition of their continued relationship.’” Jane Doe XX alleged “she sometimes slept in the same bed as Elfman, ‘never removing her clothing, often sleeping on top of the bedding,’ while Elfman slept naked next to her. In approximately 2002,

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<sup>129</sup> [rollingstone.com](https://www.rollingstone.com), July 19, 2023

<sup>130</sup> [rollingstone.com](https://www.rollingstone.com), July 19, 2023

<sup>131</sup> [hollywoodreporter.com](https://www.hollywoodreporter.com), October 19, 2023

she says Elfman told her, ‘Every time you have ever slept next to me, I would masturbate next to you.’” After that, she said she “ended her relationship with Elfman.”<sup>132</sup>

According to *The Hollywood Reporter*, “When Maryland-based Jane Doe XX read about Abadi’s case, she reached out to Abadi’s attorney mentioned in the story, Jeff Anderson.” Anderson said she told him, “The similarities are so striking. Around the same age, both aspiring in the entertainment industry, looking to him as a powerful mentor and trusting him and not in a position to recognize that they were each being used and abused.” In her suit, Jane Doe XX was “seeking damages ‘including but not limited to medical and incidental expenses and loss of earnings.’”<sup>133</sup>

## Silencing Victims

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**Elfman and his victim entered a settlement and nondisclosure agreement. Elfman agreed to pay \$830,000 over the course of five years.**

In July 2018, Abadi and Elfman “entered into a settlement and nondisclosure agreement.” The agreement “came after she’d accused him of multiple instances of sexual harassment.” According to legal filings, the settlement “included terms that [Elfman] would make payments in four different categories in various installments over the course of 5 years totaling \$830,000.00.”<sup>134</sup>

According to *Rolling Stone*, “In June 2018, Abadi and Elfman entered mediation hearings. A source who requested anonymity recalls attending an initial hearing, which didn’t yield much progress between the parties. Abadi’s friends say it was a difficult decision for her to take a settlement agreement and waive her ability to speak. Abadi took the agreement, the source says, feeling she had little choice given the difficulty of proving her claims.”<sup>135</sup>

In July 2023, Abadi sued “Elfman for failure to pay \$85,000 of the \$830,000 agreed upon in the quietly settled suit.” The suit, according to the *Los Angeles Times*, claimed that “Elfman missed two \$42,500 payments, in July 2019 and 2021, which puts him in breach of contract.”<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> [hollywoodreporter.com, October 19, 2023](https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/entertainment-news/abadi-elfman-settlement-1234567)

<sup>133</sup> [hollywoodreporter.com, October 19, 2023](https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/entertainment-news/abadi-elfman-settlement-1234567)

<sup>134</sup> [rollingstone.com, July 19, 2023](https://www.rollingstone.com/entertainment-news/abadi-elfman-settlement-1234567)

<sup>135</sup> [rollingstone.com, July 19, 2023](https://www.rollingstone.com/entertainment-news/abadi-elfman-settlement-1234567)

<sup>136</sup> [latimes.com, July 20, 2023](https://www.latimes.com/entertainment-news/abadi-elfman-settlement-1234567)



## Continued Work

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**Elfman was scheduled to be honored at a Los Angeles Concert about a week after Jane Doe XX filed suit against Elfman, and in 2024, Elfman won an Emmy Award.**

While Jane Doe XX filed suit against Elfman on October 19, 2023, Elfman appeared “at The Hollywood Bowl on Oct. 27, 28 and 29 as part of Disney’s “Tim Burton’s The Nightmare Before Christmas in Concert,” with scheduled performers Halsey, Catherine O’Hara. and Fred Armisen,”<sup>137</sup> though Halsey dropped out of the event due to a “scheduling conflict.”<sup>138</sup> The event was to honor Elfman as part of “a 30th anniversary concert for The Nightmare Before Christmas.”<sup>139</sup> Additionally, Elfman was nominated for two Emmy Awards for his work on the TV series “Wednesday,” and he won the Emmy for “Outstanding Original Main Title Theme Music” in 2024.<sup>140</sup>

## Justin Geever aka Justin Sane

### Allegations

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**Justin Geever, co-founder of the punk band Anti-Flag, allegedly sexually exploited or assaulted at least 13 women, eight of whom were under 18 at the time, between the 1990s and 2020.**

In a September 2023 article, *Rolling Stone* described the stories of 13 women who claimed that Anti-Flag band co-founder Justin Geever, the “face, voice, and outward idealism” of the band and also known as Justin Sane, “exploited the power he wielded with younger, enamored girls and women for his own sexual gratification. [...] Seven of the women were teenagers at the time of their encounters. An eighth was 12 years old.” These encounters date “back to the 1990s and as recently as 2020. These allegations include predatory behavior, sexual assault, and statutory rape, including sexual relations with a 12-year-old when Geever was a teenager.”<sup>141</sup>

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<sup>137</sup> [hollywoodreporter.com](https://hollywoodreporter.com), October 19, 2023; [hollywoodbowl.com](https://hollywoodbowl.com), accessed December 22, 2023

<sup>138</sup> [billboard.com](https://billboard.com), October 30, 2023

<sup>139</sup> [theguardian.com](https://theguardian.com), October 20, 2023

<sup>140</sup> [emmys.com](https://emmys.com), accessed February 21, 2024; [bmi.com](https://bmi.com), January 8, 2024

<sup>141</sup> [rollingstone.com](https://rollingstone.com), September 5, 2023

**In July 2023, Kristina Sarhadi publicly accused Geever of violently sexually assaulting her in 2010. Sarhadi later filed suit against Geever and his record distribution company under New York’s Adult Survivors Act.**

In July 2023, Kristina Sarhadi “appeared on a podcast to accuse the 50-year-old [Justin Geever] of violent sexual assault.” According to *Rolling Stone*, in 2010, Sarhadi was at an Anti-Flag concert in Brooklyn when “Geever locked eyes with her from the stage, she says, and approached her after the show. While chatting, Geever mentioned he’d be near her hometown for the [film] festival, Sarhadi says, and the two exchanged numbers.”<sup>142</sup>

*Rolling Stone* reported that Sarhadi and Geever met up at the film festival, “but instead of the dinner Geever had originally mentioned, she says, he asked her to drive them to the party. Throughout the night, Sarhadi says, she rebuffed Geever’s advances — including him trying to persuade her to climb into the car’s back seat to have sex. Sarhadi says she was dropping Geever off at his hotel when he asked her to go to his room to hear a new song he recorded.” Sarhadi said on the “Enough” podcast, “He tells me ‘I just recorded a song with Billy Bragg, and no one on Earth has heard it yet, and it’s so fucking good, and you’re gonna die when you hear it.’ I like lost my mind. I was like I have to hear this song, so he was like ‘Okay, just come in my room real quick. I’ll play this song.’” Sarhadi later confirmed to *Rolling Stone* that she was referring to Geever on the podcast.<sup>143</sup>

Sarhadi joined Geever at the hotel, according to *Rolling Stone*, where “they drank beers and took shots [at the hotel bar] before heading upstairs, Sarhadi says, to listen to the song. Once inside the room, Sarhadi says, Geever locked the door and playfully tackled her on the bed. ‘But as soon as I hit the bed, he put his hand around my throat and basically turned into a monster,’ she described on the Enough podcast. ‘To this day, I still have flashes of his face above me, holding me down.’ Geever proceeded to sexually assault her, Sarhadi claims. ‘It went on for a very long time,’ she added on the podcast. ‘It was the most terrifying thing I’ve ever experienced. I can’t stress how violent he was and how much I fully believed I was going to die, that he was going to kill me.’”<sup>144</sup>

In November 2023, Sarhadi filed suit against Geever under New York’s Adult Survivors Act, alleging that he “‘strangled her, forced her to perform oral sex on him, and raped her’ at a motel when she was 21.” Sarhadi said in a statement published by *Pitchfork*, “Justin Geever used his platform as a celebrated, self-proclaimed ‘punk rockstar’ to groom and lure vulnerable girls into feeling safe in his presence. While he sang about protecting women and standing up to abusers,

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<sup>142</sup> [rollingstone.com](https://www.rollingstone.com), September 5, 2023

<sup>143</sup> [rollingstone.com](https://www.rollingstone.com), September 5, 2023; [youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com), July 19, 2023

<sup>144</sup> [rollingstone.com](https://www.rollingstone.com), September 5, 2023

it appears he was hiding an addiction to power and control, harming countless women who have been unable to speak up before now. Today I hope to encourage his survivors, and survivors of other predators in the music industry, to feel hope again. What sexual predators take from us cannot be restored, but we are no longer the silent victims they want us to be.”

According to *Pitchfork*, Sarhadi’s “lawsuit names not only Justin Sane, but also Hardwork Distribution Inc.—the distribution arm of Anti-Flag’s A-F Records—as well as an unnamed Doe. [...] The lawsuit argues that Hardwork and the unnamed defendant ‘knew or should have known’ that Justin Sane ‘habitually and routinely engaged in sexual misconduct with young women and underage girls throughout the country,’ particularly in motel rooms, and had a duty to protect them.”<sup>145</sup> *Rolling Stone* noted that Hardwork Distribution also included “bandmates Patrick Bollinger, a.k.a. Pat Thetic, Chris Head, and Chris Barker (aka Chris No. 2)” as “registered members.”<sup>146</sup>

Dr. Ann Olivarius, one of Sarhadi’s attorneys along with Karen Barth Menzies, said in a statement, “I predict that in five years the music industry will be viewed the same way as the Catholic Church or the Boy Scouts—a powerful force that also enabled and shielded sexual predators for decades. ‘Drugs, sex & rock ‘n roll’ was a reality that meant a lot of young women got abused. The bands had handlers who made it all happen and executives who covered it all up because so much money depended on it.”<sup>147</sup>

### **Following Sarhadi’s allegation, multiple women told *Rolling Stone* about negative experiences with Geever, including instances of grooming and violent assault.**

A woman identified as Elizabeth described to *Rolling Stone* an encounter in which Geever “almost immediately tried to put his hands down her pants, began forcibly kissing her, and made her perform oral sex on him. [...] The next day, the two were supposed to go for lunch, but Geever asked Elizabeth to meet him at a hotel, where Elizabeth says he assaulted her. ‘He first put a spreader bar on me, which I had never seen in my life at that point,’ she says. ‘At another point, he flipped me over with the spreader bar and hogtied me — which again, I had never even been restrained. It was very scary because it wasn’t anything that he asked.’”<sup>148</sup>

According to *Rolling Stone*, a woman identified as Suzanne began dating Geezer at age 17 after he sought her out at a 2002 Anti-Flag concert. Geever allegedly professed his love for her and “[took] the 17-year-old’s virginity outside of a car. [...] Geever claimed that he was 19. He was

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<sup>145</sup> [pitchfork.com, November 23, 2023](https://pitchfork.com/news/2023/11/23/justin-sane-lawsuit/)

<sup>146</sup> [rollingstone.com, November 22, 2023](https://www.rollingstone.com/music/news/justin-sane-lawsuit-2023-11-22/)

<sup>147</sup> [pitchfork.com, November 23, 2023](https://pitchfork.com/news/2023/11/23/justin-sane-lawsuit/); [rollingstone.com, November 22, 2023](https://www.rollingstone.com/music/news/justin-sane-lawsuit-2023-11-22/)

<sup>148</sup> [rollingstone.com, September 5, 2023](https://www.rollingstone.com/music/news/justin-sane-lawsuit-2023-09-05/)

actually 30. ‘It makes me sick,’ Suzanne says. ‘I think that I was groomed. He took advantage of his status and me being young.’” A woman identified as Ella claimed that she had sex with Geever when she was 16 and he was 36, during which “she explicitly told Geever not to perform certain sex acts, but he ignored her. ‘I was in pain by the end of it,’ she says.” Another woman identified as Susie claimed that when she was 15, Geever, then 35, took her virginity and later sent her a message about the incident, which read, “I know that it must have been a lot for you to handle — I hope that looking back it’s a good and not a bad memory for you.” Another woman identified as Mat told *Rolling Stone* that Geever initiated rough sex with her, in which he choked and spat on her without consent.<sup>149</sup>

In March 2022, Hannah Stark, who accused Geever of sexually assaulting her in early 2020, “decided to anonymously post on the Tumblr page ‘The Industry Ain’t Safe’ one night in March 2022. ‘Justin Sane from Anti-Flag,’ she wrote. ‘Am I really the only person this has happened to?’” Sarhadi also came across the post. According to *Rolling Stone*, “Seeing no responses, Sarhadi replied that something had happened with her too.” Furthermore, after Sarhadi came forward with her experience on the “Enough” podcast in July 2023, “numerous women began connecting with one another online about their own alleged encounters with Geever.”<sup>150</sup>

For instance, “after the podcast aired, 44-year-old Pittsburgh native Tali Weller says she received an unexpected message about the episode from a childhood friend, who wanted to check that she was doing OK. It had been more than three decades since a 12-year-old Weller had met a 17-year-old Geever through their local church youth group in 1990.” According to *Rolling Stone*, “Their encounters, which Weller says Geever had instructed her to keep a secret, were split between friendly, chaste exchanges in public and sexual activity in closets, the lofted rehearsal space at his family home, and sleeping bags on overnight church trips. ‘I remember that I didn’t feel comfortable having sex,’ she says. ‘His answer was anal sex.’” Weller said, “I was so blinded by trust for him and infatuation, he had me sold to follow his lead.”<sup>151</sup>

**In August 2023, Hannah Stark filed a police report against Geever on accusations of sexual assault, but the police declined to move forward with her case “because she never told Geever ‘no.’”**

Hannah Stark “filed a police report against Geever in August [2023] on accusations of sexual assault stemming from an early 2020 encounter in the United Kingdom. [...] Stark claims Geever suddenly handcuffed her, spanked her, and forced her to perform oral sex, as he used degrading language toward her. She says she tried to physically get away from Geever at one

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<sup>149</sup> [rollingstone.com](https://www.rollingstone.com), September 5, 2023

<sup>150</sup> [rollingstone.com](https://www.rollingstone.com), September 5, 2023

<sup>151</sup> [rollingstone.com](https://www.rollingstone.com), September 5, 2023

point, but could not. ‘I couldn’t breathe, and then he eventually stopped,’ she says. ‘When I looked up at him, he just had this look of satisfaction on his face. It was horrible.’ At no point did Geever check that she was OK or ask for consent to the acts, Stark says, describing herself as ‘scared.’”<sup>152</sup>

Stark “acknowledges she didn’t explicitly say no to Geever, because she feared it ‘would make things worse.’ ‘To be honest, I thought he would like that,’ she says. Police in the U.K. confirmed to *Rolling Stone* they received a ‘report of a serious sexual assault’ related to Stark’s allegation. Although Stark says she provided police with a witness list and offered 300-plus items of documentation, she says the police recently informed her that they were declining to move forward because she never told Geever ‘no.’”<sup>153</sup>

Stark said that “despite police not moving forward with her case, she is still glad she filed the report. ‘It wasn’t for nothing,’ Stark says. ‘My statement stays in the [police] system forever because of the nature of the accusation. So if another person from the U.K. did ever come forward, my statement is there for corroboration.’”<sup>154</sup>

## Silencing Victims

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**Women claimed they were afraid to speak about their negative experiences with Geever because Anti-Flag “positioned itself as a leader of a movement for inclusivity, radical change, and allyship.”**

Anti-Flag, co-founded by Geever in 1993, “positioned itself as a leader of a movement for inclusivity, radical change, and allyship in the early 2000s.” The band drew “legions of devoted fans for their progressive messaging and political activism, including anti-war causes and animal-rights advocacy. Geever served as the face, voice, and outward idealism of the group for decades.” The band’s messaging included explicit support of women and feminism.<sup>155</sup>

A woman named Jenn, who met Geever as a 16-year-old in 1997, said of Geever, “He was a wolf in sheep’s clothing. [...] He came across as super supportive. He was like, ‘Yeah, we need more girls in punk rock,’ and ‘Get out there!’ He played the part of lifting women up, but at the same time, he was holding them down, literally.’ [...] ‘I didn’t say anything for a variety of reasons,’ Molly Newborn says of her 1999 run-in with Geever, who allegedly tried to kiss the then-17-year-

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<sup>152</sup> [rollingstone.com](https://www.rollingstone.com), September 5, 2023

<sup>153</sup> [rollingstone.com](https://www.rollingstone.com), September 5, 2023

<sup>154</sup> [rollingstone.com](https://www.rollingstone.com), September 5, 2023

<sup>155</sup> [rollingstone.com](https://www.rollingstone.com), September 5, 2023

old when he was 26 and bring her back to his hotel room after she said she was a virgin. ‘But a big one would probably be: I don’t think people would believe it, that this guy is a creepo, because he sings about feminism,’ she says.”<sup>156</sup>

Sarhadi said of her alleged assault by Geever, “I had no idea it happened to anyone else. [...] I felt stupid, embarrassed, and confused, because how could it have happened with this person? He is the anti-rape singer. They are the outspoken feminist band who released an album benefiting women victims of crime. It doesn’t make any sense. [But] even in nature, the worst predators have the best camouflage.”<sup>157</sup>

**Geever denied Sarhadi’s allegations and claimed he’d never been told by a woman that he had “violated her in any way,” although multiple women claim they had in fact confronted him.**

Following Sarhadi’s podcast appearance, Geever “categorically denied the allegation. ‘I have never engaged in a sexual relationship that was not consensual, nor have I ever been approached by a woman after a sexual encounter and been told I had in any way acted without her consent or violated her in any way,’ he wrote. [...] Geever’s claim that no one had ever informed him his behavior was violating is a flat-out lie, Mat and Karina allege. Karina claims she confronted Geever in 1999, alleging that he took advantage of her inexperience through manipulation and pressure, and the lasting damage it caused. Geever allegedly ‘demonstrated sympathy,’ she says, and made it ‘seem like he wanted to do better.’ Mat says that after listening to Sarhadi on the podcast, she sent Geever a long message, which *Rolling Stone* reviewed, detailing how using her for sex and easily discarding her had left her questioning her self-worth. He never responded. Two days later, he posted his statement.”<sup>158</sup>

**Anti-Flag members claimed they had “never seen Justin [Geever] be violent or aggressive toward women,” although several women claimed other band members witnessed Geever’s involvement with underage girls. The group also announced it was disbanding.**

Hours after Sarhadi publicly accused Geever of assault, Anti-Flag “wiped its social media presence — including band members’ personal pages.” The group released a short statement announcing that it would disband despite upcoming shows scheduled in Europe. The other members of Anti-Flag “released a statement alongside Geever, saying they were ‘shaken’ and ‘heartbroken’ by the accusation, adding it has always been their ‘core tenet’ to believe survivors.

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<sup>156</sup> [rollingstone.com](https://www.rollingstone.com), September 5, 2023

<sup>157</sup> [rollingstone.com](https://www.rollingstone.com), September 5, 2023

<sup>158</sup> [rollingstone.com](https://www.rollingstone.com), September 5, 2023

‘Therefore, we felt the only immediate option was to disband,’ they wrote. ‘While we believe this is extremely serious, in the last 30 years we have never seen Justin be violent or aggressive toward women.’<sup>159</sup>

According to *Rolling Stone*, three women claimed “some of the members [of Anti-Flag] were present when Geever brought them on tour, backstage, or on the tour bus as teenagers and young women. ‘They knew how young everybody was,’ Rebecca, who dated a then-25-year-old Geever as a 17-year-old in the late 1990s, claims. ‘There was a clear boundary that he kept crossing over and over that should have raised flags for everybody.’”<sup>160</sup>

Following *Rolling Stone*’s September 2023 expose, the other members of Anti-Flag released a statement, which read, “To Justin, we believe you are very sick and in need of serious professional help. We want to have compassion and have faith in restorative justice, but fuck you for hurting so many people, not just the ones who have bravely come forward, but anyone still carrying their pain internally. Fuck you for exploiting the work of the band and the many people associated with it for so long. As many predators do, it appears you used our beliefs as a cover for egregious activities that you clearly knew we would never condone. [...] We trusted Justin greatly and are now learning that we were deceived, lied to, and kept in the dark for the entirety of our association.”<sup>161</sup>

## Public Reckoning

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**Several bands left Anti-Flag’s label, A-F Records, following the allegations against Geever, and Anti-Flag said it was “in the process of unwinding the label.”**

According to *Rolling Stone*, the accusations against Geever “have already caused several bands to walk away from Anti-Flag’s label, A-F Records. Artist Sammy Kay, who signed to the label earlier this year, felt the allegation and the band’s lack of transparency left him no choice but to leave. How could he stay ‘if what they’re preaching onstage and spreading to the world does not align with what [their] day to day is,’ Kay says.” Anti-Flag also “confirmed to *Rolling Stone* that they are ‘in the process of unwinding the label, including returning master rights and physical records/merchandise to the bands, which will take some time to complete properly.’”<sup>162</sup>

In “The Punk-Rock Predator,” *Rolling Stone* noted that Sarhadi, one of Geever’s victims, “launched ThePunkRockTherapist.org [TPRT], a place where Geever’s accusers and other

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<sup>159</sup> [rollingstone.com](https://www.rollingstone.com), September 5, 2023

<sup>160</sup> [rollingstone.com](https://www.rollingstone.com), September 5, 2023

<sup>161</sup> [brooklynvegan.com](https://www.brooklynvegan.com), September 7, 2023

<sup>162</sup> [rollingstone.com](https://www.rollingstone.com), September 5, 2023

survivors within the music industry can connect and receive free therapy sessions.” The website was “a way to connect the innumerable survivors who have shared, or are ready to share, their own stories of exploitation and abuse at the hands of men in the entertainment industry,” based on the website for KBM Law, which represented sexual abuse victims in the music industry.<sup>163</sup> Based on social media posts, in October 2023, bands that left A-F Records, including Pity Party and Celebration Summer, participated in a “bandcamp Friday” to fundraise for TPRT, donating proceeds from sales of music and merchandise to the organization.<sup>164</sup>

## Clifford Harris Jr. aka “T.I.” and Tameka “Tiny” Harris

### Allegations & Criminal Investigation

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**T.I. and his wife, Tameka Harris, were sued under California’s window statute law for a 2005 incident where they allegedly drugged and sexually assaulted a woman in a hotel room.**

According to *Vulture*, in lawsuit filed in January 2024, the rapper Clifford Harris Jr., known professionally as T.I., “his wife, Xscape member Tameka ‘Tiny’ Harris, are being sued for allegedly drugging and sexually assaulting a woman in 2005.” Jane Doe alleged that “she was given a spiked drink in a nightclub before the couple brought her to a hotel room, ‘forced her to get naked,’ and sexually assaulted her.” According to the complaint, “the woman states that she met the couple in a nightclub when she was in her 20s and serving in the U.S. Air Force. After Tiny offered her a drink that she alleges was spiked with drugs, she claims that she passed out and was taken to a hotel room. There, she accuses Tiny of holding her down while T.I. penetrated her with his toes, among other claims.”<sup>165</sup>

In May 2021, the *Los Angeles Times* reported that “Los Angeles police detectives launched an investigation into [the] sexual assault report” of Jane Doe. In September of 2021, “the Los Angeles County district attorney’s office declined to file charges against the musicians because the case fell outside of the 10-year statute of limitations.” However, the January 2024 suit was filed “thanks to a California lookback law that opens a window for claims of sexual assault and abuse,” according to *Vulture*. The lawsuit “also accuses T.I. and Tiny of battery, negligence, false

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<sup>163</sup> [rollingstone.com](https://www.rollingstone.com), September 5, 2023; [kbmlaw.com](https://www.kbmlaw.com), accessed December 22, 2023

<sup>164</sup> [punknews.org](https://www.punknews.org), accessed January 24, 2024; [punknews.org](https://www.punknews.org), accessed January 24, 2024; [twitter.com](https://twitter.com), October 6, 2023; [facebook.com](https://www.facebook.com), October 6, 2023; [instagram.com](https://www.instagram.com), October 6, 2023

<sup>165</sup> [vulture.com](https://www.vulture.com), January 5, 2024



imprisonment and intentional infliction of emotional distress. She is seeking an undisclosed amount for lost earnings, general damages and legal fees, and is asking for a trial by jury.”<sup>166</sup>

Both T.I. and his wife acknowledged the suit’s accuser, saying in a statement that the “plaintiff has been threatening to file this lawsuit for THREE years,” and “For THREE years, we have emphatically and categorically denied these allegations. For THREE years we have maintained our innocence and refused to pay these extortionate demands for things we didn’t do.” The Harris’s “legal representative dismissed Doe’s ‘bogus’ claims and said ‘she missed the deadline to file the lawsuit.’”<sup>167</sup>

**In March 2021, T.I. and Tiny Harris were accused of drugging, kidnapping, rape, and intimidation by more than 30 women over a 15-year span.**

In March 2021, T.I. and his wife faced allegations of “‘forced drugging, kidnapping, rape and intimidation’ spanning more than 15 years from more than 30 women.” According to the *Los Angeles Times*, Tyrone A. Blackburn, the attorney representing several women accusing T.I. and Tiny of sexual abuse, called for investigations of the couple in Georgia and California. Blackburn said that “he had been contacted by more than 30 ‘women, survivors and witnesses’ who had allegations.”<sup>168</sup> Later, in March 2021, Blackburn told “the *Daily Beast* that since sending the letters, he has spoken with six new alleged victims of T.I. and Tiny.”<sup>169</sup>

The *New York Times* “spoke with five people who alleged — according to letters Blackburn said he sent to legal officials in California and Georgia — they were ‘drugged, raped or sexually assaulted by the Harrises or those in their orbit.’” The *New York Times* “also spoke to others who said they were told of the alleged episodes soon afterward.” It was reported “that in three of the cases, it had reviewed messages or photos supporting the timelines of events.”<sup>170</sup>

Steve Shadow, the attorney representing the Harrises, responded, “We are confident that if these claims are thoroughly and fairly investigated, no charges will be forthcoming. These allegations are nothing more than the continuation of a sordid shakedown campaign that began on social media. The Harrises implore everyone not to be taken in by these obvious attempts to manipulate the press and misuse the justice system.”<sup>171</sup>

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<sup>166</sup> [vulture.com, January 5, 2024](https://www.vulture.com/2024/01/ti-harris-lawsuit.html); [latimes.com, January 3, 2024](https://www.latimes.com/2024/01/03/ti-harris-lawsuit/)

<sup>167</sup> [vulture.com, January 5, 2024](https://www.vulture.com/2024/01/ti-harris-lawsuit.html); [latimes.com, January 3, 2024](https://www.latimes.com/2024/01/03/ti-harris-lawsuit/)

<sup>168</sup> [latimes.com, January 3, 2024](https://www.latimes.com/2024/01/03/ti-harris-lawsuit/); [latimes.com, March 1, 2021](https://www.latimes.com/2021/03/01/ti-harris-lawsuit/)

<sup>169</sup> [vulture.com, January 5, 2024](https://www.vulture.com/2024/01/ti-harris-lawsuit.html)

<sup>170</sup> [latimes.com, March 1, 2021](https://www.latimes.com/2021/03/01/ti-harris-lawsuit/)

<sup>171</sup> [latimes.com, March 1, 2021](https://www.latimes.com/2021/03/01/ti-harris-lawsuit/)

## Public Reckoning

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**MTV Entertainment paused filming of the fourth season of “T.I. & Tiny: Friends & Family Hustle” after the couple faced “a range of sexual abuse accusations.”**

In February 2021, after facing “a range of sexual abuse accusations,” MTV Entertainment paused filming of the fourth season of “T.I. & Tiny: Friends & Family Hustle.” *Deadline* reported, “According to sources, the decision to pause production was made mutually by MTV Entertainment, T.I. and Tameka Harris.” The show, which was produced by 51 Minds Entertainment, included events such as “T.I. hitting 40, releasing his latest album and becoming a professor at Clark Atlanta University, teaching a course on the ‘Business of Trap Music,’ as well as Tiny executive producing a new talk show.”<sup>172</sup> As of January 2024, there was no fourth season of the show on VH1’s website.<sup>173</sup>

## Cornell Haynes Jr. aka Nelly

### Allegations & Criminal Arrest

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**In 2017, rapper Nelly was arrested after Monique Greene sued him for allegedly sexually assaulting her on his tour bus during a tour stop in Washington State.**

In October 2017, the rapper Nelly was arrested for “alleged sexual assault during a tour stop in Washington state. The Auburn Police Department said in a statement that a woman called 911 at 3:48 a.m. Saturday and said she was assaulted by Nelly, whose given name is Cornell Haynes Jr. After a police investigation, Nelly was taken into custody an hour later.”<sup>174</sup> The woman was later identified as Monique Greene, who was 21 at the time. Greene did not pursue criminal charges but asked “for a judge to prohibit Nelly from assaulting more women, in addition to asking for damages.”<sup>175</sup> Greene’s lawsuit also included defamation charges against Nelly “after he publicly denied the incident,” according to an op-ed in the *Daily Beast* from entertainment reporter Kyndall Cunningham.<sup>176</sup>

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<sup>172</sup> [deadline.com, February 5, 2021](https://deadline.com/2021/02/ti-tiny-friends-family-hustle-paused-filming-123456789/)

<sup>173</sup> [vh1.com](https://www.vh1.com/shows/ti-tiny-friends-family-hustle/), accessed January 16, 2024

<sup>174</sup> [npr.org, October 7, 2017](https://www.npr.org/2017/10/07/464567890/)

<sup>175</sup> [npr.org, January 25, 2018](https://www.npr.org/2018/01/25/589012345/)

<sup>176</sup> [thedailybeast.com, Opinion, September 30, 2021](https://www.thedailybeast.com/opinion/september-30-2021/)

According to the lawsuit, Nelly invited Greene to an afterparty after his show in Washington, and then brought her to his tour bus in a Wal-Mart parking lot. Once aboard the bus, Nelly “allegedly took Greene to his bedroom at the rear of the bus, closed the door, and began masturbating in front of her. She says he proceeded to assault her, after she ‘refused to consent,’ and forced her into both oral and penetrative sex, pleading with her to stay with him all weekend. After the alleged assault, Greene says she screamed that she wanted to leave, and Nelly and his entourage pushed her off the bus, yelling at her. Greene says that the rapper then threw \$100 at her in the parking lot. She called both an Uber and 911, and waited for police to arrive to take a statement and transport her to a hospital.” Greene “completed a rape kit and showed signs of distress,” and the police “believed there was probable cause to arrest Nelly for second-degree rape.”<sup>177</sup>

**By 2018, two other women had publicly accused Nelly of sexual assault, which was included as anonymous testimony in Greene’s lawsuit.**

In January 2018, NPR announced that Nelly had been accused of sexual assault by two more women, whose anonymous testimonies were included in Greene’s lawsuit. The first Jane Doe, a U.S. military service member stationed in the U.K., alleged that in 2016, Nelly invited her backstage after one of his shows in England, “suddenly grabbed her leg and put his hand up her dress without her consent.” He then “allegedly argued with her and repeatedly tried to prevent her from leaving.”<sup>178</sup>

The second Jane Doe alleged Nelly invited her backstage after the show, where he “dropped his pants and began masturbating, tried to pull off her top without her consent, and tried to kiss her repeatedly. The woman, whom the suit notes is petite and stands 4’ 11”, allegedly attempted to ‘evade and refuse him’ multiple times. He also allegedly grabbed her hand and put it on his penis; when she again refused him, the suit says, he ‘made a fist,’ and she asked him if he was going to hit her. The woman says Nelly responded, ‘No, I’m just frustrated, I’m not used to not getting my way, just do it.’ He then allegedly forced her down and shoved his penis in her mouth before she was able to twist out of his reach and scramble out of the room.”<sup>179</sup>

**In 2021, a woman who accused rapper T.I. and his wife of sexual assault and human trafficking claimed that the couple forced her to have sex with Nelly in 2014.**

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<sup>177</sup> [npr.org, January 25, 2018](https://www.npr.org/2018/01/25/601111111)

<sup>178</sup> [npr.org, January 25, 2018](https://www.npr.org/2018/01/25/601111111)

<sup>179</sup> [npr.org, January 25, 2018](https://www.npr.org/2018/01/25/601111111)

In 2021, Nelly was implicated in the controversy surrounding sexual assault and human trafficking allegations against rapper T.I. and his wife Tiny Harris. As of May 2021, over two dozen women and at least one man “shared their stories of being forcibly drugged, trafficked and sexually assaulted by T.I., Tiny and their friends on multiple occasions.” One of these women, identified as Jane Doe 4, said the couple forced her to have sex with Nelly in 2014. The woman “said that she was approached by Tiny to become an assistant for her and T.I. in 2005, but things got out of hand quickly. She claims that she was never paid for the work she did for the family, and before long she was being forcibly drugged and sexually assaulted — similar to the allegations made by other women. Jane Doe 4 said that she was forced to have sex with Nelly in 2014. She also claimed that she was forced to have sex with other women often, and forced to take extreme doses of ecstasy.”<sup>180</sup>

## **Silencing & Retaliation Against Victims**

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**The women who were allegedly assaulted by Nelly reportedly did not pursue criminal charges because they were worried that they would not be supported by the criminal justice system or believed by the police.**

In December 2017, the prosecutor's office in King County, Washington said it would not proceed with a criminal case against Nelly because Greene “decided not to cooperate. This amended civil suit states that Greene declined to cooperate with prosecutors because ‘she felt she could not stand up against a celebrity and that the criminal system would fail her.’ The suit also notes that the date Greene declined to cooperate with prosecutors was the same day that actress Alyssa Milano began tweeting #MeToo and ‘brought momentum to the anti-sexual assault movement.’” According to the lawsuit, Jane Doe No. 2 also “considered going to the police but felt that she would not be believed.”<sup>181</sup>

Karen Koehler, Greene’s lawyer, wrote in a letter, “We do not live in a society where a 21 year old college student can feel safe enough to pursue criminal charges against a celebrity for an alleged rape. [...] People are saying horrible things [about her] already. [...] She cannot handle this. She is about to break.” Koehler wrote that they would put “a halt to the criminal investigation,” and the alleged victim “will not testify further in a criminal proceeding against [Nelly].” Koehler added, “She never wanted notoriety. She never wanted a dime from that man.”<sup>182</sup>

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<sup>180</sup> [popculture.com, May 16, 2021](https://www.popculture.com/story/nelly-tiny-harris-t.i.-sexual-assault-2021)

<sup>181</sup> [npr.org, January 25, 2018](https://www.npr.org/2018/01/25/601111111)

<sup>182</sup> [nylon.com, October 15, 2017](https://www.nylon.com/story/nelly-tiny-harris-t.i.-sexual-assault-2017)

Greene's lawsuit asserted “that after information about the alleged rape became public, Nelly's lawyer, Scott Rosenblum, made statements to the website TMZ last October that ‘constitutes intimidation of a witness.’ At the time, Rosenblum said: ‘It does not surprise me that she wanted to have her story publicized. That is Playbook 101 of a person with an agenda and clearly she has one. The agenda is money, fame and notoriety.’”<sup>183</sup>

**Nelly denied the sexual assault allegations against him and said he would “pursue every legal option to address this defaming claim.”**

In October 2017 following his arrest, Nelly tweeted, “I also want to thank my fans for their unwavering support. They know me. I assure you I will be vindicated. And I assure you, I will pursue every legal option to address this defaming claim. [...] I do want to apologize to my loved ones for the embarrassment and for putting myself in a situation where I could be victimized by this false and defaming allegation. [...] Let me say that I am beyond shocked that I have been targeted with this false allegation. I am completely innocent. I am confident that once the facts are looked at, it will be very clear that I am the victim of a false allegation.”<sup>184</sup>

Entertainment reporter Kyndall Cunningham noted in a *Daily Beast* op-ed that “Essex police also halted an investigation into the case of one of the English women, who accused Nelly of assaulting her after a gig at Cliffs Pavilion in Southend, due to her failure to testify. Nevertheless, Nelly publicly thanked U.K. police for ‘thoroughly investigating’ the allegations. His statement also included a section where he frustratingly mentions that he ‘stands with women and real survivors.’”<sup>185</sup>

**Nelly’s girlfriend Shantel Jackson was subpoenaed in Greene’s lawsuit after claiming the allegations were false and that she was with Nelly during the alleged incidents.**

In January 2018, Nelly’s longtime girlfriend Shantel Jackson “went to Instagram with a note in which she addressed the ‘false claims’ brought against her rapper boyfriend” by Greene. Jackson wrote, “Those dates these Jane Doe’s [sic] are claiming, I was at those venues, in the dressing rooms, and on that tour bus. [...] There are women dealing with real issues of sexual assault and for the first time people are listening and there is a chance for real change. But all of this work is discredited and makes things harder for survivors when people lie.”<sup>186</sup>

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<sup>183</sup> [npr.org](http://npr.org), January 25, 2018

<sup>184</sup> [essence.com](http://essence.com), October 26, 2020

<sup>185</sup> [thedailybeast.com](http://thedailybeast.com), Opinion, September 30, 2021

<sup>186</sup> [complex.com](http://complex.com), January 26, 2018

Greene subpoenaed Jackson to “testify over alibi claims where she [Jackson] asserts being with the rapper at the time of the alleged assault. [...] Court documents say Greene is requesting for Jackson’s deposition to be taped. The alleged victim would also like her to provide ‘all photographs, receipts, social media posts, airline tickets, bus tickets, phone records and other documents regarding her whereabouts.’”<sup>187</sup>

Following the subpoena, Jackson filed court documents “demanding to be let out of the woman’s lawsuit. [...] In newly filed court documents, Jackson says she did nothing wrong. She points out her tweet never even named the woman. [...] Jackson says her tweet was not defamatory and only contained her opinion. [...] She wants to be dismissed entirely from the case.”<sup>188</sup>

### **Other notable hip hop artists defended Nelly and criticized Greene.**

Following Greene’s lawsuit, paparazzi asked the singer Akon about “his thoughts on the rape allegations facing Nelly. The singer quickly defended the star, who he called ‘an amazing person,’ adding that the victim was either mistaken or likely looking for money.” The rapper T.I. “shared a video to Instagram in which he questioned what happens to women who lie about rape. Bringing up Mike Tyson and Tupac, who both faced rape allegations during their careers, T.I. asked, ‘What the f–k ever happened after the motherf–ker find out that the b–h was lying? What consequences is there for this young lady? Because we take ours. If more than 12 find her guilty, we got the answer for that. But, if they find out that wasn’t true, what the f–k happens to her?’”<sup>189</sup>

### **By October 2019, Nelly reached a settlement with both Greene and the second Jane Doe who had accused him of sexual assault.**

After Greene’s lawsuit was filed, Nelly countersued Greene for defamation, “contending their sexual encounter was consensual. His claims also were dropped under the dismissal agreement.” In September 2018, Nelly agreed to settle the lawsuit filed by Greene. The settlement terms were not disclosed, but Rosenblum said “that no money exchanged hands. Greene’s lawyer, Karen Koehler, disputes that assertion but said she couldn’t comment specifically. Asked by the newspaper if Greene still stands behind the allegations detailed in the lawsuit, Koehler said: ‘100 percent.’”<sup>190</sup>

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<sup>187</sup> [ebony.com](http://ebony.com), April 19, 2018

<sup>188</sup> [theblast.com](http://theblast.com), October 14, 2019

<sup>189</sup> [essence.com](http://essence.com), October 26, 2020

<sup>190</sup> [apnews.com](http://apnews.com), September 27, 2018

*Pitchfork* reported in October 2019 that Nelly reached a settlement with the second Jane Doe who “had filed her lawsuit against the singer in 2018. The suit reportedly claimed that Nelly masturbated in front of her without her consent, placed her hand on his penis, and pushed her head down to force her into oral sex on his tour bus while he was in Essex, England. Essex Police had previously dropped an investigation of the allegations. According to TMZ, the terms of the settlement agreement are confidential.”<sup>191</sup>

## Continued Work in Music Industry

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**Following the allegations against him, Nelly continued to work successfully in the music industry and received a lifetime achievement award from BET.**

In September 2021, entertainment reporter Kyndall Cunningham noted in a *Daily Beast* op-ed that despite the sexual assault allegations against him, Nelly’s career had “gained noticeable traction over the past year—thanks to the powerful PR that comes with participating in a Verzuz battle,” leading to “a new partnership with Burger King and lifetime achievement award from BET.”<sup>192</sup> He “competed on the 29th season of *Dancing with The Stars* in the fall of 2020 and placed third, despite the recency of those accusations.” Cunningham noted that a song Nelly released with Florida Georgia Line in 2021 went platinum and that his 2021 album *Heartland*, which “landed in the top 10 on the Billboard Top Country Albums chart,” was promoted on *Good Morning America*, *The Kelly Clarkson Show*, and *CMT Crossroads*.<sup>193</sup> Nelly also performed at the California Mid-State Fair in July 2023 with T.I. as a special guest.<sup>194</sup>

Cunningham argued in her op-ed that the industry’s disregard for Nelly’s alleged behavior was unsurprising because Nelly “sits at a tricky axis.” Cunningham elaborated, “as sociologist Tressie McMillan Cottom has written about radio host Charlamagne tha God in her book *THICK*, of ‘men that are not Bill Cosby big and men that did not mostly [assault] white women like Harvey Weinstein.’ Likewise, it’s easy to feign ignorance about an older, less relevant, non-white musician’s legal troubles, particularly in the currently oversaturated landscape of popular music and celebrities.”<sup>195</sup>

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<sup>191</sup> [pitchfork.com](https://pitchfork.com), October 24, 2019

<sup>192</sup> [thedailybeast.com](https://thedailybeast.com), Opinion, September 30, 2021

<sup>193</sup> [thedailybeast.com](https://thedailybeast.com), Opinion, September 30, 2021

<sup>194</sup> [midstatefair.com](https://midstatefair.com), Press Release, May 22, 2023

<sup>195</sup> [thedailybeast.com](https://thedailybeast.com), Opinion, September 30, 2021

# Don Henley

## Allegations & Criminal Conviction

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**In 1980, Eagles' drummer Don Henley was arrested after police found a naked 16-year-old girl suffering from a drug overdose in his house. Henley pleaded no contest to a misdemeanor charge of contributing to the delinquency of a minor.**

In November 1980, Eagles' drummer Don Henley, then 33 years old, "called the L.A. Fire Department, seeking medical aid for someone at his home who appeared to be having a seizure. That someone was a prostitute, who turned out to be suffering from aftereffects of Quaaludes and cocaine and who also turned out to be 16 years old. Hours later that day, police came to Henley's home and arrested him, after reportedly finding quantities of cocaine and marijuana in the house." The 16-year-old girl, who was found naked in Henley's home, was arrested as well, along with another 15-year-old girl "who was booked for being under the influence of drugs."<sup>196</sup> Henley pleaded no contest to a misdemeanor charge of contributing to the delinquency of a minor, was fined, and was given two years of probation.<sup>197</sup>

Henley told *GQ* in 1991, "I had no idea how old she was. I had no idea that she was doing that many drugs; I didn't have sex with her, you understand. Yes, she was a hooker; yes, I called a madam; yes, there were roadies and guys in my house—we were having a farewell to the Eagles. I got all of them out of the house; I took complete blame for everything. I was stupid; I could have flushed everything down the toilet. I didn't want this girl dying in my house; I wanted to get her medical attention. I did what I thought was best, and I paid the price."<sup>198</sup>

## Continued Work with WMG

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**Henley's arrest and misdemeanor charges regarding a minor had little effect on his musical career. His 1982 song "Dirty Laundry," possibly inspired by the incident, became his first No. 1 solo hit.**

In 1980, the *Los Angeles Times* reported, "Sources close to the Eagles' record [label] said the charges would have little or no effect on the group, which has a new live album high on the

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<sup>196</sup> [timesmachine.nytimes.com, November 26, 1980](https://www.nytimes.com/1980/11/26/nyregion/don-henley-arrested.html); [theguardian.com, October 1, 2015](https://www.theguardian.com/music/1980/oct/01/don-henley-arrested)

<sup>197</sup> [eaglesfans.com, August 1991](https://www.eaglesfans.com/1991/08/don-henley-arrested/), accessed via Archive.ph

<sup>198</sup> [eaglesfans.com, August 1991](https://www.eaglesfans.com/1991/08/don-henley-arrested/), accessed via Archive.ph



charts. ‘It’s no big deal,’ said one record exec. ‘Kids don’t exactly put rock stars on a pedestal these days.’”<sup>199</sup>

American Songwriter noted that while “the event caused a media frenzy around the singer,” Henley’s 1982 song “Dirty Laundry,” which was believed to be inspired by the media’s response to the arrest, became his “first No. 1 hit as a solo artist” and “reached the top of the Billboard Mainstream Rock chart and No. 3 on the Billboard Hot 100.”<sup>200</sup> The song was part of the album “I Can’t Stand Still,” which was released by the Warner Music Group label Asylum Records.<sup>201</sup>

## Daniel Hernandez aka Tekashi69

### Criminal Charges

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**Rapper Daniel Hernandez, known as Tekashi69 and 6ix9ine, pleaded guilty to felony counts of using a child for a sexual performance.**

In October 2017, Daniel Hernandez, the rapper known by names including Tekashi69 and 6ix9ine, “made his first appearance on the Billboard Hot 100 with his single ‘Gummo’” for Universal Music Group. The “record debuted at No. 58 and amassed over 29 million views on YouTube in just a month’s time.” By the end of 2017, it reached “No. 13 on the Hot 100.”<sup>202</sup>

While Hernandez achieved success in the charts, many were learning that “in 2015, the Brooklyn rapper known for his face tattoos and infamous WorldStar videos pled guilty to three felony counts in New York Supreme Court for use of a child in a sexual performance, stemming from an incident that occurred that same year with an underage girl.” According to Jezebel, “Rumblings of the incident were made public earlier this year via beefs with fellow rappers Zillakami and Trippie Redd, who started mentioning his case on social media. ‘I’m sorry brozay, 1400 don’t promote pedophiles,’ said Redd in a now-deleted Instagram video, according to Mass Appeal.”<sup>203</sup>

According to a complaint filed against Hernandez by the victim’s mother, who was unidentified, “in February 2015, she spotted three social media videos of her daughter allegedly ‘having sexual

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<sup>199</sup> [newspapers.com, November 30, 1980](#)

<sup>200</sup> [americansongwriter.com, July 14, 2023](#)

<sup>201</sup> [discogs.com](#), accessed August 2, 2023

<sup>202</sup> [billboard.com, December 14, 2017](#)

<sup>203</sup> [billboard.com, December 14, 2017](#); [jezebel.com, December 14, 2017](#)

contact with two adult males.’ The two men in question were identified as Hernandez and a separately-charged defendant, Tyquan Anderson. The complaint details the alleged victim engaging in ‘oral sexual intercourse’ with Anderson while Hernandez ‘stood behind the child making a thrusting motion with his pelvis and smacking her on her buttocks’ in one video.”<sup>204</sup>

In October 2015, Hernandez pleaded guilty “to using a child in a sexual performance when he was 18. In a video, posted online, a 13-year-old girl was seen engaging in oral intercourse while Tekashi stood behind her.” Under conditions of his plea deal, Hernandez “agreed not to commit another offence for two years so that he wouldn’t have to register as a sex offender. However, if he breached that plea deal he was told he could face up to three years in prison.”<sup>205</sup>

Tyquan Anderson, the second defendant in the case, pleaded guilty in February 2018 “to possession of a sexual performance by a child and was sentenced to 1.5 to 3 years in prison. Hernandez, despite his guilty plea, has vehemently denied the allegations in interviews with YouTube hip-hop vloggers Adam22 of No Jumper and DJ Akademiks, saying the alleged victim lied about her age, claiming that she was 19 years old at the time of the incident. In an interview with XXL, 6x9ine mocked his detractors about the allegations pinned against him.”<sup>206</sup>

## Continued Work With UMG

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**After Hernandez’s sexual assault charges were widely reported, he signed a \$10 million record deal with 10K Projects, the label founded by the son of Universal Music Group’s CEO, Lucian Grainge. In September 2023, 10K became a standalone label under Warner Music Group.**

*Billboard* reported that Hernandez was “the latest in a line of new wave viral rappers gaining steam on the scene, despite disturbing legal controversies.” In October 2019, Hernandez was “awaiting sentencing on racketeering and firearms charges. He was first arrested in November 2018 and had been set to face a mandatory minimum sentence of 47 years after pleading guilty to a number of the charges, but he entered into a co-operation agreement with the federal government shortly after his arrest in a bid to reduce his sentence.”<sup>207</sup> Page Six included the following photo of Hernandez when he petitioned the court to make music videos while under home confinement.<sup>208</sup>

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<sup>204</sup> [billboard.com](http://billboard.com), December 14, 2017

<sup>205</sup> [bbc.com](http://bbc.com), August 11, 2018

<sup>206</sup> [billboard.com](http://billboard.com), December 14, 2017

<sup>207</sup> [billboard.com](http://billboard.com), December 14, 2017; [nme.com](http://nme.com), October 10, 2019

<sup>208</sup> [pagesix.com](http://pagesix.com), April 23, 2020



Hernandez “signed a new record deal while in prison.” According to reports from TMZ and *Billboard*, Hernandez scored himself a “payday worth in excess of \$10 million if he holds up his end of the contract. As part of the deal repping with 10K, the Brooklyn native will be on the hook for a pair of albums — one in English, the other in Spanish.”<sup>209</sup>

According to Music Business Worldwide, 10k Projects was “a Los Angeles-based record company founded by Elliot Grainge.” US Weekly reported Elliott Grainge’s father, “Lucian Grainge, has been the chief executive officer of Universal Music Group since 2011.”<sup>210</sup> Music Week noted in February 2022 that 10K Projects’ music “is distributed via Universal Music Group’s independent distribution division, Virgin Music.”<sup>211</sup>

In September 2023, “Warner Music Group and Elliot Grainge’s 10K Projects announced a new joint venture,” where “10K will become a standalone label under the WMG umbrella.” According to *Billboard*, “As part of the switch from UMG to WMG, Eliot Grainge will remain as 10K’s CEO, and co-presidents Zach Friedman and Tony Talamo will also remain in place atop the label’s leadership ranks. Additionally, Grainge will join WMG’s global leadership team, the company said.”<sup>212</sup>

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<sup>209</sup> [billboard.com](https://www.billboard.com), October 10, 2019

<sup>210</sup> [musicbusinessworldwide.com](https://www.musicbusinessworldwide.com), accessed July 28, 2023; [usmagazine.com](https://www.usmagazine.com), April 8, 2021; [latimes.com](https://www.latimes.com), April 20, 2023

<sup>211</sup> [musicweek.com](https://www.musicweek.com), February 9, 2022; [musicbusinessworldwide.com](https://www.musicbusinessworldwide.com), accessed July 28, 2023

<sup>212</sup> [billboard.com](https://www.billboard.com), September 5, 2023

# Jacob Hoggard

## Allegations & Criminal Conviction

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**Jacob Hoggard was sentenced to five years in prison after being accused of raping a woman in Toronto in 2016. He also allegedly raped and assaulted a teenager, though those charges were ultimately dismissed.**

In October 2022, Jacob Hoggard, front man for the Canadian band Hedley, was sentenced to five years in prison after he was found guilty “of sexually assaulting an Ottawa woman in what the presiding judge called a ‘particularly degrading rape.’” Hoggard’s victim alleged that Hoggard raped her in 2016 at a Toronto hotel room and “told Hoggard’s sentencing hearing that what happened will haunt her for the rest of her life.” The Ontario Superior Court justice overseeing the case “said she accepted the woman’s testimony in its entirety and said it involved ‘gratuitous degradation’ and ‘gratuitous violence.’” According to the woman, “Hoggard choked her so hard she thought she was going to die. She testified the sexual assault lasted for hours.”<sup>213</sup>

According to the woman, “Hoggard raped her in a hotel room and choked, slapped and spit on her. He also dragged her across the floor by her legs.” She claimed that “Hoggard choked her so hard she thought she was going to die. She testified the sexual assault lasted for hours.” A civil complaint related to the alleged rape claimed that “Hoggard engaged in a pattern of behaviour that was intended to make the plaintiff feel that her safety was in jeopardy.”<sup>214</sup>

According to *Billboard*, “Hoggard was found guilty of one count of sexual assault causing bodily harm.” However, he “was found not guilty of groping and raping a teenage fan” at the same trial, who was a minor. That individual “said Hoggard pushed her face into the pillows, making it difficult for her to breathe.”<sup>215</sup>

In October 2022, the woman who alleged she was assaulted by Hoggard sued him for \$2.8 million, claiming “that in addition to mental anguish, the incident left her unable to complete her education and impaired both her physical and emotional wellbeing.”<sup>216</sup>

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<sup>213</sup> [theguardian.com, October 20, 2022](https://www.theguardian.com/2022/oct/20/jacob-hoggard-sentenced)

<sup>214</sup> [theguardian.com, October 20, 2022](https://www.theguardian.com/2022/oct/20/jacob-hoggard-sentenced); [toronto.ctvnews.ca, October 5, 2022](https://toronto.ctvnews.ca/2022/oct/5/jacob-hoggard-sentenced)

<sup>215</sup> [billboard.com, October 20, 2022](https://www.billboard.com/2022/oct/20/jacob-hoggard-sentenced); [toronto.ctvnews.ca, October 5, 2022](https://toronto.ctvnews.ca/2022/oct/5/jacob-hoggard-sentenced); [northernontario.ctvnews.ca, June 1, 2022](https://northernontario.ctvnews.ca/2022/june/1/jacob-hoggard-sentenced)

<sup>216</sup> [toronto.ctvnews.ca, October 5, 2022](https://toronto.ctvnews.ca/2022/oct/5/jacob-hoggard-sentenced)

**While he was awaiting the verdict in his 2022 sexual assault trial, Hoggard was charged in a separate sexual assault involving a 19-year-old woman in 2016.**

In March 2022, Hoggard was charged “with sexual assault causing bodily harm in an incident alleged to have taken place on June 25, 2016 in Kirkland Lake, Ont.” involving a 19-year-old woman. The charge came as Hoggard was already “awaiting a verdict in his sexual assault trial.”<sup>217</sup> In an interview with CBC News, the woman said she “was hoping for a moment to discuss music and play guitar with Hoggard. Instead, she claims he raped and degraded her.” She “alleged that Hoggard forced himself on her ... at the Comfort Inn in Kirkland Lake, where the band was staying.” The woman stated, “He knew what he was doing was wrong and he did it anyway.”<sup>218</sup>

The woman alleged that in June 2016, she “attended a Hedley concert at the Joe Mavrinnac Community Complex in Kirkland Lake with a family member. After the concert, she hopped in a van that was taking fans to the Comfort Inn to party with the band. The woman's relative did not go with her. While hanging out at a campfire pit in the woods behind the hotel, the woman said, she drank multiple Coors Lite beers with the band. She became drunk and said that's when Hoggard took her to his hotel room.”<sup>219</sup>

Inside the hotel room, the woman “saw several guitars and hoped she and Hoggard could ‘jam’ together. She said he accused her of being ‘talky, talky,’ took away her phone, then assaulted her.” The woman claimed that even though she attempted to rebuff his advances, Hoggard “took off her clothes and took a naked photo of her without her consent. He then undressed himself, revealing tattoos of a snake and what looked like a panther on his body.” She said, “He acted like he owned me, like he could do whatever he wanted.”<sup>220</sup>

The woman said she pushed Hoggard “off her as he tried to kiss her. She said she fought off his attempt to anally penetrate her, but was vaginally raped. ‘I was fighting him the whole time. I felt stuck while he was on top of me. He was very strong,’ said the woman. She told CBC she screamed for him to stop.” The woman said that during the assault, “Hoggard alternated between calling her a ‘dirty little piggy’ and a ‘good girl.’ The woman alleged that he choked her during sex and slapped her, leaving a red handprint on her thigh ‘that lasted a week.’ After the alleged assault, the complainant said she felt so nauseated that she went into the bathroom to vomit.”<sup>221</sup>

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<sup>217</sup> [northernontario.ctvnews.ca](http://northernontario.ctvnews.ca), June 1, 2022

<sup>218</sup> [cbc.ca](http://cbc.ca), May 31, 2022

<sup>219</sup> [cbc.ca](http://cbc.ca), May 31, 2022

<sup>220</sup> [cbc.ca](http://cbc.ca), May 31, 2022

<sup>221</sup> [cbc.ca](http://cbc.ca), May 31, 2022

## Public Reckoning

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**As allegations against Hoggard began to surface in February 2018, Hedley was dropped from its management, and its music was pulled from Canadian radio stations and the CBC Music streaming service.**

In February 2018, in wake of the #MeToo movement, “claims of sexual misconduct and inappropriate encounters with young fans against” Hoggard and his bandmates began to surface from anonymous Twitter users. Hoggard “had risen to fame in 2004 on the long-canceled television show *Canadian Idol*, finishing in the top three before signing with Universal Music Canada for his band Hedley. Capitol signed them in the U.S. in 2006 but later dropped them. In Canada, the band’s success included chart-topping singles, platinum certifications and headlining tours.”<sup>222</sup>

According to the *Toronto Star*, beginning in February 2018, Taylor Bowman, age 21, shared “accounts on Twitter of sexual misconduct by Jacob Hoggard using the hashtag #outHedley2k18, including a claim that he grabbed her buttocks outside a bar in Manitoba in 2015.” She asked “for other ‘creepy’ accounts,” telling “the CBC she receive[d] 50 to 60 submissions, including some that are extremely serious or allegedly involve minors.” Bowman then shared “some of these accounts publicly and other people also began posting allegations using the same hashtag.”<sup>223</sup> The *Vancouver Sun* noted that Hedley, along with singer R. Kelly, appeared to be the “first in a wave of Twitter campaigns against musicians inspired by the #MeToo movement that has cut a swath through Hollywood’s elite.”<sup>224</sup>

As the number of allegations against Hoggard continued to grow, *CBC News* reported that the reaction from the music industry was “swift and strong. Within days the quartet was dropped by its management team, ditched by the opening acts on their cross-Canada tour and blacklisted by radio stations including the CBC and more than a hundred Bell Media outlets.”<sup>225</sup> Chris Crippen, a former drummer for Hedley who was fired in 2017, told *CBC News* in November 2018 that “he was surprised by how quickly his former band was taken down by the #MeToo movement.”<sup>226</sup>

Following the flurry of allegations, Hedley was “dropped by its management team.” Watchdog Management and the Feldman Agency said in a statement, “Given the multiple allegations against Hedley, we have taken the decision to terminate our business relationships with the

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<sup>222</sup> [toronto.ctvnews.ca](http://toronto.ctvnews.ca), October 20, 2022; [billboard.com](http://billboard.com), October 20, 2022

<sup>223</sup> [pressreader.com](http://pressreader.com), October 6, 2022

<sup>224</sup> [vancouversun.com](http://vancouversun.com), February 16, 2018

<sup>225</sup> [cbc.ca](http://cbc.ca), February 18, 2018

<sup>226</sup> [cbc.ca](http://cbc.ca), November 8, 2018

band, effective immediately.” Additionally, Chorus Radio announced it had “temporarily suspended all airplay of Hedley songs across its 30 music stations, as have stations in Edmonton and Vancouver.” CBC Music also “dropped all of Hedley’s music from its streaming service and on radio,” and Bell Media “removed Hedley songs from its radio stations.”<sup>227</sup>

Addressing the allegations on Facebook, “Hoggard and band members Dave Rosin, Tommy Mac and Jay Benison noted the music industry ‘does not exactly have an enviable history of treating women with the respect they deserve’ and acknowledged that in the past they have ‘engaged in a lifestyle that incorporated certain rock 'n' roll clichés.’”<sup>228</sup>

## Jermaine Jackson

### Allegations

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**Rita Barrett filed suit against Jermaine Jackson of the Jackson 5, alleging he forced himself into her home and “with force and violence sexually assaulted” her. She claimed Berry Gordy, founder of Motown Records, “withheld and concealed the acts.”**

In December 2023, Rita Barrett filed a civil suit in Los Angeles Superior Court accusing Jermaine Jackson, a founding member of the Jackson 5, “of sexual abuse, sexual battery, sexual assault, harassment and rape relating to an incident that she says happened at her Los Angeles home in 1988.” The suit was filed under California’s Sexual Abuse and Cover-Up Accountability Act and also named “Jermaine L. Jackson Music Productions and Work Records, a business Mr. Jackson founded,” as defendants.<sup>229</sup>

Barrett’s lawsuit stated, “Defendant Jackson forced himself into Plaintiff’s home, and with force and violence sexually assaulted Plaintiff,” and “Plaintiff, a woman of faith[,] prayed to God for help. During the assault, Plaintiff feared for her life. After the assault and when Defendant Jackson was satiated, he left the residence.” Barrett said she suffered “severe emotional, physical and psychological injury, including humiliation, shame, and guilt, economic loss, economic capacity and permanent emotional distress.” Jeff Anderson, Barrett’s attorney, said, “Rita Barrett suffered an egregious and violent sexual assault,” adding, “This is about her power and

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<sup>227</sup> [cbc.ca](http://cbc.ca), February 16, 2018

<sup>228</sup> [cbc.ca](http://cbc.ca), February 18, 2018

<sup>229</sup> [nytimes.com](https://www.nytimes.com), December 29, 2023

the declaration of it when she learned something could be done under the law, and she found the strength and support to find us and is now standing up for herself and others.”<sup>230</sup>

According to the *New York Times*, Barrett said “she came into contact with Mr. Jackson through her role as a musician’s contractor and as a member of a union that represents musicians. The complaint says she also knew Mr. Jackson through Berry Gordy, the founder of Motown Records.” Her lawsuit claimed “that she told Mr. Gordy what happened [with Jackson] the following day, but he ‘withheld and concealed the acts, further perpetuating the coverup and allowing Mr. Gordy, Defendant Jackson and others in the business relationship to continue to reap profits derived from Mr. Jackson’s work and reputation for years to come.’”<sup>231</sup>

After the lawsuit was filed, “Michael Pellegrino, president of Artists Management Agency, which has represented Mr. Jackson since 2014, said the agency would be parting ways with the musician because of the suit.” Pellegrino wrote in a statement to the *New York Times*, “We have a zero-tolerance policy concerning these matters.” He added, “We wish him well but we must feel comfortable about who we represent and unfortunately at this moment we must take in consideration our other clients who do not feel comfortable with the current allegations.”<sup>232</sup>

## Melissa Viviane Jefferson aka Lizzo

### Allegations

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**In August 2023, three of Lizzo’s former tour dancers filed a lawsuit against the singer for sexual harassment, assault, and creating a hostile work environment.**

In August 2023, dancers Crystal Williams, Arianna Davis, and Noelle Rodriguez filed a lawsuit in Los Angeles County Superior Court against the singer Lizzo (whose legal name is Melissa Jefferson), as well as her dance captain Shirlene Quigley and Big Grrrl Big Touring Inc (BGBT). The suit accused Lizzo of sexual harassment, assault, and creating a hostile work environment, among other damages. The plaintiffs alleged that Lizzo created a “hostile work environment” due to harassment that was “sufficiently extreme and totally pervasive,” including “repeated exposure of Plaintiffs to nudity against their will, and pervasive habit of sharing lewd fantasies and tales of sexual encounters.” The plaintiffs said that because of these experiences, they suffered “substantial losses in earnings, other employment benefits, physical injuries, physical

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<sup>230</sup> [rollingstone.com, December 28, 2023](https://www.rollingstone.com/music/music-news/lizzo-lawsuit-2023-12-29/); [nytimes.com, December 29, 2023](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/29/arts/music/lizzo-lawsuit.html)

<sup>231</sup> [nytimes.com, December 29, 2023](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/29/arts/music/lizzo-lawsuit.html)

<sup>232</sup> [nytimes.com, December 29, 2023](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/29/arts/music/lizzo-lawsuit.html)



sickness, as well as emotional distress, plus medical expenses, future medical expenses, and attorneys' fees.”<sup>233</sup>

According to the suit, in February 2023, Lizzo invited dancers to an Amsterdam club called Bananenbar after a show, and while “attendance was not mandatory,” it was understood that “those who attended after-party events Lizzo planned were often favored, selected to perform with Lizzo at shows outside of regularly scheduled tour dates, and were widely considered to enjoy greater job security.” At the club, Lizzo “began inviting cast members to take turns touching the nude performers, catching dildos launched from the performers' vaginas, and eating bananas protruding from the performers' vaginas. Lizzo then turned her attention to Ms. Davis and began pressuring Ms. Davis to touch the breasts [of] one of the nude women performing at the club.” After articulating her discomfort multiple times, “a mortified Ms. Davis acquiesced.”<sup>234</sup>

The suit also alleged that while at Bananenbar, Lizzo “badgered the security guard to get on the club's stage until he submitted to her demands. When he got on the stage, his pants were pulled down, exposing his buttocks. Lizzo then began yelling, ‘take it off!’ while a club performer hit the security guard with whips.”<sup>235</sup>

The lawsuit described a rehearsal in April 2023 in which Lizzo required all dancers “to re-audition for their spots” and held “an excruciating re-audition in which the dancers repeatedly ran through the entire ninety-minute show. What was supposed to be an eight-hour rehearsal was extended to almost twelve hours. The re-audition was brutal as the dancers were not allowed a break.” Out of fear of being fired for leaving the stage, Davis “lost control of her bladder” and “remained on stage, dancing in soiled clothes” until there was eventually a brief break.<sup>236</sup>

According to the lawsuit, Lizzo and her choreographer Tanisha Scott called Davis into a private meeting in April 2023 in which they “pressed Ms. Davis for an explanation why she seemed less bubbly and vivacious than she did prior to the tour.” According to the suit, these “questions about Ms. Davis's commitment to the tour were thinly veiled concerns about Ms. Davis's weight gain, which Lizzo had previously called attention to after noticing it at the South by Southwest music festival.”<sup>237</sup>

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<sup>233</sup> [Davis, Williams, Rodriguez V Lizzo, et al](#), accessed August 3, 2023

<sup>234</sup> [Davis, Williams, Rodriguez V Lizzo, et al](#), accessed August 3, 2023

<sup>235</sup> [Davis, Williams, Rodriguez V Lizzo, et al](#), accessed August 3, 2023

<sup>236</sup> [Davis, Williams, Rodriguez V Lizzo, et al](#), accessed August 3, 2023

<sup>237</sup> [Davis, Williams, Rodriguez V Lizzo, et al](#), accessed August 3, 2023

The lawsuit alleged that after Lizzo fired Davis for recording a cast meeting on her phone, Rodriguez resigned, which “drew both Ms. Quigley’s and Lizzo’s ire. [...] Lizzo aggressively approached Ms. Rodriguez, cracking her knuckles, balling her fists, and exclaiming, ‘You’re lucky. You’re so fucking lucky!’ Ms. Rodriguez feared that Lizzo intended to hit her and would have done so if one of the other dancers had not intervened. Neither security nor management did anything to de-escalate the situation. As Lizzo left the room, she raised both her middle fingers and yelled, ‘Bye, bitch!’”<sup>238</sup>

The lawsuit also alleged that BGBT management “treated the black members of the dance team differently than other members. BGBT’s management team consisted almost entirely of white Europeans who often accused the black members of the dance team of being lazy, unprofessional, and having bad attitudes. Not only do these words ring familiar as tropes used to disparage and discourage black women from advocating for themselves, but the same accusations were not levied against dancers who are not black.”<sup>239</sup>

According to *Vox*, the lawsuit against Lizzo “underscores the poor working conditions in the music industry, and the lack of accountability that exists for such abuses. Long hours, difficult physical labor, and short-term contracts are common, while institutional oversight of individual artists isn’t always present. [...] The suit is also renewing discussions among pop culture observers online about the need for stars to be held responsible for bad behavior and the disparities that continue to exist on that front. Like anyone fielding such allegations, Lizzo should face the legal process and potential consequences for any harm she’s caused. But she’s also likely to get more blowback for such a lawsuit than a white, male star — like Brad Pitt or Johnny Depp, both of whom have fielded allegations of abuse (and denied them) — would due to the sexism, racism, and fatphobia she has to deal with.”<sup>240</sup>

**Following news of the lawsuit, several other individuals who worked with Lizzo in the past shared personal accounts of negative experiences working with her.**

In August 2023, Oscar-nominated filmmaker Sophia Nahli Allison, who left the production of Lizzo's documentary “Love, Lizzo” in 2019, wrote on her Instagram page, “I usually do not comment on anything pop culture related. But, in 2019, I traveled a bit with Lizzo to be the director of her documentary. I walked away after about two weeks. I was treated with such disrespect by her. I witnessed how arrogant and unkind she is. I was not protected and was thrown into a shitty situation with little support. My spirit said to run as fast as you fucking can and I’m so grateful I trusted my gut. I felt gaslit and was deeply hurt but I’ve healed. Reading

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<sup>238</sup> [Davis, Williams, Rodriguez V Lizzo, et al](#), accessed August 3, 2023

<sup>239</sup> [Davis, Williams, Rodriguez V Lizzo, et al](#), accessed August 3, 2023

<sup>240</sup> [vox.com, August 3, 2023](#)

these reports made me realize how dangerous of a situation it was. This kind of abuse of power happens far too often. Much love and support to the dancers.”<sup>241</sup>

Allison also posted on Instagram, “To be clear. Since I’ve spoken out, I’ve had others privately share their very similar experiences, and I have also been affirmed by people who witnessed what I went through. Lizzo creates an extremely toxic and hostile working environment and undermines the work, labor, and authority of other black and brown womxn in the process. (Notice how the documentary ended up being directed by a cis white man.) She is a narcissistic bully and has built her brand off of lies. I was excited to support and protect a Black woman through the documentary process but quickly learned her image and ‘message’ was a curated facade. I stand with the dancers and anyone who has had similar experiences working with her and her team. These working conditions are not ok.”<sup>242</sup>

According to *Newsweek*, Charlene Sanchez, who was also a part of the attempted documentary in 2019, “backed up filmmaker Allison’s claim on Instagram. ‘This is all true. I had to vent to so many of my friends about it. It was such a small crew and the experience of working with Lizzo was a nightmare,’ Sanchez wrote.”<sup>243</sup>

Ron Zambrano, the attorney for the three dancers who sued Lizzo, “said his firm was reviewing at least six further complaints against the singer from people who toured with her or worked on her reality show Lizzo’s Watch Out for the Big Grrrls.”<sup>244</sup> According to *Newsweek*, another “former dancer who worked with Lizzo, Courtney Hollinquest, spoke out on her Instagram stories and confirmed that while she’s not part of the lawsuit, she agrees with the things Lizzo is accused of. ‘This was very much my experience in my time there. Big shoutout to the dancers who had the courage to bring this to light,’ Hollinquest wrote.” Additionally, “Lizzo’s former creative director, Quinn Wilson, agreed with Hollinquest’s statement. ‘I haven’t been a part of that world for three years, for a reason. I very much applaud the dancers’ courage to bring this to light. And I grieve parts of my own experience. I’d appreciate space to understand my feelings,’ she wrote.”<sup>245</sup>

### **In August 2023, Lizzo hired Marty Singer, who represented Bill Cosby and Chris Brown, to defend herself in the lawsuit.**

In August 2023, *Vibe* reported that Lizzo “hired ‘Hollywood Bulldog’ attorney Marty Singer to help fight against her ongoing lawsuit. Singer has assisted multiple high-profile clients in

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<sup>241</sup> [variety.com, August 2, 2023](https://www.variety.com/2023/08/02/lizzo-lawsuit/)

<sup>242</sup> [variety.com, August 2, 2023](https://www.variety.com/2023/08/02/lizzo-lawsuit/)

<sup>243</sup> [newsweek.com, August 2, 2023](https://www.newsweek.com/2023/08/02/lizzo-lawsuit/)

<sup>244</sup> [theguardian.com, August 9, 2023](https://www.theguardian.com/2023/08/09/lizzo-lawsuit/)

<sup>245</sup> [newsweek.com, August 2, 2023](https://www.newsweek.com/2023/08/02/lizzo-lawsuit/)

fighting suits over the years, ranging from defamation to wrongful death, and more. The acclaimed lawyer’s clientele includes Bill Cosby, Chris Brown, Tristan Thompson, Kim Kardashian, Jim Carrey, Jonah Hill, and others.” Singer sent TMZ “an audition video showing Davis gushing about her time spent with the Special artist on Watch Out For The Big Grrrls. Davis praises Lizzo, giving a glowing review of her as an entertainer and person before ‘shooting her shot.’” Singer said of the video, “These do not sound like the words of someone who was harassed or discriminated against by someone they described as ‘THE QUEEN.’”<sup>246</sup>

**In August 2023, Lizzo countersued her accusers “in an attempt to repair the damage to her reputation.”**

In August 2023, *Essence* reported that Lizzo was countersuing her former backup dancers “in an attempt to repair the damage to her reputation. Marty Singer, Lizzo’s lawyer, alleges that the plaintiffs exhibited hypocritical behavior, as evidenced by photos of the dancers ‘happily cavorting backstage’ with performers from Crazy Horse’s topless cabaret show on March 5, 2023 in Paris – after they claimed Lizzo pressured them into attending the performance while on tour in the lawsuit.” Trial attorney Brian G. Buckmire said, “The difficulty with winning a malicious prosecution claim is 1) having a favorable outcome in the original case against Lizzo and 2) showing there was no reasonable grounds for the original suit. [...] The dancers have some strong claims, like failure to remedy a sexual harassment and sexual harassment that created a hostile work environment.” Buckmire added, “She has to not only prove the dancers were wrong about these claims but that they knew it at the time. Not just that they have a differing opinion of what happened.”<sup>247</sup>

## Robert Kelly aka R. Kelly

### Allegations & Criminal Charges

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**Executives at R. Kelly’s labels, including at Sony, ignored reports of sex abuse by Kelly going back to the 1990s and as he was investigated for a sex tape with an alleged minor in 2002.**

In May 2018, the *Washington Post* reported, “For more than two decades, the recording industry turned a blind eye to Kelly’s behavior as his career continued to thrive and he was afforded every luxury of a chart-topping superstar. A *Washington Post* investigation found that

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<sup>246</sup> [vibe.com, August 4, 2023](https://www.vibe.com/story/lizzo-lawsuit-2023)

<sup>247</sup> [essence.com, August 29, 2023](https://www.essence.com/story/lizzo-lawsuit-2023)

this disregard for R. Kelly's alleged behavior played out on many levels, from the billionaire record executive who first signed the dynamic young vocalist in the early 1990s to the low-paid assistants who arranged flights, food and bathroom breaks for his traveling entourage of young women." The *Washington Post* noted that the "chilling code of silence remains today."<sup>248</sup>

In 1994, "Kelly's tour manager Demetrius Smith recalls warning Clive Calder, the founder of Jive Records, the first label to sign Kelly." Smith told the *Washington Post* that he recalled telling Calder, "I said, 'Clive, you all need to tell him that you all aren't going to put out his records if he continues to have these incidents with these girls after the show.' [...] Because it was going on at every show." The *Washington Post* described a "culture of open secrets and official avoidance [that] became entrenched around the time of Kelly's relationship with Aaliyah Haughton," who was 15 when R. Kelly married her in 1994 without her parents' permission. Smith said he took Aaliyah "to get a fake ID stating that she was 18" so they could be married. When the two appeared on BET's "Video Soul" that summer before the marriage, co-host Leslie Sugar remembered "Jive representatives telling BET it should not ask about their personal relationship or Aaliyah's age."<sup>249</sup>

Aaliyah's uncle, Barry Hankerson, was Kelly's manager at the time. Later, in 1994, after her parents had the marriage expunged, Hankerson and Aaliyah's parents "came to Calder's office. There was no talk of reprimanding Kelly." Calder recalled, "they basically tell me they want a release from the contract," as they believed "Aaliyah would never get the proper promotion if she was on the same label as Kelly. Calder agreed to let her leave, but only after securing a percentage of her future album sales on a new label. One thing Calder didn't do: Press pause on Kelly's recording career." Hankerson also told the *Post* in 2018 that "he was 'legally' prohibited from discussing Kelly."<sup>250</sup>

In 2002, as "police were investigating a sex tape that appeared to show the R&B superstar with a 14-year-old girl," David McPherson, an executive at Epic Records, owned by Sony, willfully ignored the sex tape. Rocky Bivens, an assistant to Kelly, recalled McPherson asking him if reports of the tape were true, with Bivens asking McPherson if he watched the tape. Neither had. Bivens said he told McPherson, "Because, Dave, if I watch the tape and that's him, I'm gone and you're not getting those records. [...] I'm glad you did not watch those tapes."<sup>251</sup> In 2002, Kelly also faced child pornography charges in Florida that were dropped as the judge agreed with Kelly's defense that the images were illegally seized.<sup>252</sup>

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<sup>248</sup> [washingtonpost.com, May 4, 2018](https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/local/2018/05/04/r-kelly-aaliyah-haughton-relationship-1994-2002/2018/05/04/)

<sup>249</sup> [washingtonpost.com, May 4, 2018](https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/local/2018/05/04/r-kelly-aaliyah-haughton-relationship-1994-2002/2018/05/04/)

<sup>250</sup> [washingtonpost.com, May 4, 2018](https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/local/2018/05/04/r-kelly-aaliyah-haughton-relationship-1994-2002/2018/05/04/)

<sup>251</sup> [washingtonpost.com, May 4, 2018](https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/local/2018/05/04/r-kelly-aaliyah-haughton-relationship-1994-2002/2018/05/04/)

<sup>252</sup> [bbc.com, February 24, 2023](https://www.bbc.com/news/entertainment-arts-57184444)

Larry Khan, then a senior vice president for marketing at Jive, “said he had no problem working with Kelly even after seeing a clip of the singer’s sex tape,” questioning “whether it’s a record company’s duty to deal with a performer’s offstage behavior, referencing stars such as Jerry Lee Lewis and Chuck Berry, who also consorted with young girls.” He said, “Should NBC have stopped Mr. Cosby?”<sup>253</sup> Khan went on to work for UMG’s Interscope Records until his retirement in 2021.<sup>254</sup>

Despite over 20 years of alleged “sexually abusive behavior by Kelly toward young women” and minors, “RCA — Kelly’s label home for the entirety of his solo career, both directly and as part of its partnership with Jive Records (which merged with RCA in 2007) — has stood by the singer, primarily, sources tell *Variety*, because he has never been convicted of a crime and has steadfastly maintained his innocence.” Leslie Frank, an entertainment attorney and partner at King, Homes, Paterno & Soriano, said “that some major-label contracts have provisions stating that if [an artist is] ‘convicted of a felony or a crime of moral turpitude, generally speaking it is the label’s right to terminate the contract,’”<sup>255</sup> something that didn’t happen to Kelly until September 2021 when he was found guilty of sex trafficking, producing child sex abuse materials, and witness intimidation, among other charges, in U.S. District Court in New York. Kelly was subsequently found guilty of similar charges in U.S. District Court in Chicago in September 2022.<sup>256</sup>

Nevertheless, Frank said, “Any record company — or, really, any party to any contract — can decide they no longer want to be in the contract. [...] The question is what can happen as a result of them asserting their desire to terminate the term of the agreement. R. Kelly could sue for damages. If R. Kelly does not want to terminate the agreement and instigates a dispute saying that it’s a breach of contract by RCA, if RCA is concerned about the cost of litigation and how a court might decide, they could try to come to a settlement with R. Kelly.”<sup>257</sup>

**Parents and “former members of Kelly’s inner circle” said he held “women against their will in an abusive ‘cult’” where he controlled “every aspect of their lives,” and women who disobeyed him were punished with physical and verbal abuse.**

In 2017, *BuzzFeed News* published a report titled “Parents Told Police Their Daughter Is Being Held Against Her Will In R. Kelly’s “Cult” that centered on the experience of “J.” and “Tim,” parents whose daughter met Kelly when she was 19 years old. The parents alleged “that R. Kelly is keeping women against their will in an abusive ‘cult’ that’s tearing families apart.” Speaking

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<sup>253</sup> [washingtonpost.com, May 4, 2018](https://www.washingtonpost.com/entertainment/music/r-kelly-sex-tape-clip-2018/)

<sup>254</sup> [hitsdailydouble.com, June 30, 2020](https://www.hitsdailydouble.com/news/r-kelly-umg-interscope-records-2021/); [universalmusic.com](https://www.universalmusic.com/), accessed August 1, 2023

<sup>255</sup> [variety.com, January 18, 2019](https://www.variety.com/2019/01/18/music/news/r-kelly-convicted-sex-trafficking-1203583/); [billboard.com, April 28, 2023](https://www.billboard.com/music/r-kelly/r-kelly-convicted-sex-trafficking-1203583/)

<sup>256</sup> [bbc.com, February 24, 2023](https://www.bbc.com/news/entertainment-arts-60888888)

<sup>257</sup> [variety.com, January 18, 2019](https://www.variety.com/2019/01/18/music/news/r-kelly-convicted-sex-trafficking-1203583/); [billboard.com, April 28, 2023](https://www.billboard.com/music/r-kelly/r-kelly-convicted-sex-trafficking-1203583/)

about the last time she saw her daughter, J. said, “It was as if she was brainwashed. [She] looked like a prisoner — it was horrible. [...] I hugged her and hugged her. But she just kept saying she’s in love and [Kelly] is the one who cares for her. I don’t know what to do. I hope that if I get her back, I can get her treatment for victims of cults. They can reprogram her. But I wish I could have stopped it from happening.”<sup>258</sup>

According to the *BuzzFeed News*, “Three former members of Kelly’s inner circle — Cheryl Mack, Kitti Jones, and Asante McGee — provided details supporting the parents’ worst fears. They said six women live in properties rented by Kelly in Chicago and the Atlanta suburbs, and he controls every aspect of their lives: dictating what they eat, how they dress, when they bathe, when they sleep, and how they engage in sexual encounters that he records.” The three said “that women who live with Kelly, who he calls his ‘babies,’ are required to call him ‘Daddy’ and must ask his permission to leave the Chicago recording studio or their assigned rooms in the ‘guest house’ Kelly rents near his own rented mansion in suburban Atlanta. [...] Kelly confiscates the women’s cell phones, they said, so they cannot contact their friends and family; he gives them new phones that they are only allowed to use to contact him or others with his permission. Kelly films his sexual activities, McGee and Jones said, and shows the videos to men in his circle.”<sup>259</sup>

Mack and Jones said that if women disobey Kelly or break these rules, “he punishes them physically and verbally. For example, Jones claimed that Kelly held her against a tree and slapped her outside of a Subway sandwich shop in spring 2013 because she had been too friendly with the male cashier there. McGee said she never saw Kelly hit anybody, but also said he was running a ‘cult’ and manipulated her emotionally and sexually.”<sup>260</sup> When Kelly later faced criminal charges for his sex crimes, prosecutors “said Kelly used force, physical restraint, and threats to pressure three of his sexual partners to work for him.”<sup>261</sup>

## Settlements & Retaliation Against Victims

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**R. Kelly and his labels were named in civil lawsuits, but Kelly and his team turned to settlements, non-disclosure agreements, and professional retaliation to keep victims silent.**

By 2002, at least two women filed suit against Kelly and Jive, and another filed suit against Kelly. Tiffany “Tia” Hawkins sued in 1996, “accusing Kelly of picking her up during a visit to his

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<sup>258</sup> [buzzfeednews.com](http://buzzfeednews.com), July 17, 2017

<sup>259</sup> [buzzfeednews.com](http://buzzfeednews.com), July 17, 2017

<sup>260</sup> [buzzfeednews.com](http://buzzfeednews.com), July 17, 2017

<sup>261</sup> [businessinsider.com](http://businessinsider.com), September 27, 2021

old high school” and saying that “she first had sex with Kelly in 1991 when she was 15 and he was 24.” Kelly settled the suit with her for \$250,000, and “Jive’s attorneys successfully argued that the label and publishing company should not be found liable.” Suits filed by Montina Woods and Patrice Jones in 2002 were settled out of court in exchange for non-disclosure agreements. Barry Weiss, Jive’s chief executive from 1991 to 2011, denied knowledge of the suits and said that “he never talked to Kelly about his behavior — it was none of his business.” He said, “I wasn’t involved in his criminal cases. We were a record company, for God’s sakes.” According to the *Washington Post*, “Kelly continued to settle with more women as allegations against him mounted, but music industry luminaries remained silent.”<sup>262</sup>

Tracy Sampson recalled she “was a 16-year-old Epic Records intern when she says Kelly first approached her in 1999.” Sampson recalled that Cathy Carroll, a regional promotions manager at Epic and her boss, fired Sampson when she found out about their relationship. Sampson said, “She told me I was a stupid b— and I shouldn’t have talked to him.” Sampson’s lawsuit was settled for \$250,000 in 2002, and she was “silenced by a familiar, legal tool: A non-disclosure agreement.” She “attempted a career managing other artists but gave up because she was told her dispute with Kelly had poisoned her reputation.” Speaking to the *Washington Post* in 2018, Carroll defended Kelly and said, “A lot of these women who claim stuff, they put themselves out there like that, and then they want to turn around and sue people and sue men. [...] A lot of times it’s not really the men.” At the time of her statement, Carroll was a senior director “for the Sony-owned gospel label RCA Inspirations.”<sup>263</sup>

The *Washington Post* further received emails showing Derrel McDavid, R. Kelly’s business manager from early in his career in the 1990s to 2013, threatened legal action against at least one victim. Jerhonda Pace, who met Kelly when she was 15 after he was found not guilty in his 2008 child pornography trial, agreed to a \$1.5 million settlement in 2010. In 2012, McDavid emailed Pace’s attorney, “Your client is either LYING or insane or both. [...] [If Pace] utters one word of this nonsense to anyone I will personally sue her and have her prosecuted.” When pressed by the *Washington Post* in 2018 “if he ever tried to get help for Kelly, McDavid said he was bound by a confidentiality agreement and didn’t want to go into detail.”<sup>264</sup>

According to the *Washington Post*, “Studio workers were given non-disclosure agreements to sign and not allowed into the space while Kelly worked.” One worker who spoke to the Post on condition of anonymity recalled an incident where “she found a cup filled with urine on the baby grand piano” and damage to the studio’s wooden floor after a recording session with Kelly. She

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<sup>262</sup> [washingtonpost.com, May 4, 2018](https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/local/2018/05/04/kelly-rca-records-employees-2018/); [bbc.com, February 24, 2023](https://www.bbc.com/news/entertainment-arts-53111111)

<sup>263</sup> [washingtonpost.com, May 4, 2018](https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/local/2018/05/04/kelly-rca-records-employees-2018/)

<sup>264</sup> [washingtonpost.com, May 4, 2018](https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/local/2018/05/04/kelly-rca-records-employees-2018/)



“said she contacted RCA about the damage.” The photos, shown below, were sent to RCA’s vice president of administration.<sup>265</sup>



**R. Kelly’s manager pleaded guilty for his role in harassing, intimidating, and threatening a victim and her family who filed a civil suit against Kelly.**

In July 2022, Donnell Russell, “a self-described manager, advisor and friend of Kelly,” pleaded guilty in the U.S. District Court in Chicago for his role “in a scheme to harass, intimidate, and cause substantial emotional distress to Jane Doe,” a victim and witness in Kelly’s criminal case in Chicago. According to a Department of Justice press release, from 2018 to 2020, “Russell threatened to reveal sexually explicit photographs of Jane Doe and to publicly reveal her sexual history if she did not withdraw her lawsuit against Kelly and ‘cease her participation and association with the organizers’ of a ‘negative campaign’ against Kelly.” Russell mailed and texted nude photos to the victim, her mom, and her attorney. He also posted these photos of Jane Doe on “a Facebook Page named ‘Surviving Lies,’ a play on the title of Lifetime’s ‘Surviving R Kelly’ documentary,” and he showed the photos on a YouTube interview.<sup>266</sup> Russell was sentenced to 20 months in federal prison.<sup>267</sup>

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<sup>265</sup> [washingtonpost.com, May 4, 2018](https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/local/2018/05/04/r-kelly-damage-photos/)

<sup>266</sup> [justice.gov, July 26, 2022](https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/2022/07/22-cv-00000)

<sup>267</sup> [usatoday.com, December 20, 2022](https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2022/12/20/r-kelly-sentenced-prison/1000000001/)

## Continued Profit for Sony & UMG

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**R. Kelly was dropped by divisions of Sony and UMG following public outcry regarding his abuse, including the airing of “Surviving R. Kelly,” yet both companies continue to profit from Kelly’s backlog.**

In January 2019, following the airing of “Surviving R. Kelly,” Sony Music “decided to dissolve its working relationship with R. Kelly.” According to *Variety*, “No external announcement of the move is planned in the immediate future, says a source, who added that the company took its time to wade through the issues ‘responsibly’ and avoid legal ramifications. R. Kelly was removed from the RCA Records website.” However, “Kelly’s back catalog will remain with RCA/Sony,” where it continued to generate streaming revenue for the company as of 2023.<sup>268</sup>

The decision by Sony came “after years of public calls, and even a petition from members of the #MuteRKelly movement, for the company to part ways with Kelly.” According to *Variety*, ahead of Sony’s decision, “a plane commissioned by the women’s organization UltraViolet and carrying a sign reading ‘RCA/Sony: Drop Sexual Predator R. Kelly’ flew over Sony Music’s Los Angeles offices and a protest was staged outside of Sony’s New York headquarters. But an insider notes that efforts to extricate Sony from its contract with Kelly had been ongoing for several months before and [the plane] had no influence.” *Variety* noted, “the outcry that has followed ‘Surviving R. Kelly’ grew so intense that it likely forced the label’s hand.”<sup>269</sup>

Along the same lines, Universal Music Publishing Group (UMPG), a division of UMG, said in January 2019 after airing of “Surviving R. Kelly” that it “no longer represents the singer,” with a spokesperson claiming it was a decision dated “back to last spring.” UMPG “acquired Kelly’s catalog in 2007 when its parent Universal Music Group took over Zomba, the company that previously controlled the singer’s copyrights.” However, according to *Rolling Stone*, “to think that UMPG has really ‘severed ties’ with the singer, as some reports have suggested over the weekend, would again be incorrect. While UMPG may not publicly represent Kelly on its songwriter roster, the company is still responsible for distributing his past work — which totals some 681 songs.” Attorney Lisa Alter said, “Since UMPG continues to own R. Kelly’s catalog of existing compositions, it will presumably continue to publish those compositions, profit from the exploitation of the works and pay R. Kelly royalties pursuant to the underlying agreement.”<sup>270</sup>

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<sup>268</sup> [variety.com, January 18, 2019](https://www.variety.com/2019/01/18/music/news/sony-music-drops-r-kelly/); [billboard.com, April 28, 2023](https://www.billboard.com/2019/04/28/r-kelly-sony-music/)

<sup>269</sup> [variety.com, January 18, 2019](https://www.variety.com/2019/01/18/music/news/sony-music-drops-r-kelly/)

<sup>270</sup> [rollingstone.com, January 22, 2019](https://www.rollingstone.com/2019/01/22/music/news/universal-music-publishing-group-umpg-drops-r-kelly/); [universalmusic.com](https://www.universalmusic.com/), accessed August 1, 2023

*Rolling Stone* further noted, “Regardless of either major music company’s recent PR move, R. Kelly is likely making exactly as much money as he was before — if not a lot more.” Unlike the previous era when music was purchased in physical or digital form and profit was tied to “the continued production of songs,” with streaming, “it’s every single listen — no purchase required — that counts toward profit.” When “Surviving R. Kelly” first aired, Nielsen found streams of Kelly’s back catalog increased 116 percent, an estimated increase of \$20,000 in profit in a single day based on *Rolling Stone*’s estimates. His streams also increased around the time of his 2021 conviction. In 2018, Spotify “tried to introduce a hateful content policy,” removing content like R. Kelly from playlists, “which was quickly repealed.” According to *Rolling Stone*, Spotify’s original decision “has proven the only one — of all other music companies — to be of substance rather than posturing.”<sup>271</sup>

In June 2023, as Kelly was serving his 31-year prison sentence on federal charges, the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the Eastern District of New York filed motions asking the judge to garnish funds held by Sony and UMPG in Kelly’s royalties accounts. The funds would be used to pay over \$500,000 that Kelly owed in penalties and to two abuse victims who were awarded compensation.<sup>272</sup> As of June 2022, Assistant U.S. Attorney Elizabeth Geddes said Sony had “upward of \$4.5 million worth” of royalties that it withheld paying Kelly “as the company deals with judgments related to civil legal proceedings against him,” which totaled \$7 million at the time.<sup>273</sup>

In August 2023, *Variety* reported, “R. Kelly and Universal Music Group will have to pay over \$500,000 in music royalties to Brooklyn federal prosecutors to help pay for his victim’s restitution and criminal fines.” While UMG and Sony Music Entertainment were initially on the hook for the amount, the August 2023 ruling stated that “Sony Music will no longer have to offer payments for this particular bill since R. Kelly’s royalties with Universal will cover it.”<sup>274</sup>

## Anthony Kiedis

### Allegations & Criminal Conviction

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**Anthony Kiedis was convicted on charges of indecent exposure and sexual battery in 1989, after a well-publicized incident at a concert in Northern Virginia.**

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<sup>271</sup> [rollingstone.com](https://www.rollingstone.com), January 22, 2019; [qz.com](https://www.qz.com), October 12, 2021

<sup>272</sup> [wgntv.com](https://www.wgntv.com), June 1, 2023; [billboard.com](https://www.billboard.com), June 1, 2023

<sup>273</sup> [oxygen.com](https://www.oxygen.com), June 30, 2022

<sup>274</sup> [variety.com](https://www.variety.com), August 24, 2023

In 1989, “during the band’s Mother’s Milk tour, Kiedis was convicted of sexual battery after a show at George Mason University.” Kiedis reportedly “exposed himself and touched his crotch to a woman’s face against her wishes.” According to contemporaneous reporting by the *Washington Post*, “Kiedis was convicted of sexual battery and indecent exposure” and was “fined \$1,000 on each misdemeanor charge.” Kiedis said that the incident at GMU was “blown way out of proportion by both the media and the prosecution. It was a playful thing that happened backstage.”<sup>275</sup>

According to the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, the incident “involved touching a woman's face with his penis after a concert at George Mason University. The incident occurred outside the band's dressing room, where Kiedis presumably locks up his clothes while performing.” According to United Press International, the incident occurred on April 21, 1989, and “Kiedis denied ever touching the woman but others said they saw the incident and a band member admitted he made an encouraging statement.”<sup>276</sup>

**In 1994, Kiedis’s criminal conviction caused the federal government to pull a public service ad featuring Kiedis to promote condom use.**

In 1994, Kiedis was featured in a “a risqué T-V commercial” that was part of the CDC’s “campaign promoting condoms to prevent the spread of H-I-V.” Reportedly, “officials withdrew the spot after learning that Anthony Kiedis had been convicted of sexual battery and indecent exposure after a backstage incident at a 1989 concert in Fairfax, Virginia.” The *Gazette of Montreal* reported that the Red Hot Chili Peppers were allegedly denied an appearance on Sesame Street when “Sesame executives decided the band ‘would not be appropriate’ for the show. No further explanation was given.” According to Business Wire’s reporting on the cancellation of the CDC spots, “the advertising agency had not conducted a thorough background check on the celebrity since this was only a public service announcement, rather than a large endorsement deal.”<sup>277</sup>

According to the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, the ads were created by “Ogilvy & Mather in Atlanta [who] agreed to create public service spots on AIDS prevention for the federal government” and “wanted to feature someone who could appeal to young, sexually active audiences.” The *Plain Dealer* also reported that for his participation in the ad, Kiedis was “paid only union scale of about \$500.”<sup>278</sup>

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<sup>275</sup> [faroutmagazine.co.uk](http://faroutmagazine.co.uk), November 5, 2021; [washingtonpost.com](http://washingtonpost.com), May 13, 1990

<sup>276</sup> *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, January 12, 1994; United Press International, April 3, 1990

<sup>277</sup> Broadcast News, January 7, 2003; Canadian Press, December 25, 1994; *Montreal Gazette*, September 10, 1994; Business Wire, June 30, 1994

<sup>278</sup> *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, January 25, 1994

**In 2016, a former executive at Epic Records detailed a case of sexual harassment that she said she experienced at the hands of two members of the Red Hot Chili Peppers in the early 1990s.**

In 2016, “former Epic Records executive Julie Farman detailed how two of the Chili Peppers harassed her in the company’s storage room in 1990” in a blog post on her website “Live From The Grayish Carpet.” Farman said that she met with the Red Hot Chili Peppers in the early 1990s when Epic Records was vying to sign the band. After the meeting, Farman recalled, “I took two of the Chili Peppers to the storage room where we kept the box sets and CDs. As we looked in the cabinet, they pressed up against me and told me about all of the ways we could make a super sexy sandwich. At first I thought they were joking. When I realized they weren’t, I ran from the storage room to my office, where I closed my door, sat down at my desk, and cried.” Farman wrote that shortly after the incident, “the Chili Peppers’ then-manager knocked on my door a few minutes later” and “offered an apology that sounded memorized; it was one he’d obviously offered many times before.” Farman did not specify exactly which two members of the band harassed her.<sup>279</sup>

**Kiedis’s 2004 autobiography detailed his relationship with a 14-year-old when Kiedis was in his early 20s. When questioned on the topic in a 2022 interview with *The Guardian*, Kiedis ended the interview.**

In 2004, Kiedis released an autobiography titled “Scar Tissue.” In a 2022 column for NJ.com, Bobby Olivier quoted excerpts from the book where Kiedis admitted to sexual misconduct. Olivier paraphrased Kiedis’s book and wrote, “In the book, Kiedis admits to having sex with a 14-year-old fan in Louisiana, even after he knew she was underage.” Olivier wrote further that Kiedis said “the girl told Kiedis, who would’ve been in his early 20s, that she was only 14, her father was chief of police in her hometown and ‘the entire state of Louisiana is looking for me.’” Kiedis wrote in his book, “I wasn’t incredibly scared, because, in my somewhat deluded mind, I knew that if she told the chief of police she was in love with me, he wasn’t going to have me taken out to a field and shot, but I did want to get her the hell back home right away. So we had sex one more time.”<sup>280</sup>

In a 2022 article for *The Guardian*, Kiedis was interviewed by Kate Hutchinson about his autobiography and asked about the passages referring to his relationship with a minor after which he ended the interview. Hutchinson reported, “I was thinking more specifically about the Catholic School Girls Rule passage, but before I’ve got a chance to ask whether he has reflected

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<sup>279</sup> [thegrayishcarpet.com](https://thegrayishcarpet.com), April 20, 2016

<sup>280</sup> [nj.com](https://nj.com), August 18, 2022; Kansas City Star, May 11, 2006

on what he wrote, Kiedis shoots back: 'I don't know what you're searching for with that one. But it doesn't seem like any good can come out of discussing that.' Then the line goes dead."<sup>281</sup>

Despite self-reporting his own encounters with a minor, Kiedis claimed in 2016 that he "doesn't want to have sex with 'groupies'" and that "he doesn't enjoy getting intimate with his fans, and has specifically told security to not let any of his supporters into the hotel he is staying in."<sup>282</sup>

**Kiedis and the Red Hot Chili Peppers promoted a general culture of “drug and sex-fuelled [sic] degradation,” with Kiedis writing one song about having sex with the underage fan.**

Olivier noted that Kiedis and the Red Hot Chili Peppers discussed an incident involving Kiedis and a 14-year-old girl in song lyrics. Olivier noted that “Kiedis admits to having sex with a 14-year-old fan in Louisiana, even after he knew she was underage” and that “Kiedis later wrote a song called ‘Catholic School Girls Rule’ about the experience, which was, by definition, statutory rape.” Olivier wrote, “Kiedis was never criminally charged for this instance,” adding that he was convicted of the charges in Virginia.<sup>283</sup> *Far Out Magazine* further reported, “As late as 2006, Kiedis was still writing songs like ‘She’s Only 18’ with lines such as ‘she took the shortcut to being fully grown’. [...] Having a sordid history is nothing new in rock and roll, but being serial offenders, and then proceeding to write songs about it is on a whole other level.”<sup>284</sup>

Kiedis’s “Scar Tissue” covered his other relationships, stating that “as well as the regular sex sessions with unknown strangers, Kiedis also reveals the famous women he has dated, including Sinead O’Connor who he had a fling with in 1989, actress Ione Skye and stunning German supermodel Heidi Klum.”<sup>285</sup> In Bobby Olivier’s 2022 column for NJ.com discussing the admitted misconduct of Kiedis contained within his autobiography, Olivier noted that Kiedis “also began a romantic relationship with actress Ione Skye when he was 24 and she was 16, below the legal age of consent in California. Skye confirmed the details in a TikTok video last year.”<sup>286</sup>

In 2006, the British newspaper *The Independent* characterized the reputation of the Red Hot Chili Peppers and Anthony Kiedis as having “led a life of drug and sex-fuelled [sic] degradation in the underbelly of their native Los Angeles, leading to the early death of original guitarist Hillel Slovak.”<sup>287</sup> In 2004, the *Ottawa Citizen* reviewed “Scar Tissue” and reported that Kiedis stated

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<sup>281</sup> [theguardian.com](https://www.theguardian.com), April 1, 2022

<sup>282</sup> Bang Music, November 22, 2016

<sup>283</sup> [nj.com](https://www.nj.com), August 18, 2022

<sup>284</sup> [faroutmagazine.co.uk](https://www.faroutmagazine.co.uk), November 5, 2021

<sup>285</sup> Daily Star, November 7, 2004

<sup>286</sup> [nj.com](https://www.nj.com), August 18, 2022

<sup>287</sup> The Independent, July 1, 2006

regarding his adolescent years, “I wouldn't have traded my lifestyle for anything.” The review stated that “The underage Kiedis and his father became fixtures at the seamy clubs on Sunset Strip, knocking back booze and barbiturates. Whenever the boy's energy flagged, dad was there with a line or two of coke to perk him up. All this happens in the first 100 pages or so.”<sup>288</sup>

## Record Label Involvement/Knowledge

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**A former Epic Records executive wrote that those in the music industry were well aware of how the Red Hot Chili Peppers treated women, but nobody “in the music industry really gave a shit.”**

In 2016, former Epic Records executive Julie Farman described the attitude toward the allegations against Kiedis and the Red Hot Chili Peppers in the early 1990s. Farman wrote on her blog, “I heard stories about the Chili Peppers and the way they treated women long before Anthony was [convicted] of sexual battery and indecent exposure in 1989 and Chad and Flea were arrested for lascivious behavior, battery and disorderly conduct in 1990. No one in the music industry really gave a shit — as their legal issues made headlines, they left EMI, and every label wanted to sign them. Including Epic. I was horrified.”<sup>289</sup>

In May 2021, *Billboard* reported that the Red Hot Chili Peppers sold its “song catalog in a deal ranging from \$140 million to \$150 million, according to sources.” The catalog was purchased by Hipgnosis, an investment trust. According to *Billboard*, “The Red Hot Chili Peppers song catalog generates \$5 million to \$6 million in net publishers’ share (usually known as gross profit — although in this case its likely to include all revenue from the catalog), sources say, and it traded at a about a 25 times multiple, which calculates to about \$125 million to \$150 million total.”<sup>290</sup>

## Thomas “Tommy” Lee

### Allegations

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**An unnamed Jane Doe filed suit against Tommy Lee, accusing him and his pilot of sexually assaulting her in the cockpit of his helicopter in a 2003 incident.**

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<sup>288</sup> Ottawa Citizen, November 27, 2004

<sup>289</sup> [thegrayishcarpet.com](http://thegrayishcarpet.com), April 20, 2016

<sup>290</sup> [billboard.com](http://billboard.com), May 3, 2021

According to *Rolling Stone*, a complaint was filed by an unnamed Jane Doe plaintiff in Los Angeles in December 2023 “claims Mötley Crüe drummer Tommy Lee sexually assaulted a woman in the cockpit of a helicopter after she was ‘lured’ onto the chopper by the musician’s private pilot.” The plaintiff met and became friendly with Lee’s pilot, David Martz, in early 2002. The lawsuit detailed that “Martz invited the woman to ride in his helicopter, but she was hesitant at first because she had never ridden in one before.” Upon finally agreeing to a sightseeing trip around San Deigo County, “she was told there was a last-minute change of plans and she and Martz would be flying Lee up to Los Angeles instead.”<sup>291</sup>

During this trip, “Martz pulled out alcohol he had stored in the helicopter and began to mix drinks,’ the complaint alleges. The woman says Martz handed her a drink that she did not consume. She claims Martz and Lee drank, smoked marijuana, and snorted cocaine during the flight.” Further, the suit claimed that “at one point [during the flight], Lee penetrated the plaintiff with his fingers while fondling her breasts. Lee then pulled down his pants and attempted to force plaintiff’s head toward his genitals. [...] She was trapped with little mobility to leave the cockpit.” The plaintiff “says the alleged attack caused her ‘great shock, distress, humiliation, shame and guilt,’ and that she didn’t report it because she believed it was an isolated event and that police wouldn’t take her seriously. She now believes Martz and Lee ‘had a history of engaging in indecent and illegal conduct on Martz’s helicopter.’”<sup>292</sup>

*Rolling Stone* reported that the lawsuit “accuses Lee of ‘forcibly groping, kissing, and penetrating her with his fingers, and attempting to force her to perform oral copulation’ during the 40-minute trip from San Diego County to Van Nuys, California, in February 2003.” The charges included “sexual assault, gender violence, intentional infliction of emotional distress and negligence.” In addition to Lee, the complaint named “Mayhem Touring, Tommy Lee Inc., A Natural High Helicopters and Social Helicopters as defendants.” Jane Doe “is seeking past, present, and future damages, including but not limited to medical expenses, loss of earnings, and loss of earnings capacity.”<sup>293</sup>

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<sup>291</sup> [rollingstone.com, December 16, 2023](https://www.rollingstone.com/entertainment/music/news/tommy-lee-sexual-assault-2023-12-16/)

<sup>292</sup> [rollingstone.com, December 16, 2023](https://www.rollingstone.com/entertainment/music/news/tommy-lee-sexual-assault-2023-12-16/)

<sup>293</sup> [rollingstone.com, December 16, 2023](https://www.rollingstone.com/entertainment/music/news/tommy-lee-sexual-assault-2023-12-16/)



# Jerry Lee Lewis

## Relationships With Minors

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**Jerry Lee Lewis married his 13-year-old second cousin in 1957. The revelation caused Lewis to be blacklisted by the music industry when press reported she was his second cousin, and that Lewis was still married to his previous wife.**

In 1957, singer Jerry Lee Lewis, then 22, married his cousin Myra Gale Brown who “was just 13 years old,” according to the *Los Angeles Times*. Lewis was known for hits such as “Whole Lotta Shakin’ Goin’ On” and “Great Balls of Fire,” and he “eloped with Myra Gale Brown in December 1957, the result of a romance that developed when he moved into the Memphis home of Myra’s father, JW Brown, who was Lewis’ cousin and bass player.” A picture of Lewis and Brown taken in London in 1958 is below.<sup>294</sup>



Lewis “weathered professional exile in 1958 after a reporter covering his arrival in London inquired about the young girl in his entourage who ultimately introduced herself as ‘Jerry’s wife.’” Further, “the press came down hard on him when it was revealed that she was also his

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<sup>294</sup> [latimes.com](https://www.latimes.com), October 29, 2022

second cousin and that Lewis was still married to his second wife, Jane Mitchum, when they wed.”<sup>295</sup>

The revelation that Lewis married his 13-year-old second cousin “resulted in the abrupt cancellation of Lewis’ tour; he was blacklisted by radio and his earnings dropped overnight. (Couples married young in his Louisiana hometown of Ferriday, and he wed for the first time when he was 16 and had seven wives over the course of his life.) He continued to record music and perform in theater during that time and mounted a comeback about a decade later.”<sup>296</sup>

Lewis was “bewildered about what he’d done wrong – though the fact that Myra had originally been said to be 15 rather than 13 suggests someone, somewhere thought there was a problem. ‘I plumb married the girl, didn't I?’ Lewis had said to one reporter.”<sup>297</sup>

### **Today, Lewis’s recordings are distributed by Universal Music Group’s Virgin Records.**

In the 1950s, Sun Records “became one of the most dynamic forces in American music, releasing the first recordings” of artists such as Jerry Lee Lewis. In January 2021, according to the *New York Times*, “Primary Wave Music, an independent music company in New York, has acquired the label’s assets, including its recordings, logo and brand, from Sun Entertainment Corporation, the family-run company that bought it from Sam Phillips, Sun’s founder, in 1969.”<sup>298</sup> Subsequently in June 2021, according to *Music Week*, “Primary Wave Music has entered into a worldwide distribution agreement” with Universal Music Group’s Virgin Music Label & Artist Services.<sup>299</sup>

## **Prince Rogers Nelson aka Prince**

### **Allegations**

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**Prince met his future wife, Mayte Garcia, when she was 16 years old, and a year later, became her legal guardian. Though Garcia said the two didn’t have sexual**

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<sup>295</sup> [latimes.com](https://www.latimes.com), October 28, 2022

<sup>296</sup> [latimes.com](https://www.latimes.com), October 28, 2022

<sup>297</sup> [ultimateclassicrock.com](https://www.ultimateclassicrock.com), October 28, 2022

<sup>298</sup> [nytimes.com](https://www.nytimes.com), January 28, 2021

<sup>299</sup> [musicweek.com](https://www.musicweek.com), June 14, 2021

**relations until she was 19, Prince allegedly “never denied that the occasional impure thought crossed his mind.”**

Mayte Garcia, the ex-wife of singer Prince, “was just 16 and living in Germany when her mother submitted a video of the the [sic] teenager belly dancing to Prince, which allowed her to spend some time backstage at one of his shows.” When she met Prince, who was 32 at the time, he “told Garcia: ‘I like your tape. Are you really sixteen?’ After confirming that she was, Prince told the teenager: ‘Well, I’d like to talk to you more. Can I get your number?’” Prince began “calling her every night and writing to her, saying in one note: ‘U’re so pretty. It cheers me up if someone tries to ruin my day. Many do ... Thank u 4 coming into my world.’”<sup>300</sup>

According to Garcia, Prince “never denied that the occasional impure thought crossed his mind.” However, Garcia said that they “‘did not have a sexual relationship’ at that time.” She “was just 16 years old when she met late music icon Prince but she says it took years before her ex-husband pursued her romantically,” according to *People*.<sup>301</sup>

A year after the two met, “Garcia was living with Prince at his Paisley Park compound in Minnesota, where he became her legal guardian with the approval of her parents.” Prince’s guardianship of Garcia allowed her “to dance professionally, and she quickly became the focus of Prince’s 1992 Diamonds and Pearls Tour. That same year she also inspires Prince’s latest album, whose title was an unpronounceable symbol that later became known as Love Symbol. And in 1995, Prince penned his hit song ‘The Most Beautiful Girl in the World’ for Garcia.”<sup>302</sup>

**Prince had a relationship with model and singer Anna Fantastic, who he met when she was 15 years old. Their relationship lasted several years.**

Prince met model and singer Anna Fantastic, whom he had a relationship with “for several years in the late ’80s and inspired several of his songs,” when she was 15 years old. Fantastic wrote in an April 2017 Facebook post that she “happened to walk by the stadium where I ended up having a chat with some of the guys unloading the tour truck. One of the men working told me Prince was performing that night. [...] The man asked me if I wanted to attend the concert and I said sure can I bring my mom? I walked home and told my mom we were invited to the Prince concert. My mom ended up not feeling well that evening so she dropped me off and was going to pick me up after. And that is the first time I met Prince, after the concert back stage [sic].”<sup>303</sup>

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<sup>300</sup> [dailymail.co.uk](https://www.dailymail.co.uk), March 15, 2017

<sup>301</sup> [dailymail.co.uk](https://www.dailymail.co.uk), March 15, 2017; [yahoo.com](https://www.yahoo.com), March 17, 2017

<sup>302</sup> [dailymail.co.uk](https://www.dailymail.co.uk), March 15, 2017

<sup>303</sup> [usmagazine.com](https://www.usmagazine.com), May 25, 2016; [facebook.com](https://www.facebook.com), April 21, 2017

Discussing how her parents felt about her relationship with prince, Fantastic said, “I was born and raised in England and Europe so for starters it's very different than over here in America. My mom was a runaway and had me at 16 years old. So I guess she didn't see me as a child at 16 because she herself had to grow up very fast after having me at such a young age. And considering other options as a pregnant teen I have immense respect and love for my mother for going through that and raising me mainly by herself. I never knew my real father. Later on my mother got married and I had a stepfather. I also had my own record deal in Germany at 15 and was already working and touring throughout Europe on my own. I have to share this back story to make it clear what the situation was in my life at that time. Yes I was very young now I look back at it all, but at the same time I had lived quite a life already at that young age... so it was different. My mom couldn't have told me what to do or not to do at that time... Also 16 is legal in England and I actually wasn't in a real relationship with Prince until I was 17.”<sup>304</sup>

## Tremaine Neverson aka Trey Songz

### Allegations

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**Songz was accused of raping a woman at his home in 2016. The lawsuit accused WMG’s Atlantic Records of ignoring the mounting allegations against Songz while still continuing to work with him.**

In a February 2022 lawsuit filed in Los Angeles County court, singer Trey Songz, legal name Tremaine Neverson, “was accused of anally raping a woman at a house party in California in 2016.” The woman, who was identified as Jane Doe in the lawsuit, “said she had a consensual relationship with Songz and went to one of the singer's house parties on March 24, 2016, according to the lawsuit. The suit alleges that at the party, Songz, whose real name is Tremaine Aldon Neverson, invited her upstairs and repeatedly asked her whether he could have anal sex with her — to which the woman claims she repeatedly told him no and to stop asking.”<sup>305</sup>

The suit claimed that after they entered the bedroom, “Trey Songz turned, almost immediately, into a savage rapist.” Songz threw “Jane Doe to the ground, ripped Plaintiff Jane Doe’s pants off, pinned Plaintiff Jane Doe down face first and forced Defendant Trey Songz’s penis into Plaintiff’s anus without Plaintiff Jane Doe’s consent.” According to the suit, “Plaintiff Jane Doe screamed in pain and begged Defendant Trey Songz to stop.” Following the incident, “the woman called for an Uber ride and went to the Providence Joseph Medical Center Emergency

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<sup>304</sup> [facebook.com](https://www.facebook.com), April 21, 2017

<sup>305</sup> [nbcnews.com](https://www.nbcnews.com), February 16, 2022

Care Unit in Burbank, where she received a sexual assault exam.” Her suit claimed that “examiners found that she had suffered ‘severe anal tearing that could require surgery.’”<sup>306</sup>

In a statement to *Rolling Stone*, George Vrabeck, a lawyer representing Jane Doe, called out Warner Music Group’s “Atlantic Records, which signed Neverson in the early 2000s, as well as Neverson’s manager Liles and 300, the label he co-founded, for effectively turning a blind eye to the growing number of accusations against the singer throughout the years.” Vrabeck stated, “This case is much more than about one singer and one viciously abused sexual assault survivor who has the courage to take action.” He added, “It’s also very much about the systematic sexual abuse in the music industry and the music industry’s complicity in silencing sexual abuse survivors. It’s virtually impossible to believe that those executives are not and were not aware of the institutionalized sexual abuse.”<sup>307</sup>

**Songz was accused of assaulting a woman at a Miami nightclub. He subsequently had her forcibly removed from his vehicle and left on the street, while he reportedly threatened and ridiculed her.**

In December 2021, Songz was “accused of assaulting a woman at a Miami nightclub on New Year’s Day in 2018.” In a civil suit filed by Jauhara Jeffries in the Eleventh Judicial Circuit of Florida, she alleged that “she met Songz after she attended a New Year’s Eve party at Diddy’s home on Star Island. It says Jeffries partied for about two hours and then called for a ride-sharing service to take her and some friends to E11EVEN nightclub in Miami.” After hearing their conversation, Songz “invited them to ride with him to the club.”<sup>308</sup>

The suit alleged “that Songz invited Jeffries and her friends to join him at a private table at the club. It alleges that while Jeffries was dancing on a couch, Songz sexually violated her with his fingers. It accuses him of pulling his hand away when Jeffries turned around, the suit says.” Jeffries “immediately got off of the couch, sat down, and was in a state of shock.”<sup>309</sup>

Subsequently, “Songz, Jeffries and her friends left the club and got back into his vehicle, according to the lawsuit, which claims that Songz took his shirt off during the ride and that ‘fearing more assault, plaintiff began recording defendant Songz for her own safety.’” Songz allegedly “tried to grab the phone from Jeffries and that when she would not turn it over, he ‘instructed his driver to stop the vehicle in order to forcibly remove plaintiff from the vehicle.’” The driver then grabbed Jeffries “and violently pulled her out of the vehicle, while defendant

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<sup>306</sup> [nbcnews.com, February 16, 2022](https://www.nbcnews.com/February-16-2022)

<sup>307</sup> [nbcnews.com, February 16, 2022](https://www.nbcnews.com/February-16-2022)

<sup>308</sup> [nbcnews.com, December 16, 2021](https://www.nbcnews.com/December-16-2021)

<sup>309</sup> [nbcnews.com, December 16, 2021](https://www.nbcnews.com/December-16-2021)

Songz pushed her, and threw her onto the street.” While “Jeffries was being forced out of the vehicle, Songz ‘threatened and ridiculed’ her and threw water in her face.”<sup>310</sup>

### **Songz was sued by two women who alleged they were drugged and sexually assaulted while unconscious at a house party in 2015.**

In a lawsuit filed in October 2023, Trey Songz was accused of “sexual assault and battery for an alleged 2015 incident at his Los Angeles-area estate.”<sup>311</sup> The complaint alleged that “Jane Doe A and Jane Doe B came to his Bell Canyon, California residence on August 2, 2015, expecting a celebration. Instead, they were subjected to acts so heinous, so contrary to basic human decency, that they defy comprehension.”<sup>312</sup>

The two women involved “say they first met Trey in June 2015 when they went to his concert and got invited to an after-party he was hosting.” The women claimed that “subsequent interactions led them to be invited to his home in August for his birthday party.” At this event, the women “were forced to give a password and turn over the phone to gain admittance. Inside, they say it was mostly women and only a handful of men, and the ladies were pressured to drink alcohol from unsealed bottles.”<sup>313</sup> The suit also noted that “he [Songz] and his ‘male associates did not drink alcohol.”<sup>314</sup> Both women alleged “they suddenly felt overwhelmingly intoxicated, despite drinking what they felt was a modest amount...and believe they were drugged.”<sup>315</sup>

Songz then allegedly “led them to an upstairs bedroom where they passed out with their clothes on. The next morning, the women say they woke up naked...with a naked Trey forcing himself on them. One woman claims Trey was giving her nonconsensual oral sex. She says she tried to resist but he overpowered her. The other woman claims she woke up to Trey biting her nipple and forcing his fingers inside her vagina.”<sup>316</sup>

After the alleged assault, “the women say Trey demanded they take a shower with him [...] but say they refused and he became enraged, yelling at them... ‘You are little fucking girls, get the fuck out of my house.’” The women said that “Trey refused to turn over their phones,” but a “security guard intervened, [and] gave them their phones from a safe.”<sup>317</sup>

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<sup>310</sup> [nbcnews.com, December 16, 2021](https://www.nbcnews.com/entertainment/music/news/songz-sued-2023-12-16)

<sup>311</sup> [tmz.com, October 18, 2023](https://www.t TMZ.com/2023/10/18/songz-lawsuit)

<sup>312</sup> [people.com, October 21, 2023](https://www.people.com/2023/10/21/songz-lawsuit)

<sup>313</sup> [tmz.com, October 18, 2023](https://www.t TMZ.com/2023/10/18/songz-lawsuit)

<sup>314</sup> [people.com, October 21, 2023](https://www.people.com/2023/10/21/songz-lawsuit)

<sup>315</sup> [tmz.com, October 18, 2023](https://www.t TMZ.com/2023/10/18/songz-lawsuit)

<sup>316</sup> [tmz.com, October 18, 2023](https://www.t TMZ.com/2023/10/18/songz-lawsuit)

<sup>317</sup> [tmz.com, October 18, 2023](https://www.t TMZ.com/2023/10/18/songz-lawsuit)

Songz’s attorney, Michael Freedmen, called the complaint “yet another example of nearly decade-old allegations being repurposed to take advantage of California’s constitutionally questionable new look-back window.” Further, he stated they “look forward to vindicating Trey on the merits in court.”<sup>318</sup>

### **Songz was sued for \$10 million after groping and exposing a woman’s breast at a pool party in 2013.**

In June 2023, an anonymous Jane Doe filed “a \$10 million sexual battery and assault lawsuit” against Songz for “grabbing and exposing her breast while at a pool party” in August 2013 at Foxwood’s Resort Casino in Connecticut. Songz was “hosting an event where the woman [Jane Doe] claims she thought it would be fun to get a picture with the singer.” In a video recorded by a friend, Songz was seen “standing next to the woman when he grabbed her bathing suit top, pulled it open and exposed her chest. ‘In what appeared to be an attempt to further terrify and humiliate [the woman], [Songz] followed the assault with a degrading chant, ‘Titty in The Open ... Titty in The Open,’ the court documents allege.”<sup>319</sup>

Jane Doe worked as a business analyst and local liquor distributor and “had attended the Bacardi, Grey Goose tent [at the event] with friends and work colleagues.” According to the lawsuit, she “felt ‘ashamed, embarrassed and anxious’ over if her co-workers had seen her exposed breast. A few months after the encounter, the woman says she left her job.” Previously, Jane Doe “issued a demand for a \$5 million settlement to keep the matter out of court in April 2022.” The lawsuit filed in June 2023 demanded \$10 million dollars and also named music executive Kevin Liles and Atlantic Records “for allegedly enabling Songz’s actions and failing to act despite having knowledge of it (and other reported) actions against women.” In response, Songz’s filed a motion to dismiss, arguing that the lawsuit was filed past the statute of limitations, and in November 2023, a federal judge granted Songz’s motion to dismiss for missing the 10-year-deadline to file a claim.<sup>320</sup>

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<sup>318</sup> [people.com](https://people.com), October 21, 2023

<sup>319</sup> [hiphopdx.com](https://hiphopdx.com), September 7, 2023; [rollingstone.com](https://rollingstone.com), June 2, 2023

<sup>320</sup> [theroot.com](https://theroot.com), September 8, 2023; [rollingstone.com](https://rollingstone.com), June 2, 2023; [radaronline.com](https://radaronline.com), November 22, 2023

# Ted Nugent

## Allegations

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**In the late 1970s, Ted Nugent allegedly had a relationship with a 17-year-old girl. He became her legal guardian to avoid legal prosecution.**

According to *Far Out Magazine*, “During the late 1970s, Nugent entered a relationship with the 17-year-old girl, Pele Massa. Although he claimed [on] VH1’s *Behind the Music* that Massa’s parents approved of the relationship and preferred him to an alcoholic or a drug addict, the point remains the same, per American law, she was a minor.” Nugent said “her parents had consented to the arrangement, which gave Nugent legal rights over a girl considered underage in several US states. ‘I guess they figured better Ted Nugent than some drug-infested punk in high school,’ he said.”<sup>321</sup>

However, “Nugent has always denied the stories. During a live stream posted to his YouTube channel in July 2021, the allegations were mentioned by a user, to which he scoffed at in dismissive nature. He swiftly set about setting the record straight in his trademark fashion by blasting his political enemies.”<sup>322</sup>

**Singer Courtney Love alleged that she performed oral sex on Nugent when she was 12 to 14 years old. Nugent would have been around 29 years old.**

Singer Courtney Love claimed during a 2004 appearance on the Howard Stern show that she “performed oral sex on Nugent when she was 12 and a half. When pressed, an uncharacteristically somber Love elaborated, ‘I didn’t have breasts yet... it’s sick.’ This would have been around the time of Nugent’s 29th birthday,” according to *HuffPost*.<sup>323</sup>

Love said her encounter was “one of the first times she had oral sex was with Ted Nugent. Sounding scarred by the event, Love initially maintained that she couldn’t remember how old she was at the time, before confessing that she was 12 and a half years old when she performed oral sex on Nugent backstage at a show.” In a 2013 appearance on the Howard Stern Show, Love “corrected herself. She said that she was actually 14 when it allegedly happened, claiming that

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<sup>321</sup> [faroutmagazine.co.uk](https://faroutmagazine.co.uk), March 16, 2022; [faroutmagazine.co.uk](https://faroutmagazine.co.uk), March 3, 2023

<sup>322</sup> [faroutmagazine.co.uk](https://faroutmagazine.co.uk), March 16, 2022

<sup>323</sup> [huffpost.com](https://huffpost.com), November 6, 2016; [faroutmagazine.co.uk](https://faroutmagazine.co.uk), March 16, 2022



there was a line of young girls waiting to engage in sexual acts with Nugent. The Hole singer recalled that she was wearing a yellow tube top and ‘shouldn’t have been there.’”<sup>324</sup>

**In 1981, Nugent recorded a track titled “Jailbait,” which discussed having sex with a 13-year-old. The song was released by Sony’s Epic Records.**

In 1981, when Nugent was 32 years old, he released his “Intensities in 10 Cities” album, which featured a track titled “Jailbait.” The album was released through Epic Records, owned by Sony Music Entertainment. “Jailbait” featured lyrics about “having sex with a 13-year-old child. Also, the character offers that girl to the police officer who is arresting him to get rid of the jail.” The following are select lyrics from the song.<sup>325</sup>

*Well I don't care if you're just thirteen  
You look too good to be true  
I just know that you're probably clean  
There's one lil' thing I got do to you  
Jailbait you look so good to me  
Jailbait won't you set me free  
Jailbait you look fine fine fine  
I know I've got to have you in a matter of time*

*Far Out Magazine* noted that at the time when “Jailbait” was released, Nugent was “already regarded as one of the most unsavoury characters in rock, a reputation he exploited to ensure his presence in the music press. His *Intensities in 10 Cities* album was deliberately manufactured to generate maximum outrage and publicity. It will be no surprise to hear that the track immediately after ‘Jailbait [sic] is titled ‘Predator.’”<sup>326</sup>

## Paul Oakenfold

### Allegations

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**DJ and composer Paul Oakenfold allegedly sexually harassed a former personal assistant.**

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<sup>324</sup> [faroutmagazine.co.uk](http://faroutmagazine.co.uk), March 16, 2022

<sup>325</sup> [rockcelebrities.net](http://rockcelebrities.net), April 15, 2022

<sup>326</sup> [faroutmagazine.co.uk](http://faroutmagazine.co.uk), March 3, 2023

In June 2023, *Deadline* reported, “A-lister DJ and Swordfish soundtrack composer Paul Oakenfold has been accused of sexual harassment and workplace violations by a former personal assistant.” In a lawsuit filed in Los Angeles Superior Court, a 24-year-old woman identified as Jane Roe alleged “that two companies run by CEO Paul Stepanek — New Frequency Management and Stepanek Management— Oakenfold, and various John Does violated her employment rights.”<sup>327</sup>

According to Jane Roe, “for a total of four separate dates, Oakenfold allegedly exposed himself and masturbated in front of her. On one date in November 2022, the DJ allegedly did so four times in a single day. He also allegedly once performed the act in her vehicle.” At the time, “Roe worked out of the home of the Grammy-nominated DJ who has remixed such artists as U2, Madonna, Britney Spears and the Rolling Stones.”<sup>328</sup>

## Silencing & Retaliation Against Victims

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**Oakenfold’s personal assistant was required to sign a non-disclosure agreement after reporting the sexual misconduct to her employer. Months later, she was fired.**

After Jane Roe reported Oakenfold’s misconduct in November 2021, according to her complaint, Stepanek gave her “a non-disclosure agreement (‘NDA’) that he wanted her to sign, telling her that it was needed to protect the artists she was working with, which up until that point, had mainly been Oakenfold – the very person that [Jane Roe] had just reported as masturbating in front of her and sexually harassing her at work.” In an email sent to Jane Roe in December 2021, Stepanek wrote the following.<sup>329</sup>

*Following up on this. If you have any questions about the NDA, please let me know. I would love to get you back to work, but really do need to be able to safeguard our clients’ sensitive information and have a signed non-disclosure agreement for you. As we discussed, nothing in the agreement would impact your ability to report or discuss sexual harassment (this is specifically mentioned in paragraph 8). If you have any other concerns about the agreement, please let me know. I’d like to hear from you by Tuesday January 3<sup>rd</sup> after the new year when we are back from holiday break regarding this.*<sup>330</sup>

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<sup>327</sup> [deadline.com, June 3, 2023](#)

<sup>328</sup> [deadline.com, June 3, 2023](#)

<sup>329</sup> Los Angeles Superior Court, CRD No. 202306-20847601, filed June 1, 2023

<sup>330</sup> Los Angeles Superior Court, CRD No. 202306-20847601, filed June 1, 2023

Jane Roe, according to the lawsuit, “eventually signed [the NDA] ‘under duress’. When she returned to work for the management company, she did not work again with Oakenfold.” Additionally, after Jane Roe signed the NDA, “her hours were dramatically reduced.” Eventually, in March 2023, she was fired, with Stepanek “claiming that she was being let go for lack of work.” She was subsequently “replaced by someone else hired by Oakenfold to fulfill [her] duties.” Jane Roe’s complaint alleged Stepanek terminated her “not for any legitimate reason, but in retaliation for [her] complaints about” Oakenfold’s misconduct.<sup>331</sup>

### **Oakenfold’s management openly talked about how they had protection from lawsuits over Oakenfold’s behavior.**

Before Jane Roe reported Oakenfold’s sexual harassment, “Stepanek bragged about his insurance policies to protect him from being sued over Oakenfold or being found ‘guilty of association.’” Jane Roe’s complaint alleged that before her, there were “several other assistants assigned to Oakenfold, and there was high turnover, likely from rampant sexual harassment.”<sup>332</sup>

*The Guardian* reported in June 2023, “Oakenfold responded to the allegations with a statement on social media. ‘I categorically deny any and all claims of improper conduct,’ he wrote. ‘Respect, integrity, and consent are values I hold dear, and I have always treated everyone with utmost professionalism. It is disheartening to see these baseless accusations, which appear to be nothing more than a calculated attempt to tarnish my reputation and extort money.’”<sup>333</sup>

## **Dieuson Octave aka Kodak Black**

### **Allegations & Criminal Conviction**

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#### **In 2016, Kodak Black was accused of sexually assaulting a high schooler in South Carolina earlier that year.**

In August 2016, rapper Dieuson Octave, known as Kodak Black, was “accused of sexual battery stemming from an alleged incident at a South Carolina hotel.” At the time, Kodak Black was already imprisoned on charges “that includ[ed] robbery, drug and firearm possession and false imprisonment.” The *New York Daily News* reported that the “rapper was set to be released from

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<sup>331</sup> Los Angeles Superior Court, CRD No. 202306-20847601, filed June 1, 2023; [theguardian.com](https://www.theguardian.com), June 5, 2023

<sup>332</sup> Los Angeles Superior Court, CRD No. 202306-20847601, filed June 1, 2023

<sup>333</sup> [theguardian.com](https://www.theguardian.com), June 5, 2023

prison [...] after his April arrest for a slew of other charges, but those plans changed after authorities discovered a pair of outstanding warrants for his arrest.” The main accusation centered around a “felony charge for criminal sexual conduct in Florence, South Carolina, surrounding an alleged February incident involving Black.”<sup>334</sup>

According to a statement issued by the Florence County Sheriff’s Office, “on or about February 7, 2016, Octave is alleged to have engaged in the sexual battery of the victim at a hotel located at 2120 West Lucas Street, Florence, SC.” This incident allegedly occurred after Kodak Black “played a show at a club” in Florence. According to the *Sun-Sentinel*, “The accuser and a friend went back to the Comfort Inn and Suites in Florence to hang out with the rapper and another person, the woman told deputies. After a few minutes, she and Octave went into a separate room by themselves, the woman told police. That’s when the attack began, [...] the report says. Octave pushed her onto the bed and then the floor, where he sexually assaulted and bit her, according to the allegations. He told the woman he couldn’t help himself, as she screamed and tried to push him off her, the report says.” While the victim was in high school, state officials confirmed that she was not “a minor at the time of the alleged assault.”<sup>335</sup>

**Kodak Black’s trial in South Carolina was postponed in April 2019. He was later pardoned by then-President Donald Trump on charges related to falsifying information on forms to purchase firearms.**

In late 2016, Kodak Black was transferred from Florida where faced firearm, robbery, and marijuana charges to South Carolina he to face sexual assault charges. He was “indicted by a grand jury in April 2017 on a charge of criminal sexual conduct in the first degree,” and in December 2018, it was reported that his trial date had been set for April 2019. Then, his trial was postponed when Kodak Black requested a postponement and “the state solicitor didn't object to the request.”<sup>336</sup>

In January 2021, outgoing President Donald Trump “granted pardons to rappers Lil Wayne and Kodak Black [...] as part of a last-minute spree that saw Trump issue clemency to many political allies on his final full day in office.” Trump specifically pardoned Kodak Black of crimes related to “falsifying information on federal forms to buy firearms in Miami on two separate occasions.”<sup>337</sup>

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<sup>334</sup> [nydailynews.com, August 23, 2016](https://www.nydailynews.com/entertainment/music/kodak-black-arrest-2016-08-23/)

<sup>335</sup> [sun-sentinel.com, September 19, 2016](https://www.sun-sentinel.com/story/news/crime/2016/09/19/kodak-black-arrest/921117001/); [sun-sentinel.com, December 1, 2016](https://www.sun-sentinel.com/story/news/crime/2016/12/01/kodak-black-arrest/921117001/); [complex.com, April 23, 2019](https://www.complex.com/music/2019/04/kodak-black-arrest); [wyff4.com, December 6, 2016](https://www.wyff4.com/story/news/crime/2016/12/06/kodak-black-arrest/921117001/)

<sup>336</sup> [sun-sentinel.com, December 1, 2016](https://www.sun-sentinel.com/story/news/crime/2016/12/01/kodak-black-arrest/921117001/); [sun-sentinel.com, December 1, 2016](https://www.sun-sentinel.com/story/news/crime/2016/12/01/kodak-black-arrest/921117001/); [snow.com, December 6, 2018](https://www.snow.com/2018/12/06/kodak-black-arrest/)

<sup>337</sup> [rollingstone.com, January 20, 2021](https://www.rollingstone.com/music/news/kodak-black-pardon-2021-01-20/)

**In April 2021, Kodak Black agreed to a plea deal that allowed him to avoid jail time in the case of the alleged rape and sexual assault.**

Following his pardon, Kodak Black was back in court in South Carolina to face “charges of rape and sexual assault” from the 2016 incident in the state. In April 2021, Kodak Black “pleaded guilty to a lesser charge of first-degree assault and battery. The victim agreed to all conditions of the plea deal, according to 12th Circuit Solicitor Ed Clements, who said the victim was on screen in his office at the time.” Kodak Black was “sentenced to 10 years suspended to 18 months probation with the condition that he takes full accountability for what happened and publicly apologizes, which he did in court. He must also undergo counseling. ‘I apologize to Miss [victim’s name] and am hopeful we can all move forward,’ [Kodak Black] said. ‘I wish her the best in her life.’”<sup>338</sup>

## **Continued Work with Major Labels**

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**Prior to the publication of an outstanding warrant of criminal sexual misconduct against Kodak Black, executives with WMG’s Atlantic Records were actively involved in mitigating the artist’s other criminal proceedings.**

Prior to the reporting of the outstanding warrant in South Carolina accusing Kodak Black of criminal sexual misconduct, a hearing in Fort Lauderdale, Florida was held regarding “numerous charges [against the rapper] including robbery, false imprisonment, fleeing a law enforcement officer and possession of a firearm by a delinquent — charges that carried a maximum sentence of 55 years.” According to the *Sun-Sentinel*, Kodak Black was “considered such a hot commodity that Atlantic [Records] sent several executives to Fort Lauderdale” for the court hearing. Michael Kushner, Executive Vice President of Atlantic, which is owned by Warner Music Group, “said Black has a bright future as a recording artist, and that his body of work, at such a young age, is akin to that of more established artists.”<sup>339</sup> Subsequently, a Florida judge approved a plea deal in August 2016 “that would have allowed him to leave jail and serve a year of house arrest, followed by five years’ probation.”<sup>340</sup>

**Following his indictment on sexual assault charges, Kodak Black continued to release music with Atlantic Records and perform at shows produced by Live Nation.**

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<sup>338</sup> [complex.com, April 29, 2021](https://www.complex.com/music/news/kodak-black-plea-deal); [wbtw.com, April 29, 2021](https://www.wbtw.com/news/kodak-black-plea-deal)

<sup>339</sup> [sun-sentinel.com, August 17, 2016](https://www.sun-sentinel.com/news/florida/fla-kodak-black-plea-deal-2021-08-17); [musicbusinessworldwide.com](https://www.musicbusinessworldwide.com/kodak-black-plea-deal), accessed August 31, 2023

<sup>340</sup> [nydailynews.com, August 23, 2016](https://www.nydailynews.com/entertainment/music/kodak-black-plea-deal-2021-08-23)

When Kodak Black was indicted on sexual assault charges in 2017, a representative for Atlantic Records stated, “Atlantic Records is aware of the indictment and it was expected as part of the normal process of the pending case.”<sup>341</sup> In April 2019, the *Washington Post* reported that despite many ongoing legal issues, Kodak Black was “still signed to Atlantic Records, and he’s still headlining shows produced by concert behemoth Live Nation, such as the one at the Anthem.” Kodak Black continued to release new music throughout this time, and his “2017 album ‘Painting Pictures’ hit No. 3 on the Billboard charts; [2018’s] ‘Dying to Live’ topped it.”<sup>342</sup>

**In 2022, Kodak Black moved to UMG’s Capitol Records, following the record executive who previously signed him to Atlantic Records.**

In September 2022, Orlando Wharton “previously signed Black to Atlantic” and later “joined Capitol [Records] as executive vp [sic] and president of the relaunched Priority Records.” Shortly thereafter, it was announced that Kodak Black would move to Universal Music Group’s Capitol Records after putting out “two releases left under his agreement with Atlantic.”<sup>343</sup>

## Jimmy Page

### Relationships With Minors

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**In Los Angeles in the 1970s, teenage girls known as “baby groupies” reportedly had sexual relations with various adult musicians, such as David Bowie, Jimmy Page, and Mick Jagger.**

In November 2015, *Thrillist* published an article titled, “I Lost My Virginity to David Bowie,” which described a group of “so-called baby groupies who were helping to satisfy the sexual appetites of Jimmy Page, David Bowie, Mick Jagger, and others” in the 1970s.<sup>344</sup> According to Interview Magazine, two of these “baby groupies,” Sable Starr and Lori Lightning (whose real name was Lori Mattix), “slept with almost every big name rocker starting in the early ’70s. Growing up in L.A., the ‘baby groupies’—as they were known—would button down West Hollywood’s Sunset Strip, flexing their fake I.D.s at hot spots like the Rainbow Bar and Grill, the Whiskey A Go Go, and Rodney Bingenheimer’s English Disco. As regulars, they would frequently rub elbows (among other things) with rock’s major players, like Mick Jagger, Rod

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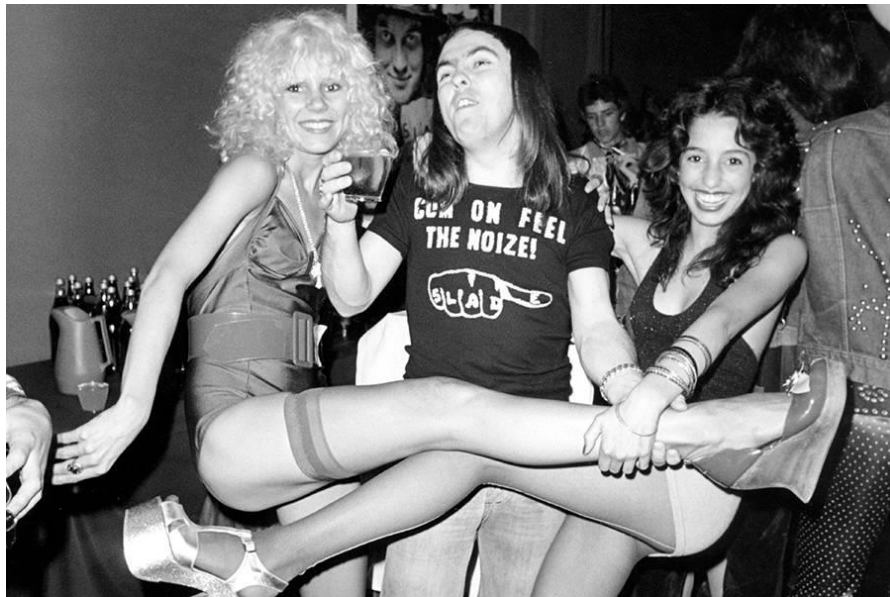
<sup>341</sup> [pitchfork.com](https://pitchfork.com), October 9, 2017

<sup>342</sup> [washingtonpost.com](https://washingtonpost.com), April 25, 2019

<sup>343</sup> [billboard.com](https://billboard.com), October 25, 2022; [universalmusic.com](https://universalmusic.com), accessed August 31, 2023

<sup>344</sup> [thrillist.com](https://thrillist.com), November 3, 2015

Stewart and Alice Cooper.” Pictured below (from left to right) are Starr, Slade guitarist Dave Hill, and Mattix.<sup>345</sup>



*Interview Magazine* reported that Sable Starr “infamously lost her virginity at age 12 to Spirit guitarist Randy California. For a time, she was involved with Iggy Pop, who glorified their relationship in his 1996 song ‘Look Away.’ ‘I slept with Sable when she was 13 / Her parents were too rich to do anything / She rocked her way around L.A. / ‘Til a New York Doll carried her away...’ he sang.”<sup>346</sup> The song was released on Pop’s album “Naughty Little Doggy,” which was released through Virgin Records, a label of Universal Music Group.<sup>347</sup>

According to freelance writer Wyatt Redd, Sable Starr “ran away from home” at age 16 to continue a relationship with New York Dolls guitarist Johnny Thunders. *All That’s Interesting*, a digital media outlet under the PBH Network, reported, “In New York, the relationship with Thunders soon grew abusive. Thunders, like many rock stars, had a serious drug problem. He was also violently jealous and possessive of Starr. After a pregnancy and later abortion, Sable Starr decided to leave Thunders and move back to LA. After a few more years in the emerging punk rock scene, Starr retired from the life of a groupie.”<sup>348</sup>

In 2015, Mattix told *Thrillist* that she was “de-virginized” by David Bowie when she was 14 or 15 years old. According to Mattix, Bowie called her home phone number and invited her to dinner,

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<sup>345</sup> [interviewmagazine.com](http://interviewmagazine.com), April 20, 2018; [thrillist.com](http://thrillist.com), November 3, 2015

<sup>346</sup> [interviewmagazine.com](http://interviewmagazine.com), April 20, 2018

<sup>347</sup> [discogs.com](http://discogs.com), accessed August 1, 2023; [universalmusic.com](http://universalmusic.com), accessed August 1, 2023

<sup>348</sup> [allthatsinteresting.com](http://allthatsinteresting.com), March 28, 2018; [allthatsinteresting.com](http://allthatsinteresting.com), accessed January 24, 2024; [linkedin.com](http://linkedin.com), accessed January 24, 2024

which she attended with Starr. Afterward, Mattix and Starr went to Bowie's hotel room, where Mattix "lost [her] virginity and had [her] first threesome" with Bowie and Starr.<sup>349</sup>

According to her account in *Thrillist*, Mattix was approached at age 15 by Led Zeppelin's manager Peter Grant, who led her into a limo where she "felt like [she] was being kidnapped" and took her to Jimmy Page's hotel room. Upon meeting Page, Mattix said she "fell in love instantly," and the two began a relationship. Mattix said, "It became so serious that Jimmy asked my mom for permission to be with me. [...] Looking back, he had to be afraid of getting sued for being with such a young girl, so maybe he thought it would be better if he cleared it with my mother and told her he was in love with me." Mattix said her mother liked Page and didn't oppose the relationship. Page and Mattix are pictured below.<sup>350</sup>



**Accounts of sexual relations in the 1970s between adult musicians and “baby groupies” have generally been normalized or romanticized by the public, as well as by some of the women involved, including Mattix.**

In 2019, *The Daily Beast* published a piece titled “David Bowie and Rock ‘n’ Roll’s Statutory Rape Problem,” in which entertainment journalist Stereo Williams noted, “Rock star escapades from that period have been glamorized for decades with no regard for how disturbing or illegal the behavior was. It became a part of the mythos—a disgusting testament to how little the writers documenting the happenings of the day cared about taking their heroes to task. And it was right there in the music itself: The Rolling Stones sang about underage girls in ‘Stray Cat Blues’ and Chuck Berry glorified the teenage ‘groupie’ in ‘Sweet Little Sixteen’ a decade earlier. [...] But we cannot write off the alarming behavior of superstars past just because they’re now

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<sup>349</sup> [thrillist.com, November 3, 2015](https://www.thrillist.com/story/2015-11-03/david-bowie-and-rock-n-roll-s-statutory-rape-problem)

<sup>350</sup> [thrillist.com, November 3, 2015](https://www.thrillist.com/story/2015-11-03/david-bowie-and-rock-n-roll-s-statutory-rape-problem)



older, greyer or in the case of Bowie, newly-departed. Because this behavior didn't start with contemporary hip-hop and R&B acts."<sup>351</sup>

In 2018, *The Guardian* reported, "Mattix was under the age of consent, she says, when Page pursued her. Post-#MeToo, does she see the situation differently? 'I think that's what made me start seeing it from a different perspective because I did read a few [articles], and I thought: 'Shit, maybe,'" she says. As for whether Page was in the wrong: "That's an interesting question. I never thought there was anything wrong with it, but maybe there was. I used to get letters telling me he was a paedophile, but I'd never think of him like that. He never abused me, ever.' Still, Mattix sounds conflicted – rapturous reminiscences ('honestly, I had a great time') are followed by cautionary notes. 'I don't think underage girls should sleep with guys,' she says. 'I wouldn't want this for anybody's daughter. My perspective is changing as I get older and more cynical.'"<sup>352</sup>

Former self-described groupie Roxana Shirazi told *The Guardian*, "It's never possible to have full agency [as a groupie]. [...] From the outset, the power structure is not equal. They're famous, and, unless you're famous yourself, you're not on the same plane." In "The Last Living Slut," Shirazi "documented what she describes as emotional abuse from the Guns N' Roses keyboardist, Dizzy Reed (whom she claims pressured her to have an abortion). The reaction was markedly different from the condemnation such allegations tend to receive today – she was, she says, ostracised by people in the music industry. 'A lot of the initial reactions were: 'Good ... well done,'" she says. 'Women wrote to me and said: 'I had the same experience with so-and-so. Do you think I should come forward?' Then it was all shut down. If I went to LA to see my friends, there were places I couldn't go; it was like I spoke out against this thing that I shouldn't have.'"<sup>353</sup>

According to *The Daily Beast*, "Led Zeppelin's peak epitomized rock's most egregiously excess-driven period, and while it has been romanticized in pop culture via movies like *Almost Famous*, that period represented just how normalized fans, media and enablers were when it came to some of music's most depraved personalities. Sex, drugs and rock & roll became a mantra, and groupie culture became chic, but it wasn't just a big post-'60s party. Looking back now, the '70s classic rock era looks like libido run amok—with some glaring examples of just how dark the public would allow its favorite rockers to be without ever calling them into question."<sup>354</sup>

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<sup>351</sup> [thedailybeast.com](http://thedailybeast.com), March 20, 2019

<sup>352</sup> [theguardian.com](http://theguardian.com), March 15, 2018

<sup>353</sup> [theguardian.com](http://theguardian.com), March 15, 2018

<sup>354</sup> [thedailybeast.com](http://thedailybeast.com), January 16, 2019

# Thomas Wesley Pentz aka Diplo

## Allegations & Restraining Order

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**In 2020, Shelly Auguste filed a restraining order against Diplo, who she accused of distributing revenge porn and attempting to intimidate her with a private investigator.**

In 2020, Shelly Auguste filed a restraining order against DJ and music producer Diplo, or Thomas Wesley Pentz. According to her attorney Lisa Bloom, Auguste sought “to block Diplo from distributing revenge porn” allegedly “designed to humiliate her and to scare other women out of coming forward.” On Twitter, she referred to him as “a huge manipulating liar / gaslighter who PREYS [on] young women of ALL races (to be honest) but primarily young naive women of color.”<sup>355</sup>

Auguste “alleged that Diplo, 42, had filmed sexual activity without her permission. ‘I SPECIFICALLY asked him not too & his reply was ‘fuck it. I’m recording this,’” she tweeted. Following the thread, a user posted a naked picture of the woman on Twitter. The photo came from what Bloom and the accuser believe to be ‘a front account and a fake account’ operated by Diplo or someone acting on his behalf. ‘She alleges in her declaration in support of the restraining order that the only person that had that picture other than her was him,’ Bloom said.”<sup>356</sup>

Auguste also accused Diplo of “hiring a private investigator to contact her following an argument between them. She called the gesture an attempt to ‘scare’ her out of discussing ‘the disgusting details’ she knew about him. ‘The private investigator stated to me that he knew my address, he knew my parents address, he knew my place of work as well as my parents place to work,’ she wrote in the thread. ‘Take that as you may but most people will take that as a threat.’”<sup>357</sup>

Bloom “said she spoke to three other women with similar allegations against Diplo. ‘Witnesses are important in every case,’ Bloom said. ‘We are happy to speak for free and confidentially to any girls or women who also may have something against Diplo. We have spoken to a number of them so far and we’re continuing our investigation.’”<sup>358</sup>

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<sup>355</sup> [thedailybeast.com, November 17, 2020](https://www.thedailybeast.com/november-17-2020)

<sup>356</sup> [thedailybeast.com, November 17, 2020](https://www.thedailybeast.com/november-17-2020)

<sup>357</sup> [thedailybeast.com, November 17, 2020](https://www.thedailybeast.com/november-17-2020)

<sup>358</sup> [thedailybeast.com, November 17, 2020](https://www.thedailybeast.com/november-17-2020)

**In June 2021, Auguste sued Diplo for sexual assault, for which the police declined to file charges, and she also accused him of grooming her and knowingly giving her chlamydia.**

In June 2021, Auguste sued Diplo “for alleged sexual battery, assault, defamation, and intentional infliction of emotional distress. The suit describes Diplo as ‘a middle-aged white man who targets very young Black women and girls for sexual assault.’” According to legal filings, Auguste claimed “that Diplo reached out to her on Twitter when she was seventeen, and they continued to talk before they first had consensual sex when she was 21 in March of 2018. Then, according to her account, just over a year later, Diplo raped her in his hotel room after a performance in Las Vegas. The Las Vegas police declined to file charges. There are medical records from days after this encounter that show she tested positive for chlamydia, and she says in her filings that Diplo was her only sexual partner at the time.”<sup>359</sup>

According to the *Daily Mail*, “California law considers knowingly passing on a sexually-transmitted infection and recording a sexually explicit video without a partner's consent as misdemeanors.” Court documents “alleged that after Auguste confronted Diplo about the rumors he had herpes, he ‘cut off all communication’ with her. But after they reconciled, a year later, in 2019, she claims ‘she gave in to the pressure and lost her virginity to Diplo.’ [...] Not long after, she says she ‘was diagnosed with chlamydia’ and ‘believes she got it from Diplo because she says he was her only sexual partner at the time.’”<sup>360</sup>

**In 2010, Diplo tweeted about sleeping with teenage girls, and in 2017, he tweeted about joining the “r Kelly sex cult.”**

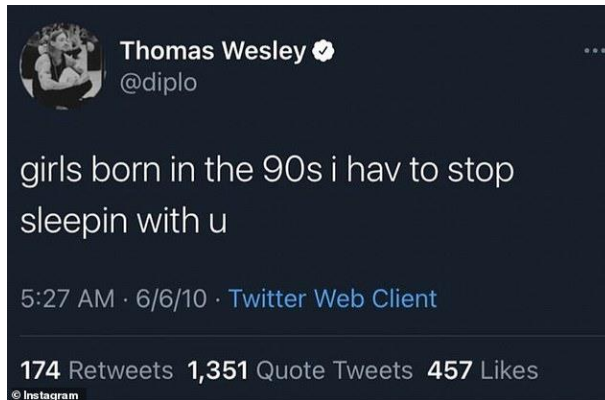
A *Daily Mail* article noted that in 2010, Diplo tweeted about sleeping with “girls born in the 90s,” who at the time of the post would have been between the ages of 11 and 20. Diplo at the time was in his early 30s. The tweet, which has since been deleted, read, “girls born in the 90s i hav to stop sleepin with you.”<sup>361</sup>

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<sup>359</sup> [thecut.com, October 7, 2021](https://www.thecut.com/2021/10/diplo-sexual-assault)

<sup>360</sup> [dailymail.co.uk, October 6, 2021](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-4011111/diplo-sexual-assault-2021.html)

<sup>361</sup> [dailymail.co.uk, October 6, 2021](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-4011111/diplo-sexual-assault-2021.html)



In 2017, after allegations broke that singer R. Kelly had been keeping multiple women in a sex “cult” against their will, Diplo tweeted, “Low key sent my cv for r kelly sex cult membership.” He deleted the post about 20 minutes later, according to *Spin*, which recorded a screenshot of the post. After deleting the tweet, Diplo “posted a follow-up photo of himself drinking what appears to be champagne with the simple caption, ‘Cheers.’”<sup>362</sup>

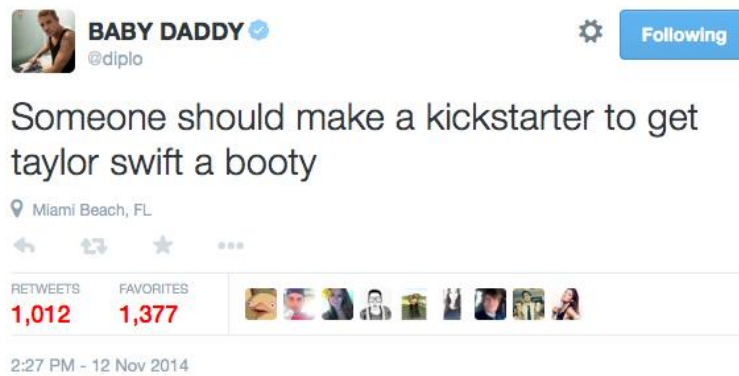


**In 2014, Diplo posted a tweet about making “a Kickstarter to get Taylor Swift a booty,” which he never apologized for or deleted.**

In 2014, Diplo tweeted, “Someone should make a kickstarter to get taylor swift a booty,” which he “followed up with an actual link to a fundraising site. Although Diplo never deleted or apologized for the tweet, in a recent interview with *Input*, he said that making fun of other artists online ‘really came back to hurt me in the end.’ ‘When I first started using social media, it was a big joke for me,’ he explained. ‘On Twitter, I was an unabashedly crazy person. And I didn’t realize that there was power in those words.’ Diplo’s tweet received widespread backlash

<sup>362</sup> [huffpost.com, July 18, 2017](http://huffpost.com, July 18, 2017)

because it was seen as body-shaming the ‘Shake It Off’ singer. (Swift later revealed in her Netflix documentary ‘Miss Americana’ that she was suffering from an eating disorder at the time.)”<sup>363</sup>



## Retaliation Against Victims

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**Diplo refuted Auguste’s claims and filed both a restraining order and a lawsuit against her in 2021.**

Via an Instagram post, Diplo claimed Auguste was “an obsessed fan with whom he had two consensual encounters over the course of a few years before realizing she was delusional and attempting to stop all communications with her. He says that he didn’t meet her until 2018, and that she has been using fake numbers and anonymous social media accounts to harass him and the mother of one of his children. He also says a family in Florida has a permanent restraining order against her.”<sup>364</sup>

Diplo alleged that Auguste was “engaging in criminal activity” and called her a possible “call girl.” In a post, he alleged Auguste “would offer her friends and other people to have sexual experiences with, and that’s when I began to get suspicious that she was engaging in criminal activity, and was possibly a call girl.” Diplo wrote, “I don’t think she could physically harm me but I was afraid she was going to harm herself.”<sup>365</sup>

In December 2020, a month after Auguste was granted a restraining order against him, Diplo filed a restraining order against her, “saying that she posted nude images of him without his

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<sup>363</sup> [insider.com, March 3, 2022](https://www.fox.com/story/entertainment/insider/2022/03/03/insider-com-march-3-2022)

<sup>364</sup> [thecut.com, October 7, 2021](https://www.thecut.com/2021/10/07/2021-10-07-the-cut)

<sup>365</sup> [dailymail.co.uk, October 6, 2021](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/2021/10/06/2021-10-06-daily-mail)

consent.” Both restraining orders were dismissed in January 2021 “when neither party’s lawyers showed up at a hearing.”<sup>366</sup>

In April 2021, Diplo sued Auguste for monetary damages, “accusing her of stalking, trespassing, and distributing private materials.”<sup>367</sup> His lawsuit accused Auguste of sharing nude pictures of him on social media and “alleged that the harassment extended to his friends and family as well.” He categorically denied all of her allegations against him, describing her as “a stalker [who] scammed her way into my life and tried to extort me for millions and then sued me when she didn’t get what she wanted.”<sup>368</sup>

**In 2022, Diplo won the case brought by Auguste and was awarded \$1.2 million by the Los Angeles Superior Court.**

In September 2022, *Pitchfork* reported that Diplo “won a ruling in a case against a woman he says harassed him after a sexual relationship that ended in 2020, TMZ reports and Pitchfork can confirm. Diplo had demanded an arbitration hearing against the woman, accusing her of violating a dual restraining order agreement that the pair signed in January 2021. In the new ruling, an arbitrator who considered both sets of arguments sided with Diplo, recommending that the Los Angeles Superior Court award him more than \$1.2 million in fees, damages, costs, and expenses.”<sup>369</sup>

**Following Auguste’s accusations, another woman sued Diplo for allegedly coercing her into performing oral sex in 2019, which Diplo and his legal team denied and referred to as part of a “shakedown” orchestrated by Auguste.**

In 2021, several weeks after Auguste made allegations against Diplo, another woman accused the producer of coercing her into performing oral sex in 2019. According to the lawsuit, “the alleged victim had been invited to an afterparty at one of Diplo’s concerts in Las Vegas. When the woman and her friends met him at the Wynn hotel, he provided marijuana and alcohol to the group. Soon after, Diplo allegedly asked the woman to join him in his private room while Diplo’s security started to remove other people from the party. Inside the room, the woman claims that Diplo wouldn’t let her leave until she performed oral sex on him. The woman said that she complied because she wanted to leave and feared for her safety. The woman also claims that she believes Diplo filmed the entire incident without her giving consent and is seeking unspecified damages.”<sup>370</sup>

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<sup>366</sup> [thecut.com, October 7, 2021](https://www.thecut.com/2021/10/diplo-lawsuit-auguste)

<sup>367</sup> [thecut.com, October 7, 2021](https://www.thecut.com/2021/10/diplo-lawsuit-auguste)

<sup>368</sup> [papermag.com, September 22, 2022](https://www.papermag.com/2022/09/22/diplo-lawsuit-auguste)

<sup>369</sup> [pitchfork.com, September 21, 2022](https://pitchfork.com/2022/09/21/diplo-lawsuit-auguste)

<sup>370</sup> [papermag.com, July 8, 2023](https://www.papermag.com/2023/07/08/diplo-lawsuit-auguste)

Diplo’s attorney Bryan Freedman “denied the allegations on behalf of his client, claiming that this suit is a part of a ‘shakedown’ that Diplo’s ex, Shelly Auguste, has orchestrated. ‘This complaint is completely outrageous, wildly untrue and yet also entirely predictable, given that it simply repeats the exact same claim already made by the plaintiff’s friend Shelly Auguste, an individual who has been harassing Mr. Pentz and his family for more than a year and already has repeatedly violated the restraining order issued against her,’ said Freeman to TMZ in a statement. ‘We have irrefutable evidence that this is a completely meritless claim and we will be providing it to a court as quickly as we possibly can to put an end to this shakedown by Ms. Auguste and her accomplices once and for all,’ he continued.”<sup>371</sup>

In 2021, Diplo “posted an Instagram carousel disputing all the charges and allegations being brought against him,” including those regarding sexual assault in Las Vegas. According to Diplo, the incident would have occurred “the same night that his accuser [Auguste] says he raped her. He says he had consensual sex with the woman and a handful of her friends, [...] and that the charges were dropped because he found videos of that night that both women filmed.”<sup>372</sup>

**In 2021, the second woman to sue Diplo for sexual assault withdrew her lawsuit allegedly without receiving any payment.**

In July 2021, *Rolling Stone* reported that the lawsuit against Diplo for allegedly coercing a woman into performing oral sex in Las Vegas in 2019 had been withdrawn by the plaintiff. The woman, who remained anonymous, said, “In light of the evidence and after consultation with my attorneys, I have decided to withdraw my lawsuit. [...] No payment was offered or requested. I regret filing the lawsuit.”<sup>373</sup>

Diplo’s attorney Bryan Freedman said in a statement to *Rolling Stone*, “As we said when we first learned of this lawsuit, there was absolutely irrefutable evidence that proved that the allegations it contained were false. [...] As soon as we shared that plethora of evidence with the plaintiff’s lawyers, they recognized that they needed to withdraw their suit immediately. [...] This demonstrably false claim ... has caused great harm. [...] While that damage can never fully be undone, we are glad to see this lawsuit be dismissed with prejudice.”<sup>374</sup>

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<sup>371</sup> [papermag.com](https://papermag.com), July 8, 2023

<sup>372</sup> [thecut.com](https://thecut.com), October 7, 2021

<sup>373</sup> [rollingstone.com](https://rollingstone.com), July 16, 2021

<sup>374</sup> [rollingstone.com](https://rollingstone.com), July 16, 2021

**Speaking on a podcast, Azealia Banks accused Diplo of having sex with her when she was 17 and he was in his 30s, claiming she “had to give him some teenage p\*\*\*y” for him to launch her career.**

In October 2021, the *Daily Mail* reported that rapper Azealia Banks “made accusations of Diplo’s predatory behavior on the podcast Cheapy’s Two Cents. ‘I used to have sex with Diplo when I was 17. Diplo definitely found me on f\*\*king Myspace,’ she said. ‘I always give him credit for f\*\*king launching my career off, but yeah, I had to give him some teenage p\*\*\*y to do it. He’s always been preying on young ethnic girls.’ Diplo would have been in his early 30s at the time.” According to *Daily Mail*, the rapper M.I.A., “who dated Diplo for five years, has accused him of emotional abuse.”<sup>375</sup>

## Public Reckoning

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**In July 2021, the Baltimore Orioles cancelled Diplo’s concert scheduled for after a game amid the sexual assault allegations against him.**

In July 2021, the Baltimore Orioles cancelled a Diplo concert scheduled for after a baseball game amid new sexual assault allegations against the DJ. In a statement, the Orioles organization wrote, “The Orioles will not hold the upcoming postgame performance on July 24 at Oriole Park at Camden Yards. Fans who purchased field passes with games tickets to the Diplo concert on July 24 will receive a refund.”<sup>376</sup>

**In 2020, Diplo received criticism online after 19-year-old TikTok star Quenlin Blackwell posted that she and Diplo were living together.**

In 2020, Diplo was the subject of “backlash surrounding his supposed living arrangement with 19-year-old TikTok star Quenlin Blackwell. It all started last week after the social media influencer told her 4.1 million followers that she was ‘living’ with the 41-year-old DJ. [...] It didn’t take long for the information to raise eyebrows online, with some accusing the DJ of ‘grooming’ Quenlin.”<sup>377</sup>

In response to backlash regarding his relationship to Blackwell, Diplo wrote on Twitter, “OK so I rent one of my properties to @quenblackwell. And yes I use the studio that is in that building,” later “mentioning in a follow-up tweet that they’ve previously bonded by making music together.

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<sup>375</sup> [dailymail.co.uk](https://www.dailymail.co.uk), October 6, 2021

<sup>376</sup> [consequence.net](https://www.consequence.net), July 13, 2021

<sup>377</sup> [papermag.com](https://www.papermag.com), October 27, 2020



[...] Her social media is sarcastic and chaotic and I can see you can get a twisted idea but there is nothing but a friendship between us. [...] As a landlord I don't really consider age or race as a qualification.”<sup>378</sup>

Quenlin “also issued a statement in which she denied the two were anything more than just friends. ‘I’m an adult. I’m not being groomed. Platonic relationships exist. I’ve been living here for over a year,’ she wrote. ‘I’d rather break both of my legs and be forced to walk than pursue Diplo romantically and he’d rather choke. [...] Diplo and his team are my mentors in LA and they are my safety net. Diplo and his team have saved me numerous times from the weirdos in LA. My parents trust him. I trust him,’ Quenlin added. ‘Y’all are making me feel icky. Diplo is my LA dad.. [sic] nothing more.’”<sup>379</sup>

In 2022, Quenlin posted a video that “reignited questions about her relationship with celebrity DJ Diplo.” In the video, which was later deleted, she reportedly said, “This producer told me to come out here when I was 17, and I came out here when I was 18, and I didn’t know what I was coming out here for really.” She added, “My music’s been a journal to me through all the bullshit I’ve dealt with from someone older like, ‘wanting to help me’ but essentially just like, seeing a young creative would [lighten them] and wanting to own them and wanting to have them a part of your crew. [...] So when I wake up out of the fog and haze from like, living over there and living with these producers and shit, I like, have all this music.”<sup>380</sup>

## **Attorneys’ Connections to Other Sex Abuse Allegations**

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### **Auguste’s lawyer was Lisa Bloom, who advised Harvey Weinstein in his legal battles for sexual assault.**

According to *The Daily Beast*, Auguste’s lawyer Lisa Bloom “has an extensive and polarizing track record on sexual-abuse cases. The Bloom Firm founder and former anchor of the truTV cable series *Lisa Bloom: Open Court*, represented several women in their sexual harassment claims against Bill O’Reilly in 2017. That same year, she advised Harvey Weinstein in his myriad legal battles for sexual assault and harassment—a role that her mother, famed women’s rights lawyer Gloria Allred, openly criticized. ‘Had I been asked by Mr. Weinstein to represent him,’ Allred told *The New York Times*, ‘I would have declined.’”<sup>381</sup>

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<sup>378</sup> [papermag.com](https://papermag.com), October 27, 2020

<sup>379</sup> [papermag.com](https://papermag.com), October 27, 2020

<sup>380</sup> [centennialworld.com](https://centennialworld.com), April 22, 2022

<sup>381</sup> [thedailybeast.com](https://thedailybeast.com), November 17, 2020

**Diplo’s attorney, Bryan Freedman, was accused of sexually assaulting and participating in the gang rape of a 17-year-old when he was a university student in the 1980s, and he paid a \$40,000 settlement.**

In November 2022, *Business Insider* reported that Bryan Freedman, “a top attorney for A-listers facing sexual-misconduct scandals,” including Diplo and Kevin Spacey, “was accused of sexual assault in the 1980s and paid a \$40,000 settlement to the accuser. In 1986, Freedman — then a student at University of California at Berkeley — and two other members of the Zeta Beta Tau fraternity were accused of sexually assaulting and battering a 17-year-old in a complaint filed in the Superior Court for Alameda County.” Freedman settled the case in 1991 without admitting liability. At the time, “Freedman had recently been admitted to the State Bar of California and was a first-year attorney at a Los Angeles law firm.”<sup>382</sup>

Based on court filings, the plaintiff became intoxicated at another fraternity party, and then, “encountered Freedman and one of his fraternity brothers” who took her to Zeta Beta Tau. According to *Business Insider*, “I guess I passed out or blanked out or something, and I woke up again and I was on another bed’ with Freedman, the plaintiff said in the deposition. [...] The teenager said that two other male college students then vaginally and orally assaulted her.” She said that “she and her friend then returned to Zeta Beta Tau to retrieve her shoe and car key. Her friend began yelling at the fraternity brothers, according to the teenager. ‘She accused them of gang-banging me,’ the plaintiff said in her deposition.”<sup>383</sup>

## Elvis Presley

### Relationships With Minors

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**Elvis Presley met his future wife, Priscilla, when she was 14 years old and he was 24, and he moved her into Graceland when she was still in high school. Priscilla said that early in their relationship, she attempted to hide her age from the public.**

In 1959, Elvis Presley met his future wife, Priscilla, at a party in Germany when she was “an impressionable 14-year-old. He was 24.” At the time, Priscilla’s stepfather served in the Air Force and was transferred to a base in Wiesbaden where “Elvis was serving in the Army.” Priscilla wrote in an essay published by *People* in 1985 that when she first met Elvis, he “stood up and smiled. ‘Well,’ he said, ‘what have we here? What are you, about a junior or senior in

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<sup>382</sup> [businessinsider.com, November 16, 2022](https://www.businessinsider.com/2022/11/bryan-freedman-sexual-assault)

<sup>383</sup> [businessinsider.com, November 16, 2022](https://www.businessinsider.com/2022/11/bryan-freedman-sexual-assault)

high school?” When Priscilla told Elvis that she was in the ninth grade, he laughed and said, “Why, you’re just a baby.”<sup>384</sup>

When Elvis and Priscilla began spending more and more time together, her stepfather insisted he meet Elvis. When they met, Priscilla’s stepfather asked Elvis, “Just what is the intent here? Let’s face it: You’re Elvis Presley. You have women throwing themselves at you. Why my daughter?” Elvis replied, “Well, sir, I happen to be very fond of her. She’s a lot more mature than her age and I enjoy her company.” Priscilla said that when she began seeing Elvis more regularly, she tried “to find some way to appear older than my age.” Priscilla wrote, “I’d borrow my mother’s clothes and hope everyone would assume I was at least 16.”<sup>385</sup>

Eventually, as reported by the *Las Vegas Sun* in 1967, “Priscilla stayed with Presley’s father and stepmother at the family mansion, ‘Graceland,’ when she graduated from a Memphis high school in 1963.” According to *Insider*, Priscilla’s parents at first didn’t approve of her going to Memphis to be with Elvis “as she was still only 17. But after Elvis called Priscilla’s dad and told him that Priscilla wouldn’t be living with Elvis, but with his parents, that he’d make sure Priscilla graduated high school, and that he’d one day marry Priscilla, her parents acquiesced.”<sup>386</sup>

Ultimately, Elvis and Priscilla married in 1967. When they eloped, Priscilla was 21, and Elvis was 32. Priscilla claimed, according to *Insider*, that “the two waited until they were married to sleep together.” They separated in 1972 and divorced in 1973.<sup>387</sup>

### **Elvis Presley had a history of dating other 14-old girls and reportedly targeted virgins “to mould them and mentor them.”**

According to a report on Presley’s dating history in the *Mirror* “Alanna Nash, author of *Baby Let’s Play House: Elvis and the Women Who Loved Him*, claims that ‘Elvis loved 14- and 15-year-old girls’. In her book, she explains: ‘He was insecure about his sexual prowess and wanted virgins so they wouldn’t have anyone to compare him to as a lover. Adult women scared him. He wanted to mould them and mentor them and they adored him.’” She added, “He didn’t seem to worry that a fling with a child could land him in jail.”<sup>388</sup>

Presley “had a history of dating underage girls. In his book *Elvis Presley: A Southern Life*, historian Joel Williamson revealed a darker side to Elvis when he detailed the time he spent

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<sup>384</sup> [insider.com, January 23, 2023](#); [today.com, June 27, 2022](#); [people.com, September 9, 1985](#)

<sup>385</sup> [people.com, September 9, 1985](#)

<sup>386</sup> [insider.com, January 23, 2023](#); [lasvegussun.com, May 2, 1967](#)

<sup>387</sup> [insider.com, January 23, 2023](#)

<sup>388</sup> [mirror.co.uk, June 24, 2022](#)

with teenagers while touring.” He wrote that “on one tour, Elvis had his eyes on a group of three 14-year-old girls who the 22-year-old would pillow fight, tickle, wrestle and kiss. One of those girls was Frances Forbes, who claims that Elvis didn’t notice her until she was 14.” Forbes said, “When I was 14, he noticed me. Fourteen was a magical age with Elvis. It really was.” Additionally, “two years after his divorce from Priscilla, Elvis, who was now close to turning 40, went after another 14-year-old girl - Reeca Smith.”<sup>389</sup>

### **Elvis Presley continues to be a major earner for Sony Music Entertainment.**

According to *Billboard* in 2022, “Presley’s catalog generated publishing royalties that averaged \$12 million annually over the last three years.” In 1974, Elvis’ manager, Tom Parker, “made a deal to sell all of Presley’s master recordings to RCA Records for \$5.4 million, which means the label pays no royalties to the estate for tracks released before 1973.” Lyn Koppe, executive vice president of global catalog for Sony Music Entertainment and Legacy Recordings, told *Billboard* in 2022 that Elvis “consistently is one of our top 10 artists.” In total, “Sony Music-owned RCA Records has earned an average \$23.5 million in annual revenue over the past three years, according to Billboard estimates,” across all its artists.<sup>390</sup>

## **Rolling Stones**

### **Relationships With Minors**

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#### **Rolling Stones front man Mick Jagger allegedly had a sexual relationship with an up-and-coming actress who was 15 years old at the time, while he was 33.**

In February 2020, actress Rae Dawn told the *Daily Mail* how she and the Rolling Stones’ Mick Jagger “had a two-day fling in 1977 while he was still married to first wife Bianca.” At the time, Jagger was 33 years old while Dawn was 15. Dawn said she met Jagger during a trip to New York after he told her, “you’re cute.” He then “whisked her to a recording studio before the pair spent the night together.” Dawn told the *Daily Mail* that Mick Jagger “never asked me how old I was and I never told him. It never came up. I remember thinking he was really cute. He had tousled hair. I thought, ‘Oh man, he is beautiful.’”<sup>391</sup>

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<sup>389</sup> [mirror.co.uk, June 24, 2022](https://www.mirror.co.uk, June 24, 2022)

<sup>390</sup> [billboard.com, June 25, 2022](https://www.billboard.com, June 25, 2022)

<sup>391</sup> [dailymail.co.uk, February 1, 2020](https://www.dailymail.co.uk, February 1, 2020)

Dawn said that after they met, Mick Jagger “grabbed my hand and we jumped in his limo and went straight to a recording studio. The Stones were there, I was in the background. I remember being in there for hours and hours. “Then I slept over at his apartment. I knew what I was doing. I was experimenting with Mick. I was having fun.” She then recalled “waking to find Jagger's bandmate Keith Richards staring at the pair.” The two went on to spend another day together “first back at the recording studio and then at a Fleetwood Mac concert at Madison Square Garden, where Jagger and Richards were mobbed by fans.”<sup>392</sup>

However, Dawn “insisted Jagger should not be vilified because their fling took place ‘in a different era’ to today's #MeToo culture. She says she is only speaking out to ‘own’ the story after accidentally blurting out during a podcast that she had sex with Jagger when she was two years under the age of consent.” Speaking to *The Hollywood Reporter*, Dawn was asked how she landed a role in 1985's *Commando*. She replied, “I got it because I'd been in a Jagger video and then they asked me how I knew Mick and before I knew it I'd blurted out that I'd had sex with him when I was 15. It just slipped out.” Dawn said, “I feel incredibly bad about it. It's me and my big mouth. My family and friends knew about it but it's not something I have ever dined out on.”<sup>393</sup>

Dawn showed the *Daily Mail* “a black leather journal from 1977 in which she recorded her liaison with Jagger in childish handwriting which reads: ‘I got to experience being a groupie. Not that being a groupie is worth experiencing. I just had to go and be wild. Well I did it. I got to live with Mick Jagger, John Phillips, Mackenzie and Ron Wood... it was fun and full of excitement.’”<sup>394</sup>

Dawn stated, “It's all about currency in Hollywood. Between men and women it's ‘what can you do for me?’ When you're young and hot, everyone wants a piece. When you are old and crusty, nobody wants a piece.”<sup>395</sup>

**Mick Jagger allegedly had sex with the 18-year-old daughter of The Mamas & Papas singer John Phillips. At the time, Jagger allegedly told her, “I’ve been waiting for this since you were 10 years old.”**

According to the *New York Post*, actress Mackenzie Phillips claimed that she had sex with Rolling Stones front man Mick Jagger in the late 1970s “during a raucous, drug-fueled party at the Central Park West home of her dad, folk-rock star John Phillips” of The Mamas & The

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<sup>392</sup> [dailymail.co.uk, February 1, 2020](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/celebrity-news/article-4011111/mick-jagger-dawn-fleming-1970s.html)

<sup>393</sup> [dailymail.co.uk, February 1, 2020](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/celebrity-news/article-4011111/mick-jagger-dawn-fleming-1970s.html)

<sup>394</sup> [dailymail.co.uk, February 1, 2020](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/celebrity-news/article-4011111/mick-jagger-dawn-fleming-1970s.html)

<sup>395</sup> [dailymail.co.uk, February 1, 2020](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/celebrity-news/article-4011111/mick-jagger-dawn-fleming-1970s.html)

Papas. At the time, Phillips was 18 years old, and Jagger allegedly told her, “I’ve been waiting for this since you were 10 years old.” Jagger would have been about 35 at the time of the encounter. Phillips wrote in her memoir, “I’d known Mick since I was a kid, and maybe most people think their parents’ friends are old and gross.”<sup>396</sup>

### **Rolling Stones bassist Bill Wyman began a relationship with a 13-year-old while he was 48 and had sex with her when she was just 14.**

Rolling Stones bassist Bill Wyman “famously began courting Mandy Smith when she was 13 and he was 48. They married, disastrously, when she was 18, but her mother joined them on honeymoon and they spent less than a week of married life together.” In discussing his relationship with Smith, Wyman said, “It was very emotional and special at the time. It wasn’t how it was reported to be and it was the only time it ever happened in my life.”<sup>397</sup>

Wyman told the *Daily Mail* that “he avoided talking about Miss Smith because it upset his wife and teenage girls – ‘who are the age she was’ – Wyman said: ‘We all have a skeleton in the cupboard, it’s just if you’re a taxi driver in Halifax no one ever hears about it.’”<sup>398</sup>

According to the *Mirror*, Smith’s “older sister had called for Wyman to be prosecuted. But Wyman has revealed that he made contact with police and the Crown Prosecution Service to discuss the relationship in the wake of the Jimmy Savile scandal.” According to the *Guardian*, Savile, host of the BBC’s Top of the Pops program, “sexually abused hundreds of children and women at the height of his fame.” Wyman claimed, “I went to the police and I went to the public prosecutor and said, ‘Do you want to talk to me? Do you want to meet up with me, or anything like that?’ and I got a message back, ‘No’.”<sup>399</sup>

## **Continued Work with Major Labels**

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### **The Rolling Stones’ catalogue has been with every major label group, including Sony, Universal, and Warner. In 2018, the band announced an expanded agreement with Universal covering its catalogue.**

In July 2018, the Rolling Stones and Universal Music Group “announced an expansive worldwide agreement covering the band’s recorded-music and audio-visual catalogs, archival

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<sup>396</sup> [nypost.com](http://nypost.com), September 25, 2009; [nypost.com](http://nypost.com), March 5, 1999

<sup>397</sup> [dailymail.co.uk](http://dailymail.co.uk), March 31, 2013

<sup>398</sup> [dailymail.co.uk](http://dailymail.co.uk), March 31, 2013

<sup>399</sup> [dailymail.co.uk](http://dailymail.co.uk), March 31, 2013; [theguardian.co.uk](http://theguardian.co.uk), June 26, 2014; [mirror.co.uk](http://mirror.co.uk), April 1, 2013

support, global merchandising and brand management.” In an announcement, Universal Music Group noted that the Rolling Stones “has a partner that complements and supports their global stature, with expertise and resources that enable the band to maximize their reach while underscoring their enduring cultural relevance across numerous forms of entertainment.”<sup>400</sup>

According to *Variety*, the agreement allowed the Rolling Stones to take “full advantage of UMG’s range of companies. Its recorded-music catalog from 1971 through the present and future releases will continue to be distributed globally by UMG’s labels and networks around the world, as they have since 2008. Over the years the Stones’ post-1970 catalog has been with every major label group, beginning with Warner, moving to CBS (which was later purchased by Sony) in 1983, then to Virgin/EMI in 1992; its pre-1971 catalog remains with Abkco Music, which is also distributed by UMG.”<sup>401</sup>

In October 2023, the Rolling Stones released a new album “Hackney Diamonds,” which “debuted on the Billboard 200 albums chart at No. 3.” The debut made the band “the first act to have newly-charted top 10 albums in the United States in every decade since the 1960s.” The album “also extended the rock band’s record as the artist with the most top 10 albums of all time, with a total of 38.”<sup>402</sup>

## William Bruce “Axl” Rose Jr.

### Allegations & Criminal Charges

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**Guns N’ Roses singer Axl Rose faced statutory rape charges after he had sex with a 15-year-old girl. Following the alleged rape, the girl was found naked on the street seeking help from the LAPD.**

In December 1985, Guns N’ Roses singer William Bruce “Axl” Rose Jr. allegedly had sex with a 15-year-old girl named Michelle. According to LoudWire, “There are many, many different accounts from what actually happened with this situation. But what we know is that a 15-year-old girl found herself in the Gardner Studio one day, and then was thrown out by Axl Rose, without any of her clothes. She ventured through Los Angeles, naked, and sought assistance from the police.”<sup>403</sup>

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<sup>400</sup> [variety.com, July 8, 2018](https://variety.com/2018/07/08/universalmusic.com); [universalmusic.com, July 9, 2018](https://universalmusic.com)

<sup>401</sup> [variety.com, July 8, 2018](https://variety.com/2018/07/08)

<sup>402</sup> [hollywoodreporter.com, October 31, 2023](https://hollywoodreporter.com/2023/10/31)

<sup>403</sup> [loudwire.com, February 11, 2023](https://loudwire.com/2023/02/11)

Rock journalist Mick Wall wrote in his biography of the band, “A naked, underage girl running away from adult men along one of the busiest streets in Los Angeles was not going to go unnoticed, and within hours the LAPD were back at the Hell House with the girl, looking to ID her assailants. Everyone in the house was brought outside except for Axl, who hid behind some equipment along with another girl. ‘While the cops are out there harassing everybody, asking their stupid questions, I’m with this girl behind the amp and we start going at it,’ he later boasted. ‘That was the rush! I got away with it! It was really exciting.’”<sup>404</sup>

As the police left, they warned “the band that Axl needed to turn himself in. Within a few days the garage had been raided and searched. The band was told that the girl and her parents were pressing charges of statutory rape (a minor is considered by law as incapable of giving consent to sexual intercourse) against Axl and Slash.” Wall wrote that Axl “and Slash quickly skipped the scene when reality -and the possibility of a mandatory 5-year jail sentence- hit home.”<sup>405</sup>

**Axl Rose and Slash hid at manager Vicky Hamilton’s Los Angeles apartment while police sought them on statutory rape charges. Hamilton later worked in A&R at UMG’s Geffen Records and Capitol Records.**

As Axl feared being arrested on statutory rape charge, “Slash rang Vicky Hamilton, their sometime promoter/manager, and begged her to take Axl in for a few days.” Hamilton, who later managed Guns N’ Roses, also became an A&R executive at Universal Music Group’s Geffen Records and Capitol Records. According to rock journalist Mick Wall, “Hamilton had a one-bed apartment at 1114 North Clark Street that she’d secured with settlement money she’d received for relinquishing an interest in the management of Poison, who were now in the process of breaking big. She was sharing with a friend in need, Jennifer Perry, and working as an agent for Silver Lining Entertainment as well as helping Guns N’ Roses out on an ad hoc basis.” Their “arrangement became more solid as soon as Axl showed up as a fugitive from the LAPD.”<sup>406</sup>

Hamilton said she got a call from Slash “asking if Axl could stay and I asked why. Slash had replied: ‘Well, it’s kind of important... the cops are looking for him.’ ‘Why are the cops looking for him?’ ‘He had a girl up in the loft, and I guess they had sex, but then he got mad at her and locked her outside without her clothes and she went to the cops and said that he raped her.’ I was stunned and didn’t know what to say. Slash sort of begged so I said, ‘Okay, for a few days.’ Minutes later Axl walks through the door carrying a plastic garbage bag and a little suitcase full of all his worldly possessions.” When Hamilton “asked him what happened and he said very

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<sup>404</sup> [ultimate-guitar.com](http://ultimate-guitar.com), January 5, 2017

<sup>405</sup> [ultimate-guitar.com](http://ultimate-guitar.com), January 5, 2017

<sup>406</sup> [medium.com](http://medium.com), January 4, 2017; [vickyhamilton.com](http://vickyhamilton.com), accessed August 14, 2023



little, other than ‘It was stupid, involving a girl... It won’t happen again,’ Axl promised. He didn’t give me any more information. Everything I heard about the incident from that point on was hearsay.”<sup>407</sup>

While Axl and Slash stayed with Hamilton, she “found Axl a lawyer to represent him on the rape charge.” Though Hamilton recalled “several visits from the police and many, many lawyers’ phone calls, the rape charges were withdrawn at some point during this period. The case against Slash was given a court date but later dropped. Axl did have to find a suit and appear at a court hearing, but his case was also dropped through a lack of hard evidence.”<sup>408</sup>

**Former model Sheila Kennedy sued Axl Rose for sexual assault under New York’s Adult Survivors Act, alleging that he dragged her by the hair, tied her up, and raped her at a New York City hotel in 1989.**

In November 2023, Sheila Kennedy, a former model who appeared in *Penthouse*, sued Axl Rose for sexual assault and battery in New York State Supreme Court under the Adult Survivors Act ahead of the window closing. Kennedy “accused him of dragging her by the hair, tying her up and raping her in a New York hotel in 1989.” She said “that she has suffered anxiety and depression as a result of the incident with Mr. Rose, and that her career as an actress and model has suffered.” She also “discussed her encounter with Mr. Rose in the Past,” including in a 2016 interview in the *Daily Mail* and her 2016 memoir “No One’s Pet.”<sup>409</sup>

Kennedy said after meeting him at a New York nightclub, “Rose invited her and another woman to a party at his suite in a hotel on Central Park West, where he offered them cocaine and alcohol.” Then, Rose asked everyone to leave the party except for her, the other woman, and a man, and “Mr. Rose began having sex with the other woman, in an ‘aggressive’ way that Ms. Kennedy says in the suit ‘appeared painful’ for the woman.” She recounted hearing “breaking glass and objects being thrown in Mr. Rose’s room,” along with him “calling her a ‘whore.’”<sup>410</sup>

Kennedy’s suit stated that “Rose stormed into the room where she was, knocked her down, ‘grabbed her by the hair and dragged her across the suite back to his bedroom.’ Her knees were bleeding from being scraped against the rug.” Once inside Rose’s room, “he threw her facedown on the bed, tied her hands behind her back with pantyhose and sexually assaulted her, forcing anal penetration. The suit says that Mr. Rose never sought Ms. Kennedy’s consent, and that she

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<sup>407</sup> [medium.com, January 4, 2017](https://medium.com/january-4-2017)

<sup>408</sup> [medium.com, January 4, 2017](https://medium.com/january-4-2017)

<sup>409</sup> [nytimes.com, November 22, 2023](https://nytimes.com/november-22-2023)

<sup>410</sup> [nytimes.com, November 22, 2023](https://nytimes.com/november-22-2023)

‘did not consent and felt overpowered.’” Writing in her 2021 memoir, “Kennedy also described her encounter with Mr. Rose as a violent one, which left her ‘crying and bleeding.’”<sup>411</sup>

## Cherilyn “Cher” Sarkisian

### Allegations

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**Cher was sued by three former dancers who claimed they were fired from her tour because of their race, age, and for reporting a sexual assault by a company member.**

In 2014, dancers Jacquelyn Dowsett Ballinger, Suzanne Easter, and Kevin Wilson sued the singer Cherilyn “Cher” Sarkisian, claiming they were fired from her Dressed to Kill (D2K) tour “for reporting an alleged sexual assault by a male dancer on a female fan after a June stop of the tour.” According to *The Hollywood Reporter*, their complaint alleged that Wilson and Easter “were also fired because they’re African-American—they claim Cher once remarked ‘We have too much color onstage’ while auditioning dancers and selected a white dancer over a more skillful minority dancer—and Easter because she’s over 40. They’re suing for violations of unfair competition and the whistle-blower statute and several causes of employment discrimination, and they name Cher’s Isis Productions and manager Lindsay Scott and manager Roger Davies as defendants.”<sup>412</sup> The wrongful termination lawsuit sought over \$10 million in damages.<sup>413</sup>

Within the suit, according to *CNN*, it was claimed specifically that “Cher was personally involved in the coverup of a sexual assault against a female fan by one of her other male dancers while on Cher’s Dressed to Kill tour.” According to the suit, the alleged assault happened in a St. Louis hotel in June 2014 after a show, when a “recently-hired dancer invited a female fan to his hotel room, it said. The fan, identified as ‘Jenn,’ later complained to another dancer, Jacquelyn Ballinger, that the male dancer pressured Jenn to have sex with him. ‘When she refused, the dancer became angry,’ the complaint said.” Subsequently, “Jenn asked for Ms. Ballinger not to leave Jenn alone and for help, to which Ms. Ballinger obliged.”<sup>414</sup>

Ballinger later told tour choreographer-dancer Kevin Wilson and dancer Suzanne Easter about the allegation. The three dancers “made numerous and repeated complaints” to Cher and tour

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<sup>411</sup> [nytimes.com, November 22, 2023](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/22/nytimes.com)

<sup>412</sup> [hollywoodreporter.com, September 22, 2014](https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/2014/09/22/hollywoodreporter.com)

<sup>413</sup> [cbsnews.com, September 19, 2014](https://www.cbsnews.com/2014/09/19/cbsnews.com)

<sup>414</sup> [cnn.com, September 18, 2014](https://www.cnn.com/2014/09/18/cnn.com)

managers “regarding the sexual assault of a female fan by an employee.” The dancers “were instructed not to tell anyone what had transpired” and “informed that management would ‘take care of the situation,’” the suit said. All three dancers were fired a month after reporting the assault “whilst the dancer whom they accused of sexual assault remained gainfully employed.” The dancer who allegedly assaulted the fan was put on “probation” only after the fired dancers hired a lawyer and prepared to sue, the complaint said.<sup>415</sup>

According to *CNN*, “The purported reason given for the firing was ‘budget cuts,’” even though Cher’s tour sold out every show and added more. In the extension of her tour, Cher even “brought in Bob Mackie to remake all of her costumes, incurring at least \$100,000 per outfit in additional expense for EACH costume,” the suit said. These actions were alleged to be “incongruous with Defendants’ use of ‘budget cuts’ as the reasoning behind Plaintiffs’ terminated employments.” Further, it was also reported that the D2K tour “grossed nearly \$55 million from 610,000 fans” and was “ranked among the top-10 grossing tours of 2014 by the trade publication Pollstar,” according to *CBS News*.<sup>416</sup>

The suit “accuses Cher of making a racist comment while reviewing audition tapes for dancers. After watching a ‘minority female dancer’ who ‘particularly impressed’ the choreographer and tour manager, Cher allegedly remarked ‘we have too much color onstage’ and requested a white, blonde dancer. A blond haired, blue-eyed female was subsequently hired,” according to the suit.<sup>417</sup> Additionally, the suit alleged “This pattern of racism and discrimination continued to permeate the tour when Wilson was prohibited by Cher and tour management from casting any dark skinned African Americans who auditioned, even if they danced better than their white counterparts.”<sup>418</sup>

## Nikki Sixx

### Allegations

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**Mötley Crüe bassist Nikki Sixx recalled in the band’s 2001 memoir that he “pretty much” raped a woman at a party. When asked about the incident in 2019, he walked back the story, calling it an embellishment that he didn’t remember.**

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<sup>415</sup> [cnn.com](http://cnn.com), September 18, 2014

<sup>416</sup> [cnn.com](http://cnn.com), September 18, 2014; [cbsnews.com](http://cbsnews.com), September 19, 2014; [i2.cdn.turner.com](http://i2.cdn.turner.com), September 18, 2014

<sup>417</sup> [cnn.com](http://cnn.com), September 18, 2014

<sup>418</sup> [i2.cdn.turner.com](http://i2.cdn.turner.com), September 18, 2014

In Mötley Crüe’s 2001 memoir “The Dirt,” bassist Nikki Sixx “recollects a night where a woman he knew pulled him into a small room at a party and the two began having sex. Soon after, Sixx left the room, returned with bandmate Tommy Lee and tricked the woman as to who she was having sex with. ‘We fucked for a while, then I told her I had to go to the bathroom. I went into the party and found Tommy,’ Sixx wrote in the book. ‘Dude, come here.’ I grabbed him. ‘I got this chick in the closet. Follow me, and don’t say a word. When I tell you, start fucking her.’ ‘In the closet, I stood directly behind Tommy,’ he continued. ‘He fucked her while she grabbed my hair and yelled, ‘Oh, Nikki! Nikki!’”<sup>419</sup>

Sixx recalled that the next morning, “he didn’t remember the incident until the woman called him and told him she had been raped the night before. Though she said her attacker was a man who’d picked her up while she was trying to hitchhike home, Sixx said the story made him realize ‘that I had probably gone too far.’” Sixx added, “At first, I was relieved, because it meant I hadn’t raped her. But the more I thought about it, the more I realized that I pretty much had. I was in a zone, though, and in that zone, consequences did not exist. Besides, I was capable of sinking even lower than that.”<sup>420</sup>

When asked by *Rolling Stone* in 2019 about the alleged sexual assault, “Sixx demurred and said, ‘There was a little embellishment here and there with Neil Strauss,’” who wrote Mötley Crüe’s memoir with the band. In a statement, Sixx “said he did not recall this particular story because *The Dirt* was being written ‘during a really low point in my life’ where he was drinking and using drugs again to deal with a crumbling relationship. ‘I honestly don’t recall a lot of the interviews with Neil,’ he said.”<sup>421</sup>

## Gordon Sumner aka Sting

### Allegations

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**Gordon “Sting” Sumner was accused of statutory rape against a 15-year-old girl in 1979 while on tour with The Police, and Jane Doe filed suit against him and fellow band members before Arizona’s window statute expired.**

According to the *Phoenix New Times*, Gordon Sumner, widely known as “Sting,” was accused of “sexually assaulting a 15-year-old girl in a Tempe hotel where he was staying while on tour with

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<sup>419</sup> [rollingstone.com, March 5, 2019](https://www.rollingstone.com/music/album-reviews/motley-crue-the-dirt-2001-1999999999/)

<sup>420</sup> [rollingstone.com, March 5, 2019](https://www.rollingstone.com/music/album-reviews/motley-crue-the-dirt-2001-1999999999/)

<sup>421</sup> [rollingstone.com, March 5, 2019](https://www.rollingstone.com/music/album-reviews/motley-crue-the-dirt-2001-1999999999/)

his band The Police in 1979.” The lawsuit “alleges that Sumner, then 27 and married with a hit album, knew that the plaintiff, identified only as Jane Doe in court documents, was underage and unable to give consent as a result. It says she has suffered lifelong trauma as a result of the incident, leaving her in need of therapy and unable to maintain healthy relationships.” Doe’s lawsuit was filed in December 2020 “before the deadline set by a new Arizona law” allowing individuals to file time-barred child sexual abuse lawsuits.<sup>422</sup>

The suit filed by Doe further alleged that “The Police and Frontier Booking International (FBI), the band's booking company, were negligent in letting the assault happen. The lawsuit asks for a variety of damages, including medical expenses and attorneys' fees. No dollar amount is given, but it notes that the total amount contested in the suit exceeds \$75,000.” The case cited “sexual assault/sexual abuse of a minor, intentional infliction of emotional distress, assault, battery, and negligence.” Sumner’s bandmates, Andy Summers and Stewart Copeland, also were sued, according to Vermilion County First.<sup>423</sup>

Doe claimed that she met Sumner “in May 1979 at a meet-and-greet, and she told him she was 15 at the time. After Sumner approached her again at their show at Dooley's in Tempe, she went with him to a house party in Phoenix alongside guitarist Andy Summers and two women,” reported the *Phoenix New Times*. During the party, “Sumner came onto her sexually” and “allegedly ‘kissed (her), touched her breasts, and touched her genitals.” However, “Doe told him she was 15 and a virgin. They eventually went back to Tempe to meet up with Doe's friend and she was in Sumner's hotel room when the alleged assault happened.”<sup>424</sup>

John Rosenberg, Sumner’s attorney, responded that “the musician ‘categorically denies’ that the assault described in the lawsuit ever occurred. ‘As will be revealed at the appropriate time, there is compelling independent evidence that refutes these allegations. Virtually the only part of the story alleged in the lawsuit that we do not dispute is that The Police performed a show in Arizona in 1979.’”<sup>425</sup>

**Jane Doe’s attorneys argued The Police had “a pattern of sexualizing young women,” as demonstrated by “‘Don’t Stand So Close To Me’ about a teacher with sexual feelings toward a student” and references to the book “Lolita” about a pedophile.**

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<sup>422</sup> [phoenixnewtimes.com](https://www.phoenixnewtimes.com), December 21, 2020

<sup>423</sup> [phoenixnewtimes.com](https://www.phoenixnewtimes.com), December 21, 2020; [vermilioncountyfirst.com](https://www.vermilioncountyfirst.com), November 19, 2020

<sup>424</sup> [phoenixnewtimes.com](https://www.phoenixnewtimes.com), December 21, 2020; [vermilioncountyfirst.com](https://www.vermilioncountyfirst.com), November 19, 2020

<sup>425</sup> [phoenixnewtimes.com](https://www.phoenixnewtimes.com), December 21, 2020

According to the *Phoenix New Times*, Jane Doe’s “complaint includes lyrics from The Police’s later-published hit ‘Don’t Stand So Close To Me’ about a teacher with sexual feelings toward a student. The song, the band’s fifth-most popular on Spotify, references the book *Lolita*, a 1955 literary classic by Russian author Vladimir Nabokov about a pedophile repeatedly sexually assaulting his adolescent stepdaughter. [...] While the filing claims that Sumner wrote the lyrics shortly after the assault alleged in the lawsuit, Doe’s two attorneys say they are not claiming it was inspiration for the song. Instead, the two told *New Times* they contend there was a pattern of sexualizing young women among members of the band at the time, which is why they have named the band and booking company in the suit.”<sup>426</sup>

Furthermore, speaking to the *New Times* about The Police’s interest in young fans, Ashley Pileika, an attorney for Jane Doe, “referenced a 1982 photo they found published by Summers, the guitarist, of a young fan. Summers captioned it ‘Fans, Lolita, Canada.’”<sup>427</sup> The following photo with that caption was published on the website for Andy Summers, noting that it was among “over six hundred photographs from Andy’s Police days along with the journal entries of that period” from 1980 to 1983 when The Police were on tour. The photos were published in the book “I’ll Be Watching You.”<sup>428</sup>



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<sup>426</sup> [phoenixnewtimes.com](https://www.phoenixnewtimes.com), December 21, 2020

<sup>427</sup> [phoenixnewtimes.com](https://www.phoenixnewtimes.com), December 21, 2020

<sup>428</sup> [andysummers.com](https://www.andysummers.com), accessed January 17, 2024

# Steven Tallarico aka Steven Tyler

## Allegations

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**Aerosmith singer Steven Tyler was accused of sexually abusing and assaulting a 16-year-old fan, who he met via his agents. Tyler went so far as to get legal custody of the fan so she could travel with him while avoiding criminal charges.**

In December 2022, Aerosmith singer Steven Tyler faced accusations of sexual assault in the form of a lawsuit filed by accuser Julia Holcomb in California. *Rolling Stone* reported that “the suit accuses the Aerosmith singer of sexual assault, sexual battery, and intentional infliction of emotional distress. The assault was alleged to have begun when Holcomb was 16 years old.” Holcomb’s lawsuit was filed within days of the deadline for California legislation “that lifted the statute of limitations and granted a three-year lookback period for survivors of childhood sexual abuse to come forward with their allegations.” A picture of Tyler and Holcomb together in the 1970s, published by the *Guardian*, is below.<sup>429</sup>



Holcomb’s lawsuit alleged, according to *Rolling Stone*, “Tyler convinced Holcomb’s mother to grant him guardianship over her when she was 16 years old, which consequently allowed her to live with him and engage in a sexual relationship. She claims they were together from 1973 until about three years later.” When the case was filed, Tyler was not initially named as a defendant,

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<sup>429</sup> [rollingstone.com](https://www.rollingstone.com), December 29, 2022; [theguardian.com](https://www.theguardian.com), September 13, 2021

instead being referred to as “Defendant Doe 1.” *Rolling Stone* reported that “the complaint was amended to include his name, though [D]oes 2 through 50 haven’t been specified yet.”<sup>430</sup>

Notably, Holcomb’s lawsuit against Tyler also referenced unnamed defendants who were described as “the managers, trustees, partners, servants, joint venturers, shareholders, contractors, and/or employees” of Tyler and other defendants. Holcomb’s complaint alleged that these defendants were responsible “for the occurrences herein alleged, and were a legal cause of the childhood sexual assault and intentional infliction of emotional distress which resulted in injury to the Plaintiff.”<sup>431</sup>

Holcomb “met Tyler (who would’ve been 25 at the time of their meeting) just after her 16th birthday when Aerosmith played a concert in Portland, Oregon, in 1973. Tyler, according to the suit, took Holcomb back to his hotel room, where they discussed Holcomb’s age. After he allegedly asked why she was out all night by herself, Tyler and Holcomb talked about her troubles at home. He then ‘performed various acts of criminal sexual conduct upon’ her before sending her home in a taxi the next morning, the lawsuit states.”<sup>432</sup>

Holcomb’s suit alleged that “Tyler convinced Holcomb’s mother to allow him to become her guardian, which would allow him to more easily travel with her without criminal prosecution — a timeline that matches Tyler’s own comments from his 2011 memoir.” Specifically, Holcomb’s complaint alleged that Tyler “and his agents took actions for” Tyler to become Holcomb’s guardian. Tyler “made various promises and inducements to Plaintiff’s mother assuring her of the wellbeing of [Holcomb] including, but not limited to promising he would enroll her in school; that he would support her; and provide her with better medical care and support than her mother could at the time.” However, Tyler did not follow through on these promises “and instead continued to travel with, assault and provide alcohol and drugs to [Holcomb].”<sup>433</sup>

### **When Tyler’s victim was 17 years old, his agents allegedly helped arrange an abortion after pressure from Tyler.**

Holcomb alleged that “she was pregnant with Tyler’s son in 1975 when she was 17 years old but got an abortion after Tyler insisted she terminate the pregnancy following an apartment fire. In making the argument, he cited smoke inhalation and lack of oxygen to the baby. Though the suit claims a medical professional told her the unborn baby was not harmed by the fire.” Holcomb’s

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<sup>430</sup> [rollingstone.com](https://www.rollingstone.com), December 29, 2022

<sup>431</sup> [Los Angeles County Superior Court](#), Case No. 22TRCV01604, filed February 1, 2023

<sup>432</sup> [rollingstone.com](https://www.rollingstone.com), December 29, 2022; [Los Angeles County Superior Court](#), Case No. 22TRCV01604, filed February 1, 2023

<sup>433</sup> [rollingstone.com](https://www.rollingstone.com), December 29, 2022; [Los Angeles County Superior Court](#), Case No. 22TRCV01604, filed February 1, 2023



complaint claimed that Tyler “pressured and coerced [Holcomb] to have an abortion by threatening that he would send her back to her family and cease to support and love her.”<sup>434</sup>

According to Holcomb’s amended complaint against Tyler, she claimed that Tyler’s agents “were present and assisted with arrangement for the abortion which needed to be performed at a different facility since the facility [that] treated Plaintiff was Catholic and an abortion was not available.” Holcomb ultimately “relented and the abortion was performed.”<sup>435</sup> According to *Rolling Stone*, Holcomb said she “left Tyler and went back to Portland to change her life. She became a devout Catholic, met her husband, and buried her previous experiences with Tyler until he wrote about them in his book.”<sup>436</sup>

**Tyler’s 2011 memoir reportedly detailed his sexual relationship with the underage fan and romanticized the abuse. It also named his victim to her dismay.**

Holcomb claimed that “her life was further disrupted with the publication of Tyler’s memoir, which, without Holcomb’s consent, referenced his time with an underage girl and subjected her to ‘involuntary infamy’ while framing the alleged abuse as a ‘romantic, loving relationship,’ the suit says. Tyler has also spoken of a relationship with an underage girl both in his own memoir and in Aerosmith’s autobiography.” Holcomb claimed that “she’s mentioned in the memoir’s acknowledgments which further removed her anonymity.”<sup>437</sup>

Holcomb’s complaint alleged that Tyler’s “memoirs characterize the child sex assaults of [Holcomb] as a romantic, loving relationship without her knowledge or consent.” Holcomb’s complaint alleged that statements made in Tyler’s memoir were made “with the intent of garnering various benefits including fame and financial benefit for himself and his managers/agents/publishers without the consent or permission of Plaintiff and to her detriment.”<sup>438</sup>

**In response to his victim’s lawsuit, Tyler alleged that he had legal immunity from sexual misconduct as her legal guardian.**

In April 2023, Steven Tyler denied “all allegations stated” in Holcomb’s lawsuit. Tyler’s answer to Holcomb’s complaint “states that the plaintiff, formerly known as Julia Holcomb, consented to their sexual relationship and he had immunity as her legal guardian at the time the alleged

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<sup>434</sup> [rollingstone.com, December 29, 2022](https://www.rollingstone.com); [Los Angeles County Superior Court](https://www.losangelescourts.org), Case No. 22TRCV01604, filed February 1, 2023

<sup>435</sup> [Los Angeles County Superior Court](https://www.losangelescourts.org), Case No. 22TRCV01604, filed February 1, 2023

<sup>436</sup> [rollingstone.com, December 29, 2022](https://www.rollingstone.com)

<sup>437</sup> [rollingstone.com, December 29, 2022](https://www.rollingstone.com)

<sup>438</sup> [andersonadvocates.com, filed February 1, 2023](https://www.andersonadvocates.com)

events occurred. He also requested for the lawsuit to be dismissed entirely, according to the documents obtained by PEOPLE.”<sup>439</sup>

Susan Crumiller, an attorney interviewed by *Rolling Stone*, stated that upon reviewing Tyler’s denial claims, “I got [to the immunity response] and I thought, ‘This is fucking insane,’ [...] There is no such thing as immunity to a caregiver or guardian for sex abuse. I don’t have the words to describe how crazy it is.” According to *Rolling Stone*, “Whether or not Tyler and his team intended for the immunity claim to specifically insinuate that his position as a defendant protects him from sexual misconduct isn’t clear.”<sup>440</sup>

**Jeanne Bellino, a former child model, was the second woman to come forward alleging Tyler sexually assaulted her as a teenager, and she sued him in New York for gender-motivated violence.**

In November 2023, a second woman came “forward with allegations that Steven Tyler sexually assaulted her when she was a teenager, according to a lawsuit filed in New York.” Jeanne Bellino was a child model “who claimed to have met Tyler in New York in the summer of 1975 when she was 17,” and she “alleged in the suit that Tyler, then around 27, violently assaulted her twice the only day they’d encountered one another. The cause of action listed in the suit is gender-motivated violence, and the plaintiff is seeking unspecified damages to be determined by the court.”<sup>441</sup>

According to Bellino’s lawsuit, she met Tyler with a friend after a fashion show in Manhattan, and while they were walking down Sixth Avenue, “she asked Tyler a question about a song lyric, which frustrated Tyler, leading to him forcing her into a phone booth.” Her suit alleged, “While holding her captive, Tyler stuck his tongue down her throat, and put his hands upon her body, her breasts, her buttocks, and her genitals, moving and removing clothing and pinning her against the wall of the phone booth.” Bellino said that during the incident, “he was humping her pretending to have sex with Plaintiff,” and “Tyler’s penis was erect.” Bellino alleged, “Others stood by outside the phone booth laughing and as passersby watched and witnessed, nobody in the entourage intervened. [...] Tyler’s bandmates and members of the entourage watched, laughed and did nothing to intercede.”<sup>442</sup>

Bellino said she was confused and in shock and went with the group “back to the Warwick Hotel, where again near the hotel’s bar area, Tyler allegedly forcibly kissed Bellino and grinded against

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<sup>439</sup> [people.com, April 5, 2023](https://people.com/steven-tyler-sexual-abuse-2023/)

<sup>440</sup> [rollingstone.com, April 10, 2023](https://www.rollingstone.com/music/steven-tyler-sexual-abuse-2023/)

<sup>441</sup> [rollingstone.com, November 2, 2023](https://www.rollingstone.com/music/steven-tyler-sexual-abuse-2023/)

<sup>442</sup> [rollingstone.com, November 2, 2023](https://www.rollingstone.com/music/steven-tyler-sexual-abuse-2023/)

her. Again, the suit claims, Bellino resisted. Tyler then allegedly whispered into her ear that he was ‘going in my room to do something quick,’ and that he’d call her to come to the room after.” Eventually, when Tyler had an associate tell her to go up to his room, she “says she was so afraid that she ‘couldn’t talk and was paralyzed.’ She shook her head to the associate and ‘bolted toward the door,’ where a doorman who she says saw the previous act ‘flung her’ into a cab outside the hotel and yelled for the driver to go.”<sup>443</sup>

In February 2024, U.S. District Judge Lewis Kaplan dismissed Bellino’s case, ruling that her claims “did not qualify” under New York’s Victims of Gender-Motivated Violence Protection Law. The judge “ruled that the special ‘lookback’ window only applies to cases where the abuser’s actions presented a ‘serious risk of physical injury’ – and that Tyler’s alleged actions did not do so.” *Billboard* reported that the “ruling could be legally significant.”<sup>444</sup>

Based on the case docket, after the judge granted Tyler’s motion to dismiss, Jeff Anderson, attorney for Bellino, filed a letter to the judge noting “that Plaintiff was not served with Defendant’s underlying Motion, despite defense counsel’s certification that the Motion was electronically served on February 2, 2024. As a result, Plaintiff was not aware of the Motion and did not timely file an opposition.” The letter requested “that the underlying Motion and subsequent Order be stricken.” Plaintiff also had until March 13, 2024 to file a motion for leave to file an amended complaint.<sup>445</sup>

## Continued Work With Sony

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### **Aerosmith’s music is distributed by Sony Music Entertainment’s Columbia Records.**

In 1995, Aerosmith announced it had changed its manager and reverted back to their old label, Columbia Records, known as “a premier frontline label of Sony Music Entertainment.” In 1990, Aerosmith “had signed this lucrative multi-million dollar contract with Columbia Records.”<sup>446</sup> Aerosmith first “landed a record contract with Columbia Records in 1972” and worked at the label until moving to Geffen Records.<sup>447</sup> Aerosmith signed a contract with Universal Music Group’s Geffen Records in 1991 before resigning for Columbia.<sup>448</sup>

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<sup>443</sup> [rollingstone.com](https://www.rollingstone.com), November 2, 2023

<sup>444</sup> [billboard.com](https://www.billboard.com), February 22, 2024

<sup>445</sup> [uscourts.gov](https://uscourts.gov), Case No. 1:24-cv-00712-LAK, accessed February 26, 2024

<sup>446</sup> [sonymusic.co.uk](https://sonymusic.co.uk), accessed July 27, 2023; [aerosmithtemple.com](https://aerosmithtemple.com), accessed July 27, 2023; [musicbusinessworldwide.com](https://musicbusinessworldwide.com), accessed July 27, 2023

<sup>447</sup> [allthemusic.com](https://allthemusic.com), accessed July 27, 2023

<sup>448</sup> [benvaugh.com](https://benvaugh.com), October 18, 2022; [interscope.com](https://interscope.com), accessed July 27, 2023; [archive.ph](https://archive.ph), accessed July 27, 2023; [referenceforbusiness.com](https://referenceforbusiness.com), accessed July 27, 2023; [audiencerepublic.com](https://audiencerepublic.com), accessed July 27, 2023

# Kaallan “KR” Walker

## Allegations & Criminal Charges

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**Rapper Kaalan “KR” Walker faced criminal charges of sexual assault and rape involving aspiring models who he allegedly hired for professional work.**

In October 2018, actor and rapper Kaalan “KR” Walker was “charged with nine felony sexual assault charges...after he was arrested last month for accusations of sexual assault dating back to 2016,” according to *Variety*. The charges included “five counts of forcible rape, three counts of sexual penetration by a foreign object, and one count of forcible oral copulation.” The assaults all “took place in Los Angeles County” and “involve[d] aspiring models whom Walker contacted under the premise of being hired for professional work.” His court date was set for November 14, 2018, and he was released on a \$1,080,000 bail. Walker was “re-arrested March 2019 when six new victims were added to the case, and then released on reduced bond in November 2020.” He was brought back in custody in 2022 “after his April 2022 conviction.”<sup>449</sup>

In April 2022, Walker was found “guilty of three counts of forcible rape, one count of assault to commit oral copulation, two counts of statutory rape and two counts of rape by intoxication,” *People* reported. He was found “not guilty of one count of digital penetration and two counts of forcible rape.” Beginning in 2013, Walker “used Instagram and Twitter to contact women — including aspiring models — on social media, promising them opportunities for professional work and to meet celebrities, prosecutors said.” *People* reported that “over a two-year span, Walker would get the women alone and then sexually assault them, police said. ‘When they said, ‘Stop,’ he didn’t care.”<sup>450</sup>

**Walker was sentenced to 50 years to life in prison after he was convicted of raping four women and three teenage girls he met on social media.**

In October 2022, Walker was sentenced to 50 years to life in prison and required to “register as a sex offender for the rest of his life” after he had been “convicted of raping four women and three teenage girls he met on social media,” according to *People*. Walker’s attorney said the

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<sup>449</sup> [people.com, October 18, 2022](https://www.people.com/article/kr-walker-sexual-assault-2018); [variety.com, October 26, 2018](https://www.variety.com/story/kr-walker-sexual-assault-2018); [nbcnews.com, October 18, 2022](https://www.nbcnews.com/entertainment/music/kr-walker-sexual-assault-2018)

<sup>450</sup> [people.com, October 18, 2022](https://www.people.com/article/kr-walker-sexual-assault-2022)

sentence was “draconian” and the trial was “very unfair.” *NBC News* reported that Walker’s “defense team plans to appeal the sentence.”<sup>451</sup>

## Brian Warner aka Marilyn Manson

### Allegations

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**Marilyn Manson insinuated that he engaged in sexual acts with minor fans, who supposedly wanted it. In addition to violence in his stage acts, he said he was sexually aroused by women in fear.**

In a 1995 *Purr* interview, Brian Warner, aka Marilyn Manson, was asked about groupies and to talk about “any exciting episodes.” He said, “I have always found that the best and most exciting stories on the road are better left a secret because of the statute of limitations.” When pressed further if he was “advised by your manager to leave all that shit out,” Manson responded, “NO. But I’ve found there are some things you should keep to yourself. I can say I’ve never been ceased to be amazed at the level of depravity that a male or female will go to. I realize that a lot of fans are caught up in the excitement of the moment and a certain part of me has to respect that innocence and ignorance, and I care not to want to exploit people like that, so anybody that gets into any exploitation is not someone who doesn’t WANT to get taken advantage of.”<sup>452</sup>

For the 2000 documentary “Demystifying the Devil,” people close to Manson during this time further discussed how Manson privately “shows himself to be a racist boor with a connoisseur’s appreciation for moral and physical abuse.” This included Manson “relishing in seeing” animal violence, such as “a fluffy white bunny getting squeezed dead by another pet snake,” as well as “full frontal nudity and unspeakable acts with groupies’ underwear and toothbrushes.” One of the participants in the documentary was Missi Romero, Manson’s ex-girlfriend whom he dated until 1998 and began dating when she was 17 years old and he was 23 years old.<sup>453</sup>

During the 1995 *Purr* interview, Manson was further asked about a line in one of his songs “I like you more when you’re afraid.” He said, “I’ve grown accustomed to getting sexual excitement out of a girls’ screaming. There’s something about a terrified girl that I find exciting. I like scaring girls, but how far do you go for your own entertainment? I guess I tend to be into fear and I like to find out what makes people afraid and why.” Later in the interview, he said, “The

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<sup>451</sup> [people.com, October 18, 2022](https://people.com/entertainment/brian-warner-aka-marilyn-manson-11-18-2022/); [nbcnews.com, October 18, 2022](https://www.nbcnews.com/entertainment/music/brian-warner-aka-marilyn-manson-11-18-2022)

<sup>452</sup> [Purr Magazine, 1995](https://www.purr.com/1995/01/01/brian-warner-aka-marilyn-manson/), accessed via liveinternet.ru

<sup>453</sup> Sun Sentinel, January 7, 1999; [rollingstone.com, November 14, 2021](https://www.rollingstone.com/music/album-reviews/brian-warner-aka-marilyn-manson-11-14-2021/)

things I would want to do to peoples' kids would really scare them because I would love to push individuality and free thinking on them and that would be something that would disrupt the family household.”<sup>454</sup>

An investigative report published in *Rolling Stone* in 2021 noted that Manson wrote in his memoir “about abusing a woman he called ‘Nancy’ as part of his early stage act, describing how he would hold her by a leash and beat her onstage.” He “claimed in the book that he and a bandmate plotted murdering Nancy before changing their minds.” Both *Rolling Stone* and Purr described how Manson’s early shows would feature women and children in cages, with one local musician recalling that he saw Manson hitting a woman in the cage.<sup>455</sup>

### **A fan of Manson’s alleged she was sexually abused by him and threatened on his tour bus multiple times when she was 16 years old.**

According to a lawsuit filed by a Jane Doe in 2023 in Nassau County Supreme Court in New York, Manson sexually assaulted the girl when she was 16 years old on his tour bus after a concert in September 1995. The lawsuit alleged Manson took Jane Doe and another young female fan onto the tour bus, where he asked them “what each of their ages were, what grades in school they were in, and where their parents were at the time.” He also got their home addresses and phone numbers. On the tour bus, “Warner performed various acts of criminal sexual conduct upon Plaintiff, who was a virgin at the time, including but not limited to forced copulation and vaginal penetration.” One of the band members allegedly watched, and after sexually assaulting Jane Doe, “Warner laughed at her.” He also told her “to ‘get the fuck off my bus’ and threatened Plaintiff that, if she told anyone, he would kill her and her family.”<sup>456</sup>

The lawsuit continued that Jane Doe went to another concert for Manson and his band in New Orleans in December 1995 when she was still 16 years old, with Manson and the band providing “tickets for the performance, as well as a photo pass” that gave her additional access. After inviting her on the tour bus, Manson “then became more aggressive and again sexually assaulted Plaintiff, including kissing, biting her breast, oral copulation, and penetration.” Another man allegedly employed by Manson and the labels was also on the bus at the time.<sup>457</sup>

The Jane Doe lawsuit in Nassau County alleged Manson “continued to groom and sexually assault” her when she was 19 years old and he was touring in 1999. This occurred over a series of weeks at shows across several states, including New York. She alleged that in New York, he

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<sup>454</sup> [Purr Magazine, 1995](#), accessed via liveinternet.ru

<sup>455</sup> [rollingstone.com, November 14, 2021](#); [Purr Magazine, 1995](#), accessed via liveinternet.ru

<sup>456</sup> [courthousenews.com, January 30, 2023](#)

<sup>457</sup> [courthousenews.com, January 30, 2023](#)

coerced her to have sex with him through control, including “hostile and verbally abusive behavior,” as well as providing her with drugs.<sup>458</sup>

**Manson allegedly showed an ex-girlfriend a video of him abusing a young fan that he was advised by his manager not to show anyone or he’d face prison time.**

According to another Jane Doe lawsuit filed by an ex-girlfriend in Los Angeles in 2021, Manson allegedly showed her a film called “Groupie” of him threatening and abusing a young fan in 1996 after a concert at the Hollywood Bowl. Based on her recollection, the video showed “a seemingly young teenage fan.” Manson “then tied the young fan to a chair, and lectured and interrogated her. He humiliated and berated her. She cried and pled. The girl’s t-shirt was removed, and Warner forced her to drink a glass of one of the band member’s urine. Later, a gun is introduced, and Warner threatened her with it and possibly pistol-whipped her.” In the video, Manson’s “abuse and violence” increased. Jane Doe said that she began “crying and asking repeatedly if the girl in the video was dead.” Manson claimed it was his girlfriend at the time and a woman in his “Long Road Out of Hell” video. However, Doe said that “the girl looked like a young teenager” and “did not resemble the woman in the video.”<sup>459</sup>

In an investigative report for *Rolling Stone* in 2021, Manson’s friends from the 1990s “say that he taped sexual encounters and showed them to other people.”<sup>460</sup> In the complaint, Doe said the video was kept in a safe by Manson. She claimed Manson told her “only three people in the world besides him had ever seen the video,” and to Manson, “it was incredibly meaningful” for him to show her the video. Additionally, “Warner told Plaintiff that when he first showed the movie to Tony Ciulla, his manager, Ciulla told him that he needed to lock the tape in a safe and never show it to anyone, or else Warner would be sent to prison.” Doe “did not understand why he would be sent to prison if what transpired was all just ‘acting.’”<sup>461</sup>

**Manson’s fan clubs allegedly received nude photos from underage girls and were used to encourage fans to send child pornography.**

According to the 2021 *Rolling Stone* report, Laura Werder ran Manson’s “Satan’s Bake Sale fan club on and off until 1994.” She said, “There were underage girls sending nude pictures of themselves, people writing letters in blood.” Werder recalled “a newsletter urging those followers to break the law. ‘They were like, ‘We are having a contest to see who can send us a Polaroid with the most deviant usage of our logo,’ she recalls. ‘For example, ‘Your father’s

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<sup>458</sup> [courthousenews.com](https://www.courthousenews.com), January 30, 2023

<sup>459</sup> [Jane Doe, Los Angeles Complaint, May 28, 2021](#)

<sup>460</sup> [rollingstone.com](https://www.rollingstone.com), November 14, 2021; [Purr Magazine, 1995](#), accessed via liveinternet.ru

<sup>461</sup> [Jane Doe, Los Angeles Complaint, May 28, 2021](#)

passed out drunk and naked, you carve ‘Marilyn Manson’ on his bald forehead and snap a picture.”<sup>462</sup> The Nassau County lawsuit filed by Jane Doe also alleged Manson “used the Marilyn Manson Family Intervention Hotline to coax underage fans to send him child pornography, including Polaroid photographs of themselves naked.”<sup>463</sup>

## Settlements & Retaliation Against Victims

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**Legal records and press reports show Manson, his manager, and his lawyers used payouts and settlements to avoid lawsuits and keep lawsuits from moving forward with more serious claims.**

According to the 2021 *Rolling Stone* investigation, around the time of Manson’s 1996 album, “Warner linked up with manager Tony Ciulla, who would go on to oversee his career for the next 25 years.” A former Manson band member said, “Tony was the only dude who could tame the beast when shit was going down...When Manson would fucking destroy a venue or a hotel, Tony would be there with a checkbook and a smile.”<sup>464</sup>

In 1999, Craig Marks, then-editor of *Spin*, filed a lawsuit against Manson in New York State Supreme Court alleging harassment and assault. According to the legal complaint, as reported in *Rolling Stone*, while backstage at a concert, “Manson ... began to threaten Marks by shouting that he could kill Marks, his whole family, and everyone he knew ... Before Marks could respond, [Warner’s bodyguards] physically attacked him.... Manson approvingly exclaimed, “That’s what you get when you disrespect me.” The assault came after Marks took Manson off the cover of *Spin*. One eyewitness recalled, “Manson’s security guy was holding this kid up against the wall.”<sup>465</sup> *Vulture* reported that Manson countersued for defamation, and the case was “eventually settled out of court.”<sup>466</sup>

In June 2002, Manson pleaded no contest “to two misdemeanor charges of disorderly conduct and assault and battery” in Clarkston District Court in Michigan, according to MTV. He agreed “to pay a fine of \$4,000” for “rubbing his crotch” against the head of Joshua Keasler, a security guard at a show in Detroit. Initially, Manson’s lawyer, Walter Piszczatowski, “said that Manson would plead guilty after the charges were reduced from fourth-degree criminal sexual conduct to disorderly conduct.” However, Keasler filed a federal lawsuit “in U.S. District Court in Detroit alleging assault and battery, intentional infliction of emotional distress, gross negligence and

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<sup>462</sup> [rollingstone.com, November 14, 2021](https://www.rollingstone.com/news/music/marilyn-manson-lawsuit-2021/11/14/)

<sup>463</sup> [courthousenews.com, January 30, 2023](https://www.courthousenews.com/2023/01/30/)

<sup>464</sup> [rollingstone.com, November 14, 2021](https://www.rollingstone.com/news/music/marilyn-manson-lawsuit-2021/11/14/)

<sup>465</sup> [mtv.com, January 5, 1999](https://www.mtv.com/news/1999/01/05/); [rollingstone.com, November 14, 2021](https://www.rollingstone.com/news/music/marilyn-manson-lawsuit-2021/11/14/)

<sup>466</sup> [vulture.com, July 19, 2023](https://www.vulture.com/2023/07/)



wanton misconduct.” Piszczatowski said the no contest plea meant Keasler “wouldn’t be able to use Manson’s words as ammunition against him.”<sup>467</sup> The civil suit was later dismissed after Manson and Keasler agreed to an undisclosed settlement.<sup>468</sup>

Keasler told *Rolling Stone* in 2021 that he wondered “if his legal case 20 years ago could have done more to protect women: ‘Had he been a registered sex offender, maybe one of those young ladies would have considered a little longer before they thought, ‘Maybe this isn’t the guy I want to hang out with.’”<sup>469</sup>

### **Manson threatened victims with his rabid fanbase to discourage them from coming forward, and victims described the harassment they received at the hands of his fans.**

In the Jane Doe case in Nassau County, the Plaintiff alleged “several acts of retaliation,” such as “publicly revealing sensitive information about Plaintiff (‘doxxing’), hacking Plaintiff’s Instagram account, and systematic harassment through numerous websites by Defendant Warner and his fans.” The lawsuit also alleged Manson and his wife were “retaliating against Plaintiff through a particular YouTuber who has profited by discrediting, victim blaming, and shaming Defendant Warner’s victims.”<sup>470</sup>

In another case filed by a Jane Doe in Los Angeles in 2021, Doe alleged she “was frightened of Warner’s fans. Warner told her frequently that his fans were extreme in their devotion and likely would hate her. They were frighteningly loyal to him and fanatically obsessed. Warner warned Plaintiff that his fans had bullied and harassed previous girlfriends of his, and she was nervous about them finding out who she was.”<sup>471</sup> When Doe refiled her complaint after the first was dismissed, *Deadline* reported that she alleged “Manson told her he would ‘bash her head in’ if she reported the alleged assault to authorities.”<sup>472</sup>

In February 2021, Evan Rachel Wood shared on Instagram that she filed a police report against Manson in December 2020 “after becoming aware of a threat about the release of underage photos of her.” She said she “was alerted to threats” made by Manson’s wife and another Instagram user named Leslee Lane to release the photos that were taken after Wood was “given

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<sup>467</sup> [mtv.com, June 19, 2002](https://www.mtv.com/news/1000000/keasler-pleads-no-contest)

<sup>468</sup> [eastvalleytribune.com, February 18, 2004](https://www.eastvalleytribune.com/story/news/2004/02/18/keasler-pleads-no-contest/1000000)

<sup>469</sup> [rollingstone.com, November 14, 2021](https://www.rollingstone.com/news/2021/11/14/keasler-pleads-no-contest/)

<sup>470</sup> [courthousenews.com, January 30, 2023](https://www.courthousenews.com/2023/01/30/keasler-pleads-no-contest/)

<sup>471</sup> [Jane Doe, Los Angeles Complaint, May 28, 2021](https://www.losangeles.com/news/2021/05/28/jane-doe-complaint/)

<sup>472</sup> [pitchfork.com, September 23, 2021](https://www.pitchfork.com/news/2021/09/23/keasler-pleads-no-contest/)

large amounts of drugs and alcohol” following a Las Vegas show in order “to ‘ruin my career’ and ‘shut me up.’”<sup>473</sup>

Furthermore, the *Daily Mail* reported that in March 2021, Wood filed a declaration in the custody case over her son explaining she moved from Los Angeles to Nashville over fear for the safety of her and her son. According to a copy of the declaration published by the *Daily Mail*, Wood wrote, “I believe he presents an imminent risk of harm to me and the people I love, including our son, in particular in the Los Angeles/Hollywood area. I believe that me and our son are significantly safer in Tennessee where we are far away from the alleged offender, active criminal case, the alleged offender’s network of fanatic supporters, and the paparazzi.” While these portions of the declaration weren’t published, the *Daily Mail* alleged Wood also said Manson threatened to “f\*\*k her eight-year-old son” and alleged Manson “was involved in human trafficking and the sexual exploitation of minors on a large scale.”<sup>474</sup>

**Manson collected blackmail on victims and threatened professional retaliation to destroy their careers in order to coerce victims to stay silent.**

Ashley Walters, a former assistant to Manson who alleged she was “sometimes expected to work 48 hours straight” until she was fired in 2011, recounted retaliation in a 2021 lawsuit filed in Los Angeles. She said that Warner “continued to threaten her, accused her of stealing artwork from his home, and hacked into her Facebook account.” She told *The Cut* that he once sent a photo showing the cut up back of actress Esme Bianco to her “with the subject line ‘See what happens?’” While she was still employed in 2011, she also alleged Manson “attempted to ruin her reputation by beginning a smear campaign.”<sup>475</sup> Walter’s attorneys later argued that she was “deterred from filing suit” from “not just threats but also violence and intimidation and other coercive acts.”<sup>476</sup>

The “Phoenix Rising” documentary detailed how Manson would gather blackmail on people. Dan Cleary, a former assistant to Manson, said Manson used his Wi-Fi to hack phones and laptops. He said, “I’ve seen him hack into people’s laptops and gather information on them as blackmail. He’s hacked into my computer and social media accounts; he was monitoring my every move.” Wood said, “The three main things that I saw him get on people so they couldn’t say anything were naked photos, drugs, and ‘I’m going to get you to say the n-word on camera.’”<sup>477</sup>

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<sup>473</sup> [hollywoodreporter.com](https://hollywoodreporter.com), February 6, 2021

<sup>474</sup> [dailymail.uk](https://dailymail.uk), December 6, 2021

<sup>475</sup> [Ashley Walters, Final Complaint](#), accessed July 26, 2023 via Google Drive; [thecut.com](https://thecut.com), February 10, 2021

<sup>476</sup> [rollingstone.com](https://rollingstone.com), January 26, 2022

<sup>477</sup> [rollingstone.com](https://rollingstone.com), March 15, 2022

In 2022, Esmé Bianco accused Manson “of torpedoing a business deal to ‘silence’ her after she publicly accused him of sexual assault” in court documents. According to Bianco, after Manson learned that she signed a contract with metal group Deftones to participate in a photo shoot for their upcoming tour, Manson threatened the Deftones, who in response “instructed the creative director not to use the photos of Bianco. Bianco said she suffered ‘the loss of exposure from images being used during the Deftones’ world tour’ and the lost gig ‘resulted in reputational damage and a loss of future economic opportunity with the Deftones.’” Bianco filed a complaint accusing Manson of continuing “to work to silence Ms. Bianco through threats, intimidation, and coercion.”<sup>478</sup> In January 2023, Bianco settled her lawsuit with Manson out-of-court with neither side disclosing the details.<sup>479</sup>

**Manson threatened physical violence against victims to guarantee their silence and insinuated he had connections with police to discourage them from filing reports.**

In “Phoenix Rising,” Evan Rachel Wood recounted “how Manson used fear to keep her silent” about his alleged rape of her on the set of “Heart-Shaped Glasses.” Wood said, “Brian was really clear about how I should discuss the video with the press, how I was supposed to tell people that we had this great romantic time, and none of that was the truth. But I was scared to do anything that would upset Brian in any way.”<sup>480</sup>

In another lawsuit filed in Los Angeles by Jane Doe, she alleged he raped her and assaulted her. After one assault, “Doe says, Warner threatened to kill her, saying he would ‘bash her head in’ and boasted that he could ‘get away with’ murdering her ‘because she was a ‘nobody’ and he was a celebrity who had contacts with the police.”<sup>481</sup> In November 2021, Stephen D. Rothschild, an attorney for Manson in the case, said Manson “was open to settlement discussions” in the Los Angeles Doe case and “added that other settlements could follow.” He said, “There are other cases that are somewhat related, and so as things progress, we may decide that it’s best to have a global mediation.”<sup>482</sup>

In May 2018, a police complaint was filed against Manson in Los Angeles “for unspecified sex crimes dating back to 2011,” but in August 2018, the district attorney’s office “declined that case because the statute of limitations had expired and ‘absence of corroboration,’” according to *The Hollywood Reporter*.<sup>483</sup> In November 2021, *Vulture* reported that detectives with the Special

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<sup>478</sup> [insider.com, January 4, 2023](https://www.fox.com/entertainment/insider.com-jane-doe-lawsuit-2023)

<sup>479</sup> [theguardian.com, January 25, 2023](https://www.theguardian.com/entertainment/2023/jan/25/manson-lawsuit-settlement)

<sup>480</sup> [vulture.com, January 25, 2023](https://www.vulture.com/2023/01/evan-rachel-wood-phoenix-rising.html)

<sup>481</sup> [rollingstone.com, November 14, 2021](https://www.rollingstone.com/music/news/stephen-d-rothschild-manson-lawsuit-2021)

<sup>482</sup> [loudwire.com, November 19, 2021](https://www.loudwire.com/news/stephen-d-rothschild-manson-lawsuit-2021)

<sup>483</sup> [hollywoodreporter.com, August 10, 2018](https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/news/manson-lawsuit-2018)

Victims Unit in the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department searched Manson's home as part of another investigation into complaints made by several women and "reportedly seized media-storage units such as hard drives for review."<sup>484</sup> The *Los Angeles Times* reported that this investigation was concluded in September 2022, and the Sheriff's Department submitted findings to the district attorney "for filing consideration."<sup>485</sup>

**Manson used legal retaliation against victims who came forward, including alleged enforcement of confidentiality agreements and threats to encourage victims to turn on one another in court.**

In March 2022, Ashley Walters filed an amended complaint against Manson after her initial lawsuit was "thrown out in January 2022 on the basis of statute of limitations." In addition to keeping many of her original allegations, *Rolling Stone* reported that the amended complaint alleged "that, since the initial filing, Walters was also threatened by Manson's counsel with 'retaliatory legal action' if she took part in the upcoming Evan Rachel Wood documentary *Phoenix Rising* that details the alleged abuse the actress suffered while with Manson."<sup>486</sup> According to *Vulture*, "A source close to Warner says the reason for the potential legal action was a confidentiality agreement Walters allegedly violated."<sup>487</sup>

In December 2023, a California appellate court overturned the dismissal of Walters' amended complaint, allowing it to proceed towards a jury trial. Her amended complaint "said she had been 'unable to recall many of the physical and emotional abuses until the fall of 2020 when countless repressed memories flooded back to [her] after meeting numerous other victims of [Manson] and obtaining counseling from a mental health professional.'" Dan Stormer, an attorney for Walters, "said he expects the case to go to trial, and that he'll ask the jury for a 'high-seven figure amount.'"<sup>488</sup>

Ahead of the airing of "Phoenix Rising" in March 2022, Manson filed a defamation suit against Evan Rachel Wood and Illma Gore, "alleging that the pair conspired to coerce other women into making allegations against him. He also accused them of impersonating FBI agents to further coerce the women by making them believe their families were in danger."<sup>489</sup> After Manson filed suit, Wood appeared on "The View" where she said she expected Manson to do this as it's the sort of retaliation people in power take and it's a reason why victims don't speak up.<sup>490</sup>

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<sup>484</sup> [vulture.com, November 30, 2021](https://www.vulture.com/2021/11/ashley-walters-accused-manson.html)

<sup>485</sup> [latimes.com, September 20, 2022](https://www.latimes.com/2022-09-15/story/la-ent-2022-09-15-manson-accused.html)

<sup>486</sup> [rollingstone.com, March 12, 2022](https://www.rollingstone.com/2022/03/12/ashley-walters-accused-manson-1234567890/)

<sup>487</sup> [vulture.com, July 19, 2023](https://www.vulture.com/2023/07/19/ashley-walters-accused-manson.html)

<sup>488</sup> [courthousenews.com, December 13, 2023](https://www.courthousenews.com/2023/12/13/ashley-walters-accused-manson.html)

<sup>489</sup> [people.com, May 10, 2023](https://www.people.com/2023/05/10/ashley-walters-accused-manson.html)

<sup>490</sup> [youtube.com, 12:40, March 14, 2022](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=12:40)

In January 2023, Ashley Morgan Smithline’s lawsuit was dismissed after she removed her lawyer and failed to secure new representation. Page Six reported Manson’s lawyers also “provided a series of text messages allegedly sent by Smithline that appear to show she actually tried to get rid of [her lawyer] first back in April 2022.” In the text messages, Smithline’s lawyer, Jay Ellwanger, expressed concern that her phone was hacked because it didn’t sound like her. He texted, “I am honestly very concerned about you — this is all very different behavior than I have ever seen from you and I’ve known you for over a year.”<sup>491</sup>

Furthermore, in February 2023, Manson filed a declaration in his defamation case against Wood from Ashley Morgan Smithline saying she “recanted her assault allegations against Manson and claimed that she was ‘manipulated’ by Wood and Gore to make false accusations.” She also claimed her lawsuit was filed against Manson without her knowledge or permission, which her lawyer Ellwanger said was “categorically and verifiably false.”<sup>492</sup> Wood provided Page Six with Instagram messages showing Smithline was scared of the backlash for speaking out, including from Manson’s fans, and Wood provided a voicemail from Smithline expressing concern that Manson’s “attorney wanted her to ‘turn on the other girls and say that it was all a ruse.’”<sup>493</sup> The court refused to accept the declaration and struck down most of Manson’s claims against Wood and Gore in the defamation suit in May 2023.<sup>494</sup>

## Public Reckoning

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**Over a dozen women, several of whom are celebrities, came forward by 2021 with similar claims of abuse at the hands of Marilyn Manson, including descriptions of an apartment where he held women captive.**

By 2021, *Rolling Stone* reported, “more than a dozen women have come forward accusing Warner of psychological or sexual abuse, several in interviews with outlets such as the *Los Angeles Times* and *People*; four have filed civil lawsuits.” This included lawsuits filed by model Ashley Morgan Smithline, actress Esmé Bianco, Manson’s former assistant Ashley Walters, and an unnamed Jane Doe. Accusers who spoke with *Rolling Stone* for the investigation said “that Warner was able to hide his abuses in plain sight behind the Marilyn Manson character he created and the music industry that supported, and profited from, his living-demon shtick.” Allegations from these accusers painted the same story “of someone who conditioned women

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<sup>491</sup> [pagesix.com](https://pagesix.com), January 4, 2023

<sup>492</sup> [pitchfork.com](https://pitchfork.com), February 23, 2023; [thecut.com](https://thecut.com), February 28, 2023

<sup>493</sup> [pagesix.com](https://pagesix.com), February 28, 2023; [rollingstone.com](https://rollingstone.com), February 28, 2023

<sup>494</sup> [people.com](https://people.com), May 10, 2023

through flattery and dark humor before introducing a pattern of sexual and physical abuse” and “that he plied them with drugs and alcohol, controlled their eating and sleeping habits, and held them captive emotionally and physically until they submitted to his will.” When they tried to leave, “they say, he’d threaten to kill himself or, worse, them.”<sup>495</sup>

Those who spoke to *Rolling Stone* described what Manson called the “Bad Girls’ Room” built by a former tenant for recording music in an apartment Manson rented in 2010 above a West Hollywood liquor store. Described as a “cramped glass enclosure in the corner of a room,” people who dated and worked with Manson described it “as a solitary-confinement cell used to psychologically torture women. They say Warner frequently banished his girlfriends there, keeping them inside for hours on end to punish them for the tiniest perceived transgressions.” Ashley Morgan Smithline said he “repeatedly forced her to stay in the space.” In 2012, Manson even said to a magazine, “If anyone’s bad, I can lock them in it, and it’s soundproof.” He also kept the apartment cold at 65 degrees or lower, with one ex-girlfriend calling it a “black refrigerator.” Multiple exes alleged that it was in this apartment where “Warner inflicted repeated acts of mental, physical, and sexual abuse.”<sup>496</sup>

Furthermore, in February 2021, singer Phoebe Bridgers tweeted, “I went to Marilyn Manson’s house when I was a teenager with some friends. I was a big fan. He referred to a room in his house as the ‘r\*pe room’, I thought it was just his horrible frat boy sense of humor. I stopped being a fan. I stand with everyone who came forward. [...] The label knew, management knew, the band knew. Distancing themselves now, pretending to be shocked and horrified is fucking pathetic.”<sup>497</sup>

In the 2022 HBO documentary “Phoenix Rising,” Evan Rachel Wood described her “abuse at the hands of the rock musician Marilyn Manson,” including accusations of rape, physical violence, drugging, and grooming. Wood’s accusations also matched those of other accusers, such as Manson depriving her of sleep and food, the use of drugs, and branding her with a letter “M.”<sup>498</sup>

According to an op-ed for *NBC News* by freelance writer Patricia Grisafi, “When Wood alleges that Manson raped her during the music video for the song ‘Heart-Shaped Glasses,’ we see how the industry profoundly failed to help a young woman in danger.”<sup>499</sup> In the documentary, Wood said of the incident, “We had discussed a simulated sex scene, but once the cameras were rolling, he started penetrating me for real. I had never agreed to that. I’m a professional actress;

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<sup>495</sup> [rollingstone.com](https://www.rollingstone.com), November 14, 2021

<sup>496</sup> [rollingstone.com](https://www.rollingstone.com), November 14, 2021

<sup>497</sup> [twitter.com](https://twitter.com), February 4, 2021

<sup>498</sup> [theatlantic.com](https://www.theatlantic.com), March 22, 2022; [latimes.com](https://www.latimes.com), March 15, 2022

<sup>499</sup> [nbcnews.com](https://www.nbcnews.com), Opinion, March 16, 2022

I have been doing this my whole life; I'd never been on a set that unprofessional in my life up until this day. It was complete chaos, and I did not feel safe. No one was looking after me.”<sup>500</sup>

## Continued Profit for UMG

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**As early as Manson’s first album in 1993, UMG’s Interscope Records expressed concern about his pedophilic content but decided to continue to work with Manson and approve his content.**

Manson began working with Trent Reznor, founder of Nothing Records, “in the early 1990’s at the infamous Hollywood Hills home where Charles Manson’s disciples murdered pregnant movie star Sharon Tate,” based on a 2023 civil lawsuit filed in Nassau County Supreme Court in New York. In “The Long Road Out of Hell,” Manson’s 1998 autobiography, Manson “boasted that he and his friend Reznor sexually abused a woman and on the next day, Reznor told Defendant Warner that, ‘he was starting his own label through Interscope Records called Nothing, and he wanted Marilyn Manson to be the first band on it.’”<sup>501</sup> Interscope Records is a label under UMG.<sup>502</sup>

In 1993, Marilyn Manson’s first album, “Portrait of an American Family,” was released by Interscope and Nothing Records. The 2023 Nassau County lawsuit stated that based on Manson’s autobiography, Manson “attempted to include a naked photograph” of himself as a child as an insert for the album. According to the autobiography, “[T]he lawyers at Interscope said, ‘First off, that picture’s going to be considered child pornography, and not only will no stores carry the album but we’re subject to legal retribution from it.’ They said if a judge were to look at it, the law states that if a photograph of a minor elicits sexual excitement then it’s considered child pornography. I said, “That’s exactly my point.””<sup>503</sup>

According to the case, “Interscope expressed concern about producing and promoting Defendant Warner and his band.” In a 1996 interview published in Seconds Magazine, Manson admitted that Interscope dropped his band at some point. He said, “when we recorded Portrait Of An American Family, Interscope did drop us. They refused to put the album out, the reason being the content of the record was in question. [...] They had a change of heart and we stayed with them.”<sup>504</sup>

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<sup>500</sup> [pitchfork.com](https://pitchfork.com), January 23, 2022

<sup>501</sup> [courthousenews.com](https://courthousenews.com), January 30, 2023

<sup>502</sup> [universalmusic.com](https://universalmusic.com), accessed July 27, 2023

<sup>503</sup> [courthousenews.com](https://courthousenews.com), January 30, 2023

<sup>504</sup> [courthousenews.com](https://courthousenews.com), January 30, 2023

The lawsuit alleged that these interactions showed Interscope Records and Nothing Records “were well aware of Defendant Warner’s obsession with child pornography and pedophilia and his desire to expose children across America to sexual themes.” The lawsuit added that the record labels “promoted Defendant Warner’s pedophilia and violence for added publicity and financial gain.” To illustrate the point, the lawsuit included flyers promoting Manson in 1994 with “images of two disoriented drugged children being held by Defendant Warner’s character like puppets: a young boy with an exposed penis and a young girl with pigtails with exposed breasts.” One also included the words “All ages welcome.” Photos of those flyers are pictured below.<sup>505</sup>



According to a *Rolling Stone* investigation from 2021, “1995’s *Smells Like Children* EP marked a rare instance where Manson’s label told him he had crossed the line. The initial track list contained two terrifying audio vignettes titled ‘Abuse.’” The recordings featured bus driver Tony Wiggins “who joined Warner and [bassist Jeordie] White in humiliating and abusing young women and men backstage, according to Warner’s book.” In one track, “a young woman whimpers and screams in apparent agony as the bus driver asks, ‘You like it, don’t you?’ while whipping her and rattling chains; in the other, a young woman describes molesting a six-year-old boy.” One person who worked on the EP told *Rolling Stone*, “That was the point when

<sup>505</sup> [courthousenews.com](https://www.courthousenews.com), January 30, 2023



Interscope said, ‘Yeah, this is too much for us,’” and another said, “Everybody was like, ‘There’s no fucking way — we have to change this.’”<sup>506</sup>

Furthermore, in a 1995 interview with *Purr*, the interviewer pointed out that he knew “in dealing with you [Manson] for photographs and the video we did that whatever plans you make must be filtered through our management and record company.” When asked what he would do in a show if given an unlimited budget and no censorship, Manson responded, “I don’t ever take into consideration the law when performing.” He was asked his favorite age group and responded, “The most understanding crowd seems to be the 14-18 age set.” The interviewer pointed out that “on-stage you always seem to be talking to the 14 yr. olds” and asked if that got him into trouble. Manson responded, “It does and that is exactly why I do it. Because I am not supposed to and I hate being told what to do.”<sup>507</sup>

### **In 1995, Interscope allegedly paid the bail for Manson on criminal charges filed against him for getting naked on stage in Florida and apparently masturbating.**

On January 10, 1995, misdemeanor charges against Brian Warner, aka Marilyn Manson, were filed in Duval County Circuit Court in Florida for violating the prohibition against nude and semi-nude acts. Adjudication in the case was upheld, and Manson paid a total of \$100 in fines and costs.<sup>508</sup> The civil case filed in January 2023 against Manson in Nassau County alleged “Interscope paid for Defendant Warner’s bail so he could continue the tour,”<sup>509</sup> and *Vulture* reported that Manson was “released after spending a night in jail.”<sup>510</sup> Manson explained in a video posted on YouTube that he was arrested because “they thought I was masturbating on stage with a dildo.”<sup>511</sup> In a 1995 interview with *Purr*, Manson also said, “toward the end of the show I ended up taking off all my clothes,” adding, “I ended up paying a fine to get the charges dropped.”<sup>512</sup> The following mugshot from this charge was posted on an online blog.<sup>513</sup>

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<sup>506</sup> [rollingstone.com](https://www.rollingstone.com), November 14, 2021

<sup>507</sup> [Purr Magazine, 1995](#), accessed via liveinternet.ru

<sup>508</sup> [duvalclerk.com](https://www.duvalclerk.com), Case No. 16-1995-MM-001380-AXXX-MA, accessed July 25, 2023

<sup>509</sup> [courthousenews.com](https://www.courthousenews.com), January 30, 2023

<sup>510</sup> [vulture.com](https://www.vulture.com), July 19, 2023

<sup>511</sup> [youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com), November 21, 2008

<sup>512</sup> [Purr Magazine, 1995](#), accessed via liveinternet.ru

<sup>513</sup> [scandalous10.weebly.com](https://www.scandalous10.weebly.com), accessed July 25, 2023



**Manson continued to work with UMG until 2021 when several famous women went public with their abuse claims, yet his records continue to generate royalties for UMG.**

In 2009, Manson “parted ways with longtime record label Interscope following the disappointing sales performance” of his album “The High End Of Low.”<sup>514</sup> Later, in a 2012 interview with Loudwire.com, Manson said, “The fortunate thing is that I got out of the record deal because I told [then-Interscope CEO] Jimmy Iovine that he wasn't smart enough to understand what I do. That was before ‘The High End of Low’ record, so of course I made an enemy.”<sup>515</sup>

Manson later signed with Loma Vista Recordings for his subsequent albums released in 2015, 2017, and 2020. In 2012, Loma Vista was founded by former Warner Bros. Records chairman Tom Walley as a partnership with Universal Republic Records, a label under UMG. Then, in 2014, Loma Vista shifted “to UMG-distributed Concord Music Group in a new multiyear, worldwide pact.”<sup>516</sup> Loma Vista stopped working with Manson in February 2021 after actress Evan Rachel Wood and several other women accused him of abuse. The label wrote in a statement that it “will cease to promote his current album” and “not work with Marilyn Manson on any future projects.”<sup>517</sup>

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<sup>514</sup> [blabbermouth.net](http://blabbermouth.net), December 3, 2009

<sup>515</sup> [loudwire.com](http://loudwire.com), April 17, 2012

<sup>516</sup> [billboard.com](http://billboard.com), April 12, 2012; [billboard.com](http://billboard.com), July 11, 2014

<sup>517</sup> [rollingstone.com](http://rollingstone.com), February 1, 2021

In February 2021, *Billboard* reported that since Manson signed with Interscope/Nothing, Manson and his band “generated nearly 11 million albums consumptions units worth of activity in the U.S.” In 2020, “Manson’s recording catalog generated nearly \$5.03 million in revenue.” At the time of reporting, “all of the Marilyn Manson catalog, including the Loma Vista titles, are available at the services checked by Billboard.”<sup>518</sup> As of January 2024, Manson’s music was still available on streaming services such as Spotify, Apple Music, and Amazon Music where it was generating royalties for UMG.<sup>519</sup>

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<sup>518</sup> [billboard.com](https://www.billboard.com), February 3, 2021

<sup>519</sup> Streaming Services: Amazon Music, Apple Music, & Spotify, accessed January 16, 2024; [billboard.com](https://www.billboard.com), July 27, 2023

# **Abuse by Producers, Executives, and Other Industry Figures**

# Jeff Aldrich

## Allegations & Continued Employment

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**RCA Records fired senior executive Jeff Aldrich after several female employees complained of harassment, with one alleging he molested her, yet he was hired back on months later and eventually moved to WMG.**

In January 1991, RCA Records senior vice president of A&R Jeff Aldrich was fired after several female employees, one whom was “the girlfriend of a powerful RCA executive,” complained that Aldrich sexually harassed them at a company conference the month prior.<sup>520</sup> One employee told Entertainment Weekly that Aldrich “was sticking his hand down blouses and up skirts,” and *EW* reported that Aldrich had thrown one woman onto a bed “and physically [molested] her.” An RCA executive said, “When some double-digit number of women complained, we knew we had to fire him.”<sup>521</sup> RCA, a division of Sony Music, declined to comment on whether a financial settlement was involved.<sup>522</sup>

*Variety* reported that Aldrich, who had been inebriated during the alleged incidents of harassment, checked himself into a rehabilitation facility in December 1990 and was fired from RCA in January 1991. He was brought back on to RCA “as an independent consultant less than a month after his termination. He continued to work in that role for several months until he was hired as an A&R exec by Irving Azoff’s WMG-distributed label Giant Records, and then later to Warner Bros. Records,” a division of WMG. According to *Variety*, “Aldrich rejoined RCA in 2009, leaving the company two years later.”<sup>523</sup>

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<sup>520</sup> [latimes.com](http://latimes.com), November 3, 1991

<sup>521</sup> [ew.com](http://ew.com), December 6, 1991

<sup>522</sup> [sonymusic.com](http://sonymusic.com), accessed August 3, 2023; [variety.com](http://variety.com), January 31, 2018

<sup>523</sup> [variety.com](http://variety.com), January 31, 2018; [musicbusinessworldwide.com](http://musicbusinessworldwide.com), accessed August 4, 2023

# Irving & Rochelle “Shelli” Azoff

## Allegations

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**Rochelle “Shelli” Azoff, the wife of producer Irving Azoff, was accused of sexual harassment and abuse against their ex-live-in maid. Shelli Azoff allegedly ignored her complaints.**

Rochelle “Shelli” Azoff, who “has been involved in the entertainment industry for most of her adult life,” was “accused of ‘gender violence, sexual battery’ and ‘sexual harassment’ against ex-live in maid Rosa Martinez,” according to the *Daily Mail*. Both Shelli and her husband Irving Azoff, a “legendary producer” and manager for acts such as The Eagles, Bon Jovi, and Christina Aguilera, ran Azoff MSG Entertainment, and Shelli was tasked with “putting together events for the Grammy Awards.” The couple was named in a lawsuit filed by Martinez “for assault and battery, sexual battery, sexual harassment, retaliation, and wrongful termination.”<sup>524</sup>

Shelli Azoff allegedly targeted Martinez with “‘cruel and sadistic’ attacks which are said to have included spanking Martinez, squeezing her breasts and burning her with cigarettes.” Martinez was also allegedly “forced to clean Azoff’s sex toys and smell her employer’s soiled nightwear.” Additionally, Azoff reportedly forced Martinez to “wear a size 10 uniform when she is a size 14,” and was accused of “‘looking at her with disgust’ when she cried,” “pinching her cheeks until she teared up,” and routinely summoning Martinez when Azoff was “stripped naked for ‘no apparent reason other than to ask (the employee) to compliment her body,’ per the lawsuit.”

Radaronline.com reported another incident of an “alleged unwanted kiss on a private plane” and an “incident where she [Azoff] allegedly sexually assaulted her [Martinez] at a home during the Coachella Valley Music Festival.”<sup>525</sup>

According to the *Daily Mail*, “after complaining about the abuse alongside unpaid overtime, Martinez claims the behavior escalated to up to three times a day in retaliation,” and it was “often sexual in nature.” The mistreatment allegedly began in April 2022, “around four months after hiring Martinez as the live-in housekeeper.” Martinez said she felt “‘powerless’ to the assaults” but did tell Shelli Azoff “that the inappropriate touching was especially triggering as she had been raped in the past.” In response, “Azoff allegedly laughed in her face, before ‘pointing out that if she had really been through the pain of rape, she would be strong enough to

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<sup>524</sup> [dailymail.co.uk](https://www.dailymail.co.uk), March 17, 2023; [radaronline.com](https://www.radaronline.com), February 1, 2023; [the arg.com](https://www.thearg.com), accessed December 22, 2023; [celebrityaccess.com](https://www.celebrityaccess.com), December 22, 2017

<sup>525</sup> [dailymail.co.uk](https://www.dailymail.co.uk), March 17, 2023

endure her behavior.” Frank Kim, the attorney representing Martinez, said, “My client believes that Rochelle enjoyed it. She was in complete control throughout the abuse... she believes it was like a game to her.”<sup>526</sup>

## Retaliation Against Victim

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### **Though Shelli Azoff’s maid attempted to quit, the maid alleged that she was intimidated into staying and faced professional retaliation.**

After more than a year of alleged emotional and sexual abuse, Martinez attempted to quit but claimed “she was intimidated into agreeing to stay until Azoff found her replacement, leading her to remain in the home for almost two more months.” After her attempts to quit were disregarded, Martinez also claimed she “left a note on Azoff’s bed pleading for her to ‘please fire me,’” writing, “I can’t tolerate this anymore” and “my soul is crushed in a million pieces.” In June 2022, Azoff accepted Martinez’s resignation but under the condition that “she signed a separation agreement, which she knew she would refuse, or submitted to a strip search. Faced with even more humiliation, she conceded and signed the severance agreement, something she claims was only agreed to ‘under duress.’”<sup>527</sup>

Once Martinez quit, Azoff “‘defamed’ the housekeeper to the agency she was employed with, claiming she had let the employee go [due] to poor performance rather than ‘cruel and malicious’ abuse.” Consequently, Martinez was let go by the agency and struggled to find employment. Her attorney “believes the agency dropped her due to the allegations from Ms. Azoff.”<sup>528</sup>

### **Shelli Azoff’s maid alleged that Irving Azoff was aware of the sexual assaults but failed to stop them. She claimed that she was left intimidated by Irving Azoff’s status, who was described as “the most power man in the music industry,” by *Billboard*.**

Martinez also named Irving Azoff as a defendant in her suit, claiming, “he knew about the sexual assaults occurring in his LA mansion and failed to step in. The industry titan is also accused of having prior ‘knowledge that Rochelle Azoff had sexually battered, abused and harassed other victims’ in the past.” Martinez’s attorney stated that Irving Azoff’s “fame and fortune contributed to the sustained abuse,” adding she “definitely felt intimidated by their status.”

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<sup>526</sup> [dailymail.co.uk](https://www.dailymail.co.uk), March 17, 2023

<sup>527</sup> [dailymail.co.uk](https://www.dailymail.co.uk), March 17, 2023

<sup>528</sup> [dailymail.co.uk](https://www.dailymail.co.uk), March 17, 2023

Irving Azoff was “labeled ‘the most powerful man in the music industry’ by Billboard magazine in 2021, after working with artists including Christina Aguilera, Jon Bon Jovi and The Eagles.”<sup>529</sup>

## Rodney Bingenheimer

### Allegations

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**In April 2023, DJ and nightclub owner Rodney Bingenheimer was named in a lawsuit by former Runaways member Kari Krome for allegedly sexually assaulting her as a minor.**

In April 2023, KROQ DJ and nightclub owner Rodney Bingenheimer was named in a lawsuit by former Runaways co-founder and songwriter Kari Krome (whose legal name was Carrie Mitchell) for allegedly sexual assaulting Krome when she was a minor. The lawsuit alleged that Mitchell suffered “childhood sexual abuse, sexual battery, assault, and molestation” by Bingenheimer when she was “approximately 13 and 14 and 15 years old.” The Runaways manager Kim Fowley was also named in the lawsuit, which claimed both men “used their roles, status, and power as adults, as well as their connections to and work in the music industry to gain access to manipulate, exploit, and sexually assault” Mitchell, who subsequently “suffered severe emotional, physical and psychological distress, including shame, and guilt, economic loss, economic capacity and emotional loss.”<sup>530</sup>

Bingenheimer “allegedly sexually assaulted Mitchell in his bedroom at his home one evening after telling her to come into his room to watch television, the suit claims.”<sup>531</sup> Mitchell claimed that Bingenheimer “continued to sexually assault [Mitchell] multiple times over many months.”<sup>532</sup>

**Go-Go’s guitarist Jane Wiedlin and two of her “Hollywooder” high school friends alleged Bingenheimer sexually assaulted them at the English Disco as minors.**

In December 2023, Go-Go’s guitarist Jane Wiedlin alleged that when she was in high school and at the English Disco, Rodney Bingenheimer “approached her, isolated her in one of the club’s

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<sup>529</sup> [dailymail.co.uk](https://www.dailymail.co.uk), March 17, 2023

<sup>530</sup> [variety.com](https://www.variety.com), April 27, 2023

<sup>531</sup> [rollingstone.com](https://www.rollingstone.com), April 27, 2023

<sup>532</sup> [stereogum.com](https://www.stereogum.com), April 27, 2023



back rooms, and sexually assaulted her.” According to *Rolling Stone*, “Wiedlin and several other high school friends — among those who christened themselves the ‘Hollywooders’ — hung out there frequently.” Wiedlin claimed that she “didn’t know what was going to happen before, but he started rubbing against me with his crotch against my crotch.” Further, she detailed “that Bingenheimer, who would have been around 27, told her to remove her belt as it was ‘getting in the way” and “continued to rub his crotch against her before he ejaculated on her clothes.”<sup>533</sup>

Wiedlin stated to *Rolling Stone* that it had “never occurred to me that had been a crime. I didn’t know what to think. It wasn’t until the #MeToo movement started when I realized I was sexually assaulted by [an adult] when I was 15.” In 2019, Wiedlin “confided in one of her old ‘Hollywooder’ high school friends Rachel (who is using a pseudonym over privacy concerns)” and learned “Bingenheimer had also allegedly sexually assaulted her and another friend.” Wiedlin said, “it turned out he molested everybody, and nobody talked to each other about it. I think he just made his way through every girl that he could.”<sup>534</sup>

Wiedlin’s friend Rachel later detailed to *Rolling Stone* that “in 1974, Bingenheimer fondled her in a back-office room at the club when she was around 15 years old. ‘The only thing I remember about it was being in this weird room, which didn’t look anything like the rest of the club,’ Rachel says. ‘And him fondling me, I don’t think he kissed me. He didn’t really talk ... He was sort of chatty for a minute, and then he started touching me. It didn’t go farther than that. I was completely uninterested. He became really creepy to me at that moment. He was no longer sort of a joke.’” Rachel claimed Bingenheimer “was a monster who was taking advantage of all these teenage girls who were not there to be with him, but to be with each other and dance and dress up however we wanted, to have fun and meet guys our own age and meet rock stars.”<sup>535</sup>

Limor Godwin, another “Hollywooder” friend, said “she had multiple run-ins with Bingenheimer as a teenager over the course of more than a year that the friends went to the Disco. In one instance when she was 15 years old, she claims Bingenheimer took her to a back room before he started kissing her, rubbing his crotch against her and putting his fingers up her vagina.”<sup>536</sup>

**Kourtney Kaye alleged that Bingenheimer, then 28, kissed and “fumblingly groped” her when she was 11 years old.**

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<sup>533</sup> [rollingstone.com](https://www.rollingstone.com), December 11, 2023

<sup>534</sup> [rollingstone.com](https://www.rollingstone.com), December 11, 2023

<sup>535</sup> [rollingstone.com](https://www.rollingstone.com), December 11, 2023

<sup>536</sup> [rollingstone.com](https://www.rollingstone.com), December 11, 2023

*Rolling Stone* reported that Wiedlin, her two friends, and Mitchell were just four of six women who had come forward, “all of whom say they were minors at the time – [and] detailed alleged similar experiences with Bingenheimer.”<sup>537</sup> Kourtney Kaye “says that around 1974, when she was about 11 years old, Bingenheimer kissed her on her lips, stuck his tongue in her mouth, and ‘fumblingly groped’ her at her Beverly Hills home.”<sup>538</sup> Kaye claimed that one of her brother’s friends instructed her to wear a negligee robe before “Bingenheimer, who was around 28 at the time, came into her bedroom.” Kaye said that she “was half asleep, quite young, and really confused.” Further, “Bingenheimer apologized after kissing her, ‘like it was some kind of accident. And then he did it again.’”<sup>539</sup>

**An anonymous victim accused Bingenheimer of maintaining an inappropriate relationship with her as a minor and filed a police report against him.**

Amanda, the pseudonym of one of Bingenheimer’s alleged victims, “says she was in an inappropriate relationship with Bingenheimer when she was 17 and he was 38.” Amanda claimed she met Bingenheimer in December 1985 and that she “would see Bingenheimer regularly from January until just over six months later in June 1986.” She alleged that “Bingenheimer took to her quickly,” and impressed with his connections and status, she “gave him her phone number.” Amanda began visiting Bingenheimer routinely, “going with him to Hollywood parties and bars to meet his celebrity friends, where she claims she was usually one of the youngest people there.”<sup>540</sup>

Amanda alleged “the relationship turned sexual quickly, with Amanda recalling that she slept over at his home early on after meeting him.” Further, she alleged “that throughout their relationship, Bingenheimer fondled her on his couch and performed oral sex on her. She also claimed he pressured her to use a vibrator on her and photograph her naked, both of which she says she refused.”<sup>541</sup>

Throughout her relationship, Amanda claimed she “got more uncomfortable [...] noting that friends of hers were concerned and wanted her to stop.” In 2018, Amanda “went to the LAPD to file a police report [about the relationship]. *Rolling Stone* reviewed email correspondences between her and an LAPD officer confirming that she’d spoken with the police about Bingenheimer. However, no charges were ever filed against him.”<sup>542</sup>

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<sup>537</sup> [rollingstone.com, December 11, 2023](https://www.rollingstone.com/entertainment/news/2018/12/11/rolling-stone-interviews-wiedlin-mitchell-11-2023/)

<sup>538</sup> [rollingstone.com, December 11, 2023](https://www.rollingstone.com/entertainment/news/2018/12/11/rolling-stone-interviews-wiedlin-mitchell-11-2023/)

<sup>539</sup> [rollingstone.com, December 11, 2023](https://www.rollingstone.com/entertainment/news/2018/12/11/rolling-stone-interviews-wiedlin-mitchell-11-2023/)

<sup>540</sup> [rollingstone.com, December 11, 2023](https://www.rollingstone.com/entertainment/news/2018/12/11/rolling-stone-interviews-wiedlin-mitchell-11-2023/)

<sup>541</sup> [rollingstone.com, December 11, 2023](https://www.rollingstone.com/entertainment/news/2018/12/11/rolling-stone-interviews-wiedlin-mitchell-11-2023/)

<sup>542</sup> [rollingstone.com, December 11, 2023](https://www.rollingstone.com/entertainment/news/2018/12/11/rolling-stone-interviews-wiedlin-mitchell-11-2023/)

## **Bingenheimer’s Los Angeles club English Disco was described as “a clearinghouse for grooming underage girls and serving them to rock stars” in the 1970s.**

Mitchell claimed she first met Bingenheimer at age 13 in the early 1970s at his Los Angeles nightclub English Disco. The club, a “popular haunt among rock stars,” was allegedly “notorious for allowing underage kids to come inside.” The suit claimed that Bingenheimer, then 28, “‘immediately’ started grooming Mitchell ‘to believe they were becoming friends and that she could trust him,’ and that at the time, she felt ‘reassured because Bingenheimer often had numerous young girls around him, especially at the nightclub, and she had stayed at his apartment numerous times without any attempts at physical contact with her.’”<sup>543</sup> Mitchell’s attorney, Karen Menzies, described English Disco as “a clearinghouse for grooming underage girls and serving them to rock stars,” adding that “he assaulted the girls themselves.”<sup>544</sup>

Bingenheimer told the filmmakers behind the 2021 documentary “Look Away” that at English Disco, “they did not need to check attendees’ IDs because they served food and he was not aware of any crime that took place on the premises.”<sup>545</sup> In the documentary, Mitchell “tells her own ‘hair-raising stories,’ raped as a teen by a staffer in a back room at hip LA hang-out Rodney Bingenheimer’s English Disco: ‘Bam — this guy got me.’ Afterwards, ‘he dusted me off’ and brought her a Coke. ‘He acted like it was no big deal. [...] A lot of the guys, they don’t think they did anything wrong.’ (In the programme, Bingenheimer denies any knowledge of an assault on his premises.)”<sup>546</sup>

Rachel, among the friends of Go-Go’s guitarist Jane Wiedlin who alleged Bingenheimer sexually assaulted them as minors, said the club was “used as a way to groom young girls for rock stars [and] is nauseating.... The whole idea of rock stars as gods, and that you should be grateful if you were one of the chosen, is so repulsive. I can’t even fathom that that was something we all thought was normal.”<sup>547</sup>

## **Silencing Victim**

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**Mitchell claimed she had “never been taken seriously when she brought up the allegations” against Bingenheimer to confidants in the past.**

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<sup>543</sup> [variety.com, April 27, 2023](https://www.variety.com/2023/04/27/entertainment/news/music/rodney-bingenheimer-english-disco-1235854382/)

<sup>544</sup> [rollingstone.com, April 27, 2023](https://www.rollingstone.com/music/rodney-bingenheimer-english-disco-1235854382/)

<sup>545</sup> [the-sun.com, September 13, 2021](https://www.the-sun.com/2021/09/13/rodney-bingenheimer-english-disco-1235854382/)

<sup>546</sup> [ft.com, September 10, 2021](https://www.ft.com/content/2021/09/10/rodney-bingenheimer-english-disco-1235854382/)

<sup>547</sup> [rollingstone.com, December 11, 2023](https://www.rollingstone.com/music/rodney-bingenheimer-english-disco-1235854382/)

While the lawsuit was Mitchell's first public accusation of Bingenheimer, she told *Rolling Stone* that "the allegations have weighed on her for years. In the past, she says, she felt she'd never been taken seriously when she brought up the allegations to confidants. [...] 'I never shut up about it. Just nobody wanted to hear it. Nobody seemed to care. We're still looking at these characters through a lens of glamorization of that era and that scene instead of looking at them through a lens of doing things that are criminal.'"<sup>548</sup>

Mitchell told *Rolling Stone*, "Rock stars are still looked upon like gods, literally. When people go to rock concerts, it's like everyone's bowing down. People will literally defend their sacred cows until the last dying day, [and] people are always willing to overlook that." She continued, "I think it's an unfair fight for the people that are getting abused because you can't fight against the whole culture. There needs to be dialogue about this. People need to be educated."<sup>549</sup>

Menzies said Bingenheimer "has enjoyed the false reputation of a sweet, innocent friend to rock stars, when in reality he was the source for the exploitation and sexual assault of underage girls."<sup>550</sup>

## Continued Work in Music Industry

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### **As of 2024, Bingenheimer continued to host a weekly radio show on Sirius XM's Little Stevens Underground Garage Channel.**

In 2017, SiriusXM announced that Bingenheimer would "host a new weekly music show on SiriusXM's Little Steven's Underground Garage channel. [...] 'Rodney was one of my first calls when I started the channel,' said Steven Van Zandt. 'We are honored to have him. This is where he belongs!'"<sup>551</sup> As of January 2024, Bingenheimer was still listed on the SiriusXM website as a host with Underground Garage, with weekly shows at 9pm on Sundays and 12am on Mondays.<sup>552</sup>

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<sup>548</sup> [rollingstone.com](https://www.rollingstone.com), April 27, 2023

<sup>549</sup> [rollingstone.com](https://www.rollingstone.com), April 27, 2023

<sup>550</sup> [rollingstone.com](https://www.rollingstone.com), April 27, 2023

<sup>551</sup> [variety.com](https://www.variety.com), June 28, 2017

<sup>552</sup> [siriusxm.com](https://www.siriusxm.com), accessed January 16, 2024

# Mike Bone

## Allegations

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**In 1992, Def American hired Mike Bone as an executive, despite objections from multiple female employees who accused him of sexual harassment.**

In July 1992, Mike Bone became a sales and marketing executive at Def American Recordings, then a Time Warner (WMG) subsidiary and now a subsidiary of UMG known as American Recordings. According to the *Los Angeles Times*, 12 female employees “objected to working with Bone and voiced their opposition to management.” Warner Bros. Records vice president of publicity Bob Merlis said that Def American founder Rick Rubin “has every right to staff Def American the way he sees fit” and added that “Warner Bros. has no specific objections to any of his executive choices.”<sup>553</sup>

Def American’s head of media relations, Heidi Robinson, told the *Los Angeles Times* that the label “made sure that everybody here who had a problem with [Bone’s appointment] had the opportunity to speak with Mike directly to get the truth out. [...] The way it was dealt with was they were told that Mike was always just a phone call away and his door is always open and anybody is more than welcome to sit down and talk with him about it and get it all squared away.”<sup>554</sup>

Heather Gifford of the National Academy of Recording Arts & Sciences “applauded Def American’s hiring of Bone” and said she had “never seen any indication of sexual harassment in his interaction with women.” Mary Catherine Sneed, vice president of operations at the Atlanta, Ga.-based Summit Communications, “who oversees 11 urban contemporary and album rock radio stations across the nation, echoed Gifford’s assessment. ‘As far as Mike Bone goes, he’s been a close friend of mine for 15 years and in my opinion he’s one of the brightest and level-headed gentlemanly executives in the industry,’ Sneed said.”<sup>555</sup>

Tammy Bruce, president of the National Organization for Women Los Angeles, “called Bone’s hiring a ‘blatant’ example of the lack of respect shown toward women in the recording industry. ‘The message that Warner Bros. (Records, the records division of Times Warner) is sending to women is that they just don’t care about us,’ Bruce said. ‘By allowing a person with this

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<sup>553</sup> [latimes.com, July 21, 1992](#)

<sup>554</sup> [latimes.com, July 21, 1992](#)

<sup>555</sup> [latimes.com, July 21, 1992](#)

background to be hired, what they are telling women is that they think sex harassment is irrelevant and that we are useless and it doesn't matter how we feel. How quickly these guys forget. It's as if Anita Hill had never testified and sexual harassment wasn't a serious issue.”<sup>556</sup>

### **Bone allegedly committed other inappropriate actions, including mailing dead rats to rock deejays to promote a band.**

In 1988, the *Los Angeles Times* reported, “When Mike Bone was a record company promotion man and couldn't persuade an ornery rock radio program director to play a new single, he sent the programmer a pig's head with a cassette of the song in its mouth and a note which read: ‘Don't be so pig-headed. Play the record.’ Bone has also appeared at a record industry fundraiser with his entire body painted yellow (to tout a band called Yello) and once hyped the Boomtown Rats (‘Live Aid’ organizer Bob Geldof's old band) by mailing rock deejays packages filled with huge sewer rats.”<sup>557</sup>

According to the *Los Angeles Times*, when Bone worked at Arista, “he promoted an Atlanta concert by the heavy-metal band Krokus by organizing a Miss Heavy Metal Atlanta contest. ‘We had about 15 girls on stage, all dressed in these wild outfits, with the audience voting for the winner,’ recalled Elektra Records album-rock promotion exec Jeff Cook, who worked at Arista then. ‘One girl was a clear winner--we took publicity pictures with her backstage and Bone was all over her--kissing her, with his arms around her...’ Cook chuckled. ‘A few minutes later, this guy came backstage and told us that the ‘girl’ who'd won was actually a ‘he’--a female impersonator! Boy, was Bone surprised.”<sup>558</sup>

## **Settlement & Retaliation Against Victim**

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### **In 1990, Bone propositioned a female assistant while at Island Records and fired her the next day after she turned down his advances. He was later sued and settled the matter out of court for a five-figure sum.**

In July 1990, Island Records president Mike Bone “allegedly propositioned his then administrative assistant, Lori Harris, 28, at a company party,” and fired her the next day after she declined his advances. In December 1991, *Entertainment Weekly* reported that following her firing, Harris “was unemployed for six months and still has found only part-time work.”<sup>559</sup>

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<sup>556</sup> [latimes.com](http://latimes.com), July 21, 1992

<sup>557</sup> [latimes.com](http://latimes.com), April 6, 1988

<sup>558</sup> [latimes.com](http://latimes.com), April 6, 1988

<sup>559</sup> [ew.com](http://ew.com), December 6, 1991

Harris sued Bone and Island “for sexual harassment and wrongful discharge under New York state human rights laws,” and Bone “settled the sexual harassment case out of court in November 1991 for a five-figure sum,” according to the *Los Angeles Times*.<sup>560</sup>

Bone left Island Records in December 1990, “a few months after the alleged incident of harassment, to become co-president of Mercury Records. Island officials said Bone’s departure was unrelated to the alleged incident. Mercury and Island both are owned by PolyGram,” a division of Universal Music Group.<sup>561</sup> Harris told Entertainment Weekly, “What’s ridiculous is that no one stopped him. Island Records and PolyGram don’t care what happened to me. They moved him from president of a company where he had been accused of harassing and firing his assistant to president of a new company (Mercury) where no one knew what he’d done. He got to start over.”<sup>562</sup> According to the *Los Angeles Times*, female employees at other record labels, “most of whom did not want to be identified, expressed concern about Bone’s return as an industry executive.”<sup>563</sup>

## Richard Branson

### Allegations

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**In 2017, a backup singer for British singer Joss Stone alleged that she was sexually assaulted by Virgin CEO Richard Branson at a party on his private island in the British Virgin Islands.**

In November 2017, Antonia Jenae, a backup singer for British singer Joss Stone, alleged that Richard Branson, CEO of the Virgin Group, “assaulted her during a party on his private island in the British Virgin Islands in 2010.” Notably, the Virgin Group is the parent company of Virgin Records, owned by Universal Music Group. Jenae claimed that Branson “‘motorboated’ her cleavage while making engine noises.” Speaking to the Sun, Jenae said, “His behaviour was disgusting. I feel like it was sexual assault.”<sup>564</sup>

Jenae referenced the incident in an October 2017 Facebook post where she discussed her experiences with sexual assault. She wrote, “the last time that I can remember was by Sir

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<sup>560</sup> [latimes.com](https://www.latimes.com), July 21, 1992

<sup>561</sup> [latimes.com](https://www.latimes.com), July 21, 1992; [universalmusic.com](https://www.universalmusic.com), accessed August 3, 2023; [universalmusic.com](https://www.universalmusic.com), accessed August 3, 2023

<sup>562</sup> [ew.com](https://www.ew.com), December 6, 1991

<sup>563</sup> [latimes.com](https://www.latimes.com), July 21, 1992

<sup>564</sup> [thecut.com](https://www.thecut.com), November 25, 2017; [thesun.co.uk](https://www.thesun.co.uk), November 24, 2017; [virgin.com](https://www.virgin.com), accessed August 30, 2023; [universalmusic.com](https://www.universalmusic.com), accessed August 30, 2023

Richard Branson, yes... you read that right.... he kept trying to convince me to show him my boobs like this Indian statute he had at his pool on his island, I took it as a ‘joke’. As everyone was saying goodnight, he proceeded to ‘motorboard’ [sic] my breasts with his face, In front of my boss at the time, who was also a woman, in front of her dad, and the makeup artist and hairstylist. I was so shocked. I think everyone was, no one said or did anything. I think I made a post about that on FB when it happened. I like to think that karma came back in a way when his island was struck by [lightning], but who knows how many other women he has done/ is doing that to. The girl who I worked for and I made a video about how appalled and shocked we were.”<sup>565</sup>

Branson “had invited Joss and her band to his Caribbean home after they played the Go Green festival on nearby Tortola.” Jenae claimed, “We were by the bar and he was saying bye to everyone. He came up to me and put his face in my breasts.” She added, “It was surreal, totally out of the blue. Joss and I were like, ‘What the hell was that?!’ Everyone was wondering why I wasn’t angry because I’m usually a firebrand. But I was just too shocked.”<sup>566</sup>

While a representative for Stone declined to comment on the allegations, an unnamed “source confirmed that the singer did remember the incident,” according to the *Sun*. In addition to Stone, Jenae claimed that “many people witnessed the assault.”<sup>567</sup>

A spokesperson for Virgin stated, “Richard has no recollection of this matter and neither do his family and friends, who were with him at the time. There would never have been any intention to offend or make anyone feel uncomfortable in any way and Richard apologizes if anyone felt that way during their time on the island.”<sup>568</sup>

## Sean Combs aka Diddy

### Allegations

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**In a lawsuit, R&B singer Cassie alleged Sean “Diddy” Combs engaged in “a pattern of control and abuse” during their relationship, giving her drugs, forcing her to have sex with male prostitutes, and raping her.**

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<sup>565</sup> [facebook.com](https://www.facebook.com), October 16, 2017

<sup>566</sup> [thesun.co.uk](https://www.thesun.co.uk), November 24, 2017

<sup>567</sup> [thesun.co.uk](https://www.thesun.co.uk), November 24, 2017; [thecut.com](https://www.thecut.com), November 25, 2017

<sup>568</sup> [money.cnn.com](https://www.money.cnn.com), November 27, 2017



In November 2023, Sean “Diddy” Combs, “the producer and music mogul who has been one of the most famous names in hip-hop for decades,” was sued in Federal District Court by R&B singer Cassie, whose real name is Casandra Ventura. Cassie “accused Mr. Combs of rape, and of repeated physical abuse over about a decade.” According to the *New York Times*, Cassie – “who had long been Mr. Combs’s romantic partner — says that not long after she met him in 2005, when she was 19, he began a pattern of control and abuse that included plying her with drugs, beating her and forcing her to have sex with a succession of male prostitutes while he filmed the encounters. In 2018, the suit says, near the end of their relationship, Mr. Combs forced his way into her home and raped her.”<sup>569</sup>

Ventura’s lawsuit alleged that Combs “began to assert an extraordinary level of command over her life. In addition to controlling her career, he paid for her car, apartments and clothing, and even had access to her personal medical records. [...] Mr. Combs also provided Ms. Ventura with ‘copious amounts of drugs,’ including ecstasy and ketamine, and urged her to take them, the suit says, and often became violent, beating her ‘multiple times each year.’ The suit says Ms. Ventura never went to the police because she feared it ‘would merely give Mr. Combs another excuse to hurt her.’” Furthermore, Ventura alleged “that in early 2012, Mr. Combs grew so angry about her dating the rapper Kid Cudi that he said he would blow up the rapper’s car. ‘Around that time,’ the suit says, ‘Kid Cudi’s car exploded in his driveway.’”<sup>570</sup>

Ventura described how Combs “began coercing her ‘to engage in a fantasy of his called ‘voyeurism,’ in which she was directed to have sex with a succession of male prostitutes, while Mr. Combs watched, masturbated, took pictures and shot video.” Combs referred to these as “freak offs,” and Ventura’s suit said “that during a ‘freak off’ at a Los Angeles hotel in 2016, an intoxicated Mr. Combs punched Ms. Ventura in the face, giving her a black eye. He fell asleep and she tried to leave the room, but Mr. Combs woke up and followed her into the hallway, where he threw glass vases at her, sending glass shattering throughout the corridor, according to the court filing. The hotel’s security cameras captured that incident, but the suit says Mr. Combs paid the hotel \$50,000 for the footage.” Ventura alleged “that as a result of these sexual encounters in different cities, Ms. Ventura was a victim of sex trafficking.”<sup>571</sup>

In December 2023, Tiffany Red, a Grammy Award-winning singer-songwriter, published a letter addressed to Combs in *Rolling Stone* describing her “experience as a witness to events detailed in my friend Casandra Ventura’s now-settled civil lawsuit.” Red wrote, “We did a song called ‘Loyal’ that you didn’t like. We were writing about her pain. In the first verse of that song, she sings, ‘I don’t know what is real, I just know how I feel, and you keep acting like you don’t know

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<sup>569</sup> [nytimes.com, November 16, 2023](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/16/us/celebrity-news/Sean-Combs-Cassie-lawsuit.html)

<sup>570</sup> [nytimes.com, November 16, 2023](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/16/us/celebrity-news/Sean-Combs-Cassie-lawsuit.html)

<sup>571</sup> [nytimes.com, November 16, 2023](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/16/us/celebrity-news/Sean-Combs-Cassie-lawsuit.html)

what you did wrong, trying to get me to chill. Since we ain't been together, I been on some whatever.' She was pushing back in that song. You later came back up to me and said you were playing. I didn't believe you."<sup>572</sup>

*Rolling Stone* noted that in 2019, Combs was also accused by another ex-girlfriend of abuse. Speaking to blogger Tasha K, Gina Huynh alleged "that Combs physically abused her throughout their five-year relationship. She claimed he once stomped her on the stomach, causing her to lose her breath, and also punched her in the back of the head. She told Tasha K that, 'He was mentally, emotionally and physically abusing me. He would always compare me to Cassie and tell me that I'm the bad one, she's a good one.' She also said that 'everyone' in Combs' circle 'allowed' the abuse to occur."<sup>573</sup>

### **Two additional women filed suit against Combs under New York's Adult Survivors Act before the law expired, alleging "sexual assault, beatings and forced drugging" in the early 1990s.**

In November 2023, before the Adult Survivors Act expired in New York, two women "accused Sean 'Diddy' Combs of sexual abuse, one week after the music mogul settled a separate lawsuit with the singer Cassie that contained allegations of rape and physical abuse. [...] The filings detail acts of sexual assault, beatings and forced drugging allegedly committed in the early 1990s by Combs, then a talent director, party promoter and rising figure in New York City's hip-hop community."<sup>574</sup>

Joi Dickerson, one of the plaintiffs, "said she was a 19-year-old student at Syracuse University when she agreed to meet Combs at a restaurant in Harlem in 1991. After their date, Combs 'intentionally drugged' her, then brought her home and sexually assaulted her, according to the filing. Without her knowledge, Combs videotaped the assault and later shared it with several friends in the music industry, the suit alleges. The public exposure sent Dickerson into a 'tailspin,' contributing to severe depression that landed her in the hospital and forced her to drop out of college, the lawsuit says." The second plaintiff, an unnamed Jane Doe, "accused Combs and an R&B singer, Aaron Hall, of sexually assaulting her and a friend, then beating her several days later." The incident occurred in 1990 or 1991 after a music industry event. According to *CBS News*, "A few days later, an 'irate' Combs allegedly showed up at the home of the two women in an attempt to stop them from speaking out about the abuse."<sup>575</sup>

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<sup>572</sup> [rollingstone.com, December 7, 2023](https://www.rollingstone.com/music/music-news/diddy-combs-accused-2019-12-07/)

<sup>573</sup> [rollingstone.com, December 7, 2023](https://www.rollingstone.com/music/music-news/diddy-combs-accused-2019-12-07/)

<sup>574</sup> [cbsnews.com, November 24, 2023](https://www.cbsnews.com/news/diddy-combs-accused-2023-11-24/)

<sup>575</sup> [cbsnews.com, November 24, 2023](https://www.cbsnews.com/news/diddy-combs-accused-2023-11-24/)

Furthermore, Dickerson’s lawsuit said “that the victim filed police reports in New York and New Jersey after the abuse. [...] After the filmed assault, Dickerson said she approached friends in the music industry asking them to confirm the existence of the ‘revenge porn’ tape, but was rebuffed by those who were ‘terrified that Combs would retaliate against them and that they would lose future business and music opportunities.’”<sup>576</sup>

After the window created by the Adult Survivors Act (ASA) in New York closed in November 2023, attorneys who spoke to *Rolling Stone* said reopening the window with new legislation was “necessary particularly because of the lack of awareness around the bill until high-profile suits like the one against Combs were filed. Susan Crumiller, who says she filed about a dozen claims through the Survivors Law Project, tells *Rolling Stone* that her firm has gotten ‘10 times as many calls’ last week compared to the several months before.”<sup>577</sup> Speaking to *PBS*, Mariann Wang, who represented Ventura and other clients filing under New York’s ASA, said, “We were fielding and [sic] dozens in the final days, sometimes even in the final hours.”<sup>578</sup>

**An unnamed Jane Doe accused Combs, former Bad Boys president Harve Pierre, and a third defendant of gang raping her at a music studio when she was 17, and she filed suit under New York City’s gender-motivated violence law.**

In December 2023, an unnamed Jane Doe filed suit against Combs, former Bad Boys president Harve Pierre, and a third unnamed defendant in the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York, accusing the men “of gang raping her [at a music studio] in 2003 when she was 17 years old.” According to *CBS News*, unlike the lawsuits filed by Ventura and two others under New York’s Adult Survivors Act, “this lawsuit was filed under New York City’s gender-motivated violence protection law.” The lawsuit “included multiple pictures of Doe in what is allegedly [Combs’s] studio, including a picture of her sitting on Combs’ lap on the night of the alleged sexual assault.”<sup>579</sup>

Jane Doe’s lawsuit “said that she was approached by Pierre at a lounge in Michigan and was convinced by him and Combs to take a private jet to a recording studio in New York City to meet up with the rapper. Combs had spoken to the teen over the phone and said he would love to meet her.” The suit stated, “Once there, the defendants plied Ms. Doe with drugs and alcohol and viciously gang raped her, one after the other.” Jane Doe alleged “that as Combs was raping her he told her he could not ‘get off’ unless she pinched his nipples as hard as she could.” According to *CBS News*, “Pierre and the third assailant took their turns raping Doe and when

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<sup>576</sup> [cbsnews.com, November 24, 2023](https://www.cbsnews.com/news/2023/11/24/)

<sup>577</sup> [rollingstone.com, November 29, 2023](https://www.rollingstone.com/news/2023/11/29/)

<sup>578</sup> [pbs.org, December 12, 2023](https://www.pbs.org/news/2023/12/)

<sup>579</sup> [cbsnews.com, December 6, 2023](https://www.cbsnews.com/news/2023/12/06/)

they were done they left her in the bathroom of the studio alone, where she curled up into the fetal position and lay on the floor.” She then “had to be helped out of the building and taken back to the airport to be flown home.”<sup>580</sup>

## Silencing Victims

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**Combs allegedly tried to silence Ventura with threats of retribution, tying “a non-disparagement clause to her record deal termination agreement,” and offering a settlement to prevent her from filing her lawsuit.**

Combs “founded Bad Boy in 1993 and became one of the primary figures in the commercialization of hip-hop, working with stars like the Notorious B.I.G. and Mary J. Blige,” according to the *New York Times*. Ventura’s suit also named “a number of his associated companies as defendants,” alleging “that others who worked with Mr. Combs had helped him to control Ms. Ventura, at times by threatening her with retribution — like suppressing her music if she did not obey his orders — or by helping to conceal his behavior.”<sup>581</sup>

In an open letter to Combs addressing Ventura’s allegations against him, singer-songwriter Tiffany Red wrote, “when I was part of her management team in 2019 — a year after she was able to leave you — I saw you try to silence her by attempting to tie a nondisparagement clause to her record deal termination agreement, which felt unjust. With Cassie bravely sharing her story, I’m finally free to share mine.” Red added, “Recent events, such as the unveiling of accusations against numerous former record label CEOs and artists for sexual assault due to the Adult Survivors Act in New York, underscore the gravity of the situation. The systemic issues of rape culture and misogyny deeply entrenched in the music industry pose a real threat to so many people’s safety every day in this business. How can we expect meaningful change when senior leadership and superstars face accusations of these crimes?”<sup>582</sup>

Ben Brafman, a lawyer for Combs, initially responded to the suit, “For the past six months, Mr. Combs has been subjected to Ms. Ventura’s persistent demand of \$30 million, under the threat of writing a damaging book about their relationship, which was unequivocally rejected as blatant blackmail. Despite withdrawing her initial threat, Ms. Ventura has now resorted to filing a lawsuit riddled with baseless and outrageous lies, aiming to tarnish Mr. Combs’s reputation and seeking a payday.” A lawyer for Ventura said, “Mr. Combs offered Ms. Ventura eight figures to

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<sup>580</sup> [cbsnews.com, December 6, 2023](https://www.cbsnews.com/news/50-cent-lawsuit-ventura/)

<sup>581</sup> [nytimes.com, November 16, 2023](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/16/arts/music/50-cent-lawsuit-ventura.html)

<sup>582</sup> [rollingstone.com, December 7, 2023](https://www.rollingstone.com/music/music-news/50-cent-lawsuit-ventura/)

silence her and prevent the filing of this lawsuit.”<sup>583</sup> Combs settled Ventura’s lawsuit for an undisclosed sum one day after it was filed.<sup>584</sup>

## Public Reckoning

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**After lawsuits were filed against Combs in late 2023, Hulu cancelled a planned reality TV show with Combs and his family. Combs also stepped down as chairman from a Black music TV company, and several other brands cut ties with him.**

In December 2023, Hulu announced “that the company would no longer make a reality show centered around Combs and his family. The news arrived as multiple companies severed business ties with the hip-hop mogul following the accusations of sexual abuse and physical violence.”<sup>585</sup> Combs also “stepped down from his role as chairman at Black music TV company REVOLT on Nov. 28,” and “a total of 23 brands have severed ties with Combs’ e-commerce marketplace Empower Global, which officially launched in July, since the allegations came out.” Furthermore, “liquor company Diageo — with which Combs has been embroiled in a bitter legal battle over his DeLeon Tequila brand for months — filed a request asking a judge to deny Combs’ request to control a \$15 million marketing budget for DeLeon, which would entail his image appearing in new ads for the spirit.”<sup>586</sup>

## Stephen Cooper

### Allegations

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**A WMG executive claimed that WMG CEO Stephen Cooper propositioned her for sex. Despite telling HR representatives, her allegations were brushed aside.**

In February 2017, Samantha Maloney, a former vice president of A&R at Warner Records, signed a non-disclosure agreement “that would perpetually silence her regarding speaking out about a sexual harassment incident she allegedly experienced while working at Warner Music

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<sup>583</sup> [nytimes.com, November 16, 2023](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/16/entertainment/music/rap-combs-lawsuit.html)

<sup>584</sup> [cbsnews.com, November 24, 2023](https://www.cbsnews.com/news/combs-lawsuit-settlement/)

<sup>585</sup> [rollingstone.com, December 7, 2023](https://www.rollingstone.com/music/music-news/combs-lawsuit-hulu-cancellation-1234567890/)

<sup>586</sup> [billboard.com, December 13, 2023](https://www.billboard.com/music/hip-hop/combs-stepped-down-revolt-1234567890/)

Group’s flagship record label.” According to *Rolling Stone*, her story followed “where most sexual harassment claims in the music industry end: with a non-disclosure agreement.”<sup>587</sup>

In September 2017, Maloney was let go from WMG “as part of a company restructuring. She signed a separation agreement and was paid severance. About a month later, her lawyer wrote to WMG alleging misconduct by executives both at Warner Records and WMG she’d heard about and, in one case, personally encountered. That final allegation involved one of the company’s highest-ranking executives: Maloney alleged that she’d been propositioned by WMG chief executive Stephen Cooper.”<sup>588</sup>

Maloney alleged that in February 2017 at a Grammy Awards afterparty, Cooper “propositioned her for a sexual act with himself and a female party guest.” Later that night, “Maloney approached a Warner Music Group HR executive who was also at the party and told her about Cooper’s alleged comment.” According to individuals that Maloney discussed the incident with, “Maloney told them in subsequent days and months that she told the HR rep that their boss had asked her to join in a sexual encounter — a comment that would have been a violation of the company’s code of conduct and an abuse of power from a significantly higher ranking executive at the company. According to these three people whom Maloney separately confided in after the alleged incident, the HR representative brushed it off.”<sup>589</sup>

Michael Howe, a former vice president of A&R at Warner whom Maloney confided in, said, “The whole thing feels wrong to me.” Another Warner executive who requested to remain anonymous, “recalled feeling most surprised about the human resources exec’s alleged dismissal of Maloney’s claim at the Grammy event, rather than the notion that a high-ranking entertainment executive might make an inappropriate comment to a female subordinate. ‘I’m not surprised it happened — which is so sad — but surprised nothing was done about it when she went to them in the beginning,’ she says.”<sup>590</sup>

WMG said that its “leadership was not made aware of Maloney’s claims until after she had been let go, and they initiated an independent investigation the day after she lodged them with the company. In addition to investigating Maloney’s sexual harassment claim against Cooper, the legendary music company also looked into sexual misconduct allegations against senior vice president Dave Dyer and executive vice president Jeff Fenster. The allegations and broader details of the investigation, which ended three weeks later in November 2017, were never made public.”<sup>591</sup>

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<sup>587</sup> [rollingstone.com](https://www.rollingstone.com), March 14, 2022

<sup>588</sup> [rollingstone.com](https://www.rollingstone.com), March 14, 2022

<sup>589</sup> [rollingstone.com](https://www.rollingstone.com), March 14, 2022

<sup>590</sup> [rollingstone.com](https://www.rollingstone.com), March 14, 2022

<sup>591</sup> [rollingstone.com](https://www.rollingstone.com), March 14, 2022

In June 2022, three months after *Rolling Stone's* report on her allegations against Cooper, the WMG CEO announced that he “will exit the company” in 2023. Cooper “said he has instructed the board to begin the search for his successor, and that he and the board expect the transition to take place by the end of 2023.”<sup>592</sup>

## Settlement With Victim

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**A WMG executive who alleged that Cooper propositioned her was paid a settlement from the company and had to sign a nondisclosure agreement, meaning that she could not discuss the incident.**

A year after Maloney’s alleged incident with Cooper, Warner paid her “\$240,000 and signed a settlement agreement.” In the agreement, “Warner denied any wrongful conduct and documented their payment to Maloney by pointing to her participation in the investigation.” Additionally, Maloney “agreed to nondisclosure terms that would prevent her from discussing the settlement or any alleged harassment at Warner. As laid out in the agreement, any breach of the confidentiality terms by Maloney or the few people she was authorized to share the settlement agreement’s terms with would result in a \$60,000 fine. In signing the NDA, Warner was also bound to keep it confidential. But if it failed to keep the document private, that wouldn’t constitute a breach, according to the document’s terms.” By signing the NDA, Maloney “is not allowed to speak about the incident to anyone but her lawyers, tax advisors, and husband.”<sup>593</sup>

*Rolling Stone* noted, “Maloney’s allegations and the steps the company took at the conclusion of the investigation, critics of the company and the broader entertainment industry say, are indicative of a wider pattern: Misconduct accusers are silenced with ironclad NDAs, while powerful male executives are protected against a public airing of allegations against them. In recent years, advocates and lawyers who represent employees have increasingly criticized NDAs in the context of sexual harassment allegations, asserting they keep claims against powerful members of the entertainment industry protected from public view.”<sup>594</sup>

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<sup>592</sup> [wsj.com](https://www.wsj.com), June 22, 2022

<sup>593</sup> [rollingstone.com](https://www.rollingstone.com), March 14, 2022

<sup>594</sup> [rollingstone.com](https://www.rollingstone.com), March 14, 2022

# Edgardo Díaz

## Abuse by Management

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**Menudo manager Edgardo Díaz was accused of physical, sexual, and mental abuse, most notably by group member Roy Rosselló in two recent docuseries.**

Music promoter and manager Edgardo Díaz founded the 1980s hit boy band Menudo, which “encompassed dozens of performers since its 1977 inception as Díaz employed a turnstile of boys.” Díaz “established the rule that once a member reached his 16th birthday, he was booted for a young replacement.”<sup>595</sup>

According to *Rolling Stone*, Menudo had “longstanding accusations of sexual abuse against the group’s Svengali and manager, Edgardo Díaz.”<sup>596</sup> The 2022 HBO docuseries “Menudo: Forever Young” featured allegations from Menudo members of “physical, sexual and mental abuse by music promoter/manager Edgardo Díaz; grueling schedules and a lack of parental oversight (Díaz required parents to sign over most legal rights before the boys could become members); and showbiz deceit.”<sup>597</sup>

Former Menudo star Roy Rosselló previously spoke out about alleged abuse he experienced during his time with Menudo, but “his account regained new focus” with the release of the 2023 Peacock docuseries “Menendez + Menudo: Boys Betrayed” in which he recounted multiple instances of abuse inflicted on him by Díaz during his time in the group.<sup>598</sup>

In the docuseries, Rosselló “recounts a visit to the Biltmore Hotel during a trip to L.A. [when] Menudo was staying at the hotel, and Rosselló says he and other teenage members of the band rented a second room for girls, who were the same age as they were. Rosselló alleges in the series that Díaz slapped another member of the band, then punched him repeatedly when he found out about the girls. Díaz allegedly took Rosselló to another room, tied him to the bed, beat him with a wet towel and raped him. ‘He told me, ‘This better be the last time I see you with a woman because you are mine. I’m not going to share you with anyone,’ Rosselló says in Spanish in the docuseries.”<sup>599</sup>

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<sup>595</sup> [usatoday.com, June 23, 2022](https://www.usatoday.com/story/entertainment/2022/06/23/menudo-abuse-roy-rossello/10811111002/)

<sup>596</sup> [rollingstone.com, May 2, 2023](https://www.rollingstone.com/music/2022/05/02/menudo-forever-young-hbo-docuseries/)

<sup>597</sup> [usatoday.com, April 18, 2023](https://www.usatoday.com/story/entertainment/2023/04/18/menendez-menudo-boys-betrayed/11811111002/)

<sup>598</sup> [latimes.com, May 2, 2023](https://www.latimes.com/entertainment-arts/story/2023-05-02/menendez-menudo-boys-betrayed/)

<sup>599</sup> [latimes.com, May 2, 2023](https://www.latimes.com/entertainment-arts/story/2023-05-02/menendez-menudo-boys-betrayed/)



In 2014, Rosselló “appeared on the Brazilian reality show ‘A Fazenda 7’ and alleged he had been a victim of sexual abuse by Díaz. Six years later, he appeared on a Mexican entertainment news program, ‘Ventaneando,’ and repeated claims of sexual abuse by Díaz.”<sup>600</sup>

In May 2023, the *Los Angeles Times* reported that Díaz was “under investigation by the Los Angeles Police Department over allegations that he sexually assaulted a former teenage member of the group in the 1980s, police officials said. Allegations of sexual, verbal and physical abuse have swirled around Menudo for decades, but the investigation by the LAPD, centered around an attack that allegedly occurred at the Biltmore Hotel in downtown Los Angeles, is the first known criminal investigation surrounding Menudo and its creator by law enforcement. [...] The investigation stems from allegations made by former Menudo star Roy Rosselló, who was part of the teen-pop band during the height of its international popularity in the 1980s.”<sup>601</sup>

*Rolling Stone* described the Peacock docuseries “Menendez + Menudo: Boys Betrayed” as a “damning brief against Díaz and a culture of complicity which, according to several sources interviewed here, allowed him to prey on the young teens that cycled in and out of Menudo (group members were generally replaced when they turned 16). The series paints a convincing picture of a monster whose sex crimes were covered up by media who exchanged their silence for exclusive coverage of Latin America’s biggest pop phenomenon, and law enforcement who saw Menudo as a cash cow beneficial to the territory as a whole.”<sup>602</sup>

**Since the 1990s, there have been allegations of sexual abuse towards members of Menudo, a hit boy band that “employed a turnstile of boys” in the 1980s.**

According to the *Los Angeles Times*, “abuse allegations had plagued the boy band since the early 1990s.” Bolivar Arellano, a freelance photographer who worked with Menudo, “alleged on a Puerto Rican talk show in 1991 that several members of the band had been given alcohol, drugs and were sexually abused.” In 1983, former Menudo member Ralphy Rodríguez “appeared on the Univision program ‘El show de Cristina’ and said that he’d seen the alleged abuse perpetrated by Díaz with underage members of the band.”<sup>603</sup> In the 2022 HBO docuseries “Menudo: Forever Young,” former group member Angelo Garcia said he was “raped a series of times” while he was in Menudo between 1988 and 1990.<sup>604</sup>

According to *USA Today*, former group members Andy Blázquez and Jonathan Montenegro “tell nearly identical stories about the Menudo production team threatening to touch the boys’

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<sup>600</sup> [latimes.com](https://www.latimes.com), May 2, 2023

<sup>601</sup> [latimes.com](https://www.latimes.com), May 2, 2023

<sup>602</sup> [rollingstone.com](https://www.rollingstone.com), May 2, 2023

<sup>603</sup> [latimes.com](https://www.latimes.com), May 2, 2023

<sup>604</sup> [usatoday.com](https://www.usatoday.com), June 23, 2022

private parts as a rite of passage into the group. Blázquez says that as he was held down, braced for the encounter, the team members instead began to sing a silly song. ‘That was not funny,’ says Blázquez, adding there was always an atmosphere of ‘extreme sexualization’ and comments about anal sex.”<sup>605</sup>

## Abuse by Sony Executive

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**In a 2023 docuseries, Roy Rosselló alleged that he was sexual assaulted as a child by RCA executive Jose Menendez, who was infamously murdered by his two sons over an alleged history of sexual abuse.**

In April 2023, the *New York Times* reported that Roy Rosselló was “coming forward with an allegation that he was sexually assaulted as a teenager by Jose Menendez.” In 1983, while serving as executive vice president at RCA Records, a label owned by Sony, Menudo “signed a long-term recording contract” with RCA that called “for 12 albums in six years.” Menendez became nationally known in 1996 after he was murdered by his sons Lyle and Erik Menendez, who were convicted of the murder and argued in their trial that they were sexually molested by their father for years.<sup>606</sup>

Erik and Lyle Menendez’s defense argued that the brothers suffered years of sexual abuse at the hands of their father, and according to *The New York Times*, the credibility of that account “was central to the criminal trials that unfolded after the discovery of the murders in 1989.” Defense asserted that Lyle “had confronted his father about the family’s sex abuse secrets, that his father had become enraged and threatening, and that the brothers had killed out of concern for their lives.”<sup>607</sup>

According to the *Los Angeles Times*, Rosselló alleged that when he was 13 or 14, Menudo founder and manager Edgardo Díaz “took him to the Menendez family home in New Jersey. There, he says, he was given wine, drugged and raped by Jose Menendez, suggesting the trip was to help seal a deal between RCA and Menudo. In a declaration filed as part of the petition [for the Menendez brothers], Rosselló alleged Menendez performed oral sex on him before a concert in New York. After the concert, Menendez raped him at a hotel, Rosselló said.”<sup>608</sup>

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<sup>605</sup> [usatoday.com, June 23, 2022](https://www.usatoday.com/story/entertainment/music/2023/06/23/roy-rossello-allegation-sony-music/12345678)

<sup>606</sup> [nytimes.com, April 18, 2023](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/04/18/nyregion/roy-rossello-allegation-sony-music.html); [nytimes.com, November 23, 1983](https://www.nytimes.com/1983/11/23/nyregion/roy-rossello-allegation-sony-music.html); [sonymusic.com](https://www.sonymusic.com), accessed July 27, 2023

<sup>607</sup> [nytimes.com, April 18, 2023](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/04/18/nyregion/roy-rossello-allegation-sony-music.html)

<sup>608</sup> [latimes.com, July 17, 2023](https://www.latimes.com/2023/07/17/entertainment/music/roy-rossello-allegation-sony-music.html)

In April 2023, *LAMag* reported that a source close to the 2023 Peacock docuseries “Menendez + Menudo: Boys Betrayed” told the publication “that more individuals claiming to be victims of the late Menéndez are now contacting the filmmakers. This is exactly what Robert Rand says he was hoping the film would provoke. It’s Rand’s reporting, along with his writing partner, Nery Ynclan, that will be featured in the series. ‘The stories about Jose Menéndez and his obsession with Menudo have been around for 30 years,’ Rand, the author of *The Menéndez Murders*, tells *LAMag*. ‘It was our hope that Roy’s honesty would allow other victims to come forward.’”<sup>609</sup>

## Ahmet Ertegun

### Allegations

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**Warner Music Group’s Atlantic Records faced a lawsuit by Jan Roeg, a former employee who said that she was sexually assaulted by the label’s founder Ahmet Ertegun and that the company knew about the allegations and enabled his abuse.**

In November 2022, Jan Roeg, who worked as a talent scout at Warner Music Group’s Atlantic Records from 1984 to the mid-2000s, sued the label and the estate of its founder, Ahmet Ertegun, for sexual assault. Roeg’s lawsuit alleged “that Atlantic knew about Ertegun’s misconduct and took a ‘laissez faire’ approach when dealing with it.” *Rolling Stone* reported Roeg alleged that Ertegun “sexually [harassed] and assaulted her throughout her time at the label, masturbating in front of her numerous times, forcing her head to his crotch in attempts to engage in oral sex, digitally penetrating her and, during a dinner in 1990, drugging her, resulting in her getting her stomach pumped.” Ertegun died in 2006.<sup>610</sup>

Roeg’s complaint stated that “Ertegun made it clear to Ms. Roeg that she had to ‘get to know’ him in order to maintain her place (and that of her artists) at Atlantic. That is, women who wanted to do business with Atlantic had to play along with Mr. Ertegun’s sexual desires, and could not rock the boat with a complaint or lawsuit.” Further, Ertegun “held the fate of Ms. Roeg’s artists, including the first one who was signed by the Label, as well as her own career, in his hands.” According to the lawsuit, “Ertegun and others in the industry referred to Roeg as his girlfriend. She denies that label and said that the phrase ‘stunted her career in the music business.’”<sup>611</sup>

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<sup>609</sup> [lamag.com](https://lamag.com), April 20, 2023

<sup>610</sup> [theguardian.com](https://theguardian.com), November 29, 2022; [rollingstone.com](https://rollingstone.com), November 28, 2022

<sup>611</sup> [rollingstone.com](https://rollingstone.com), November 28, 2022; [iapps.courts.state.ny.us](https://iapps.courts.state.ny.us), Case No. 952003/2022, filed November 28, 2022

**Dorothy Carvello, another former employee of WMG’s Atlantic Records, sued the companies alleging that she was sexually abused and harassed by Ertegun, President Doug Morris, and Chairman Jason Flom.**

In December 2022, Dorothy Carvello, a former employee at Warner Music Group’s Atlantic Records, filed a complaint against the companies, along with “former Atlantic president and Universal Music Group CEO Doug Morris, former Atlantic chairman Jason Flom, and the estate of late Atlantic Records co-founder Ahmet Ertegun, alleging that she was sexually abused and harassed by Ertegun and Morris, and sexually harassed by Flom, during her time at Atlantic Records. Carvello began at Atlantic as an administrative employee.” In 1988, she “became the label’s first female head of its artists-and-repertoire division since its founding in 1947. She brought top talent to Atlantic, including the rock band Skid Row.”<sup>612</sup>

According to her suit, “Ertegun violently and sexually attacked” Carvello twice in 1988. In one instance in March 1988, Carvello accompanied Ertegun and Atlantic chairman Jason Flom from New York City to Allentown, Pennsylvania by helicopter to see a performance by Skid Row, a rock band the label was in the process of trying to sign. At the concert, in the presence of Flom and others, Ertegun “grabbed at her underneath her skirt, forcibly clawed at the bike shorts she was wearing underneath her skirt and pulled them down to access her underwear. He then forcibly pulled down her underwear and exposed her vagina to all present at the club.” Ertegun “grabbed her genitals, causing her significant physical pain,” and caused bruises and a scratch on Carvello’s body that began to bleed. According to the complaint, “Carvello begged Mr. Flom and others in attendance to stop Mr. Ertegun, but they laughed and did nothing to assist her or to stop Mr. Ertegun’s attack.”<sup>613</sup>

**Carvello alleged sexually inappropriate behavior by Doug Morris, including that he forcibly kissed her and constantly commented on her body and appearance.**

According to *Billboard*, “while working as [Morris’s] de facto secretary,” Carvello “claims Morris would ‘forcibly kiss’ her on the face and touch her inappropriately on a daily basis while ‘constantly’ commenting on her body and appearance. She also claims that on multiple occasions, both Morris and Ertegun would suggest that Atlantic would pay for her to get breast augmentation surgery.” She claimed these routine comments about her body were made “at times negatively with the intent to humiliate.” She also alleged that Morris “once [placed] a pornographic magazine on her desk while seated next to her.”<sup>614</sup>

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<sup>612</sup> [theguardian.com](https://www.theguardian.com), December 13, 2022; [latimes.com](https://www.latimes.com), December 6, 2022; [japps.courts.state.ny.us](https://japps.courts.state.ny.us), Case No. 952006/2022, filed December 4, 2022

<sup>613</sup> [japps.courts.state.ny.us](https://japps.courts.state.ny.us), Case No. 952006/2022, filed December 4, 2022

<sup>614</sup> [billboard.com](https://www.billboard.com), December 5, 2022; [theguardian.com](https://www.theguardian.com), December 13, 2022

## Industry Knowledge of Abuse

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**Roeg claimed that Atlantic’s management was aware of sexual abuse and misconduct, which occurred out in the open, and helped create a culture of abuse prevalent in the music industry.**

According to Roeg’s complaint, “Atlantic’s management was very aware of Mr. Ertegun’s outrageous and abusive sexual conduct towards female employees and business associates, including his propensity for assault.” Before meeting Roeg, Ertegun “already had a reputation for such misconduct at Atlantic, and the Label notoriously took a laissez faire approach to sexual misconduct, misogynistic and hostile sexual attitudes towards women, and harassment of women in its offices, with a culture of abuse that has become famous in music industry history.”<sup>615</sup>

Ertegun’s sexual misconduct “would often occur at business dinners and on trips with other Company executives.” Additionally, he would “brag openly in large Company meetings about his sexual escapades with women he was not married to, including with so-called ‘groupies’ backstage at concerts.”<sup>616</sup>

While Roeg worked at Atlantic with Ertegun, open “physical harassment of female employees by Atlantic executives also was everyday business at Atlantic.” Roeg claimed that she “learned to ‘hold onto her skirt’ whenever she entered Atlantic’s offices, due to Mr. Ertegun’s conduct and the conduct of other male employees who regularly took liberties and would proposition or otherwise make sexual comments to women at work. She adopted a defensive practice of wearing only long skirts to the office, at or nearly to her ankles in anticipation of warding off such behavior.”<sup>617</sup>

**Carvello compared the offices of WMG’s Atlantic Records to the set of a porn movie, and alleged that leadership at WMG and Atlantic, including Doug Morris, knowingly enabled sexual misconduct.**

Carvello’s lawsuit alleged that WMG, Atlantic, and their executives knowingly enabled Ertegun’s and others’ “outrageous workplace sexual assault.” According to the *Los Angeles Times*, Carvello’s suit against industry executives “called Atlantic studios and offices ‘places to indulge

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<sup>615</sup> [iapps.courts.state.ny.us](https://iapps.courts.state.ny.us), Case No. 952003/2022, filed November 28, 2022

<sup>616</sup> [iapps.courts.state.ny.us](https://iapps.courts.state.ny.us), Case No. 952003/2022, filed November 28, 2022

<sup>617</sup> [iapps.courts.state.ny.us](https://iapps.courts.state.ny.us), Case No. 952006/2022, filed December 4, 2022

their sexual desires.” Describing her work at WMG’s Atlantic Records, Carvello told *Rolling Stone* in 2018, “It was insanity. It was like a porn movie. That’s what I walked onto: the set of a porn movie.” She added, “When you work a 12-hour day and you’re serving a man like Ahmet [Ertegun], you’re not sleeping, you’re not capable of making decisions, you’re a slave with a half hour for lunch. This was all wrong and illegal, but nobody cared. You just did it. It became normal: guys showing you their penises, people asking you to blow them, people reading pornography during meetings. This is the shit we did. And I contributed to it. I got caught up in it and it became normal.”<sup>618</sup>

The *Los Angeles Times* also reported that Ertegun “allegedly broke Carvello’s arm after slamming it against a table.” In her lawsuit, Carvello claimed that after reporting the incident to Doug Morris, he responded, “What do you want me to do about it?”<sup>619</sup>

### **WMG and Atlantic Records allegedly failed to protect female employees from ongoing sexual abuse and harassment.**

Roeg claimed that top executives and other management at Atlantic “had ample opportunities to observe Mr. Ertegun’s drunken, abusive conduct and hateful attitude towards women, including in Company meetings in which he would openly brag about and recount in detail sexually exploitative escapades he engaged in backstage at concerts and the like.” However, Atlantic “did not act to protect Ms. Roeg or its other female employees, business partners, and other women who crossed paths with” Ertegun.<sup>620</sup>

Meanwhile, victims like Roeg and “other women in Mr. Ertegun’s and Atlantic’s orbit tried to take precautions to protect themselves while in those offices and on business trips for Atlantic.” For instance, “Roeg would ‘hold onto her skirt,’ in her words, while on Atlantic’s premises, and took to wearing long, ankle-length skirts when visiting the Label’s offices.”<sup>621</sup>

### **Carvello nominated herself to WMG’s board of directors as part of a shareholder campaign “to force WMG to fix a culture she says is broken,” alleging “WMG’s management is not doing enough to investigate and act upon allegations of sexual misconduct at the company.”**

In November 2022, Dan McDermott, an adjunct professor of shareholder activism at the University of Pennsylvania Carey School of Law, wrote, “The #MeToo movement, shareholder

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<sup>618</sup> [rollingstone.com](https://www.rollingstone.com), September 9, 2018; [latimes.com](https://www.latimes.com), December 6, 2022

<sup>619</sup> [latimes.com](https://www.latimes.com), December 9, 2022

<sup>620</sup> [japps.courts.state.ny.us](https://japps.courts.state.ny.us), Case No. 952003/2022, filed November 28, 2022

<sup>621</sup> [japps.courts.state.ny.us](https://japps.courts.state.ny.us), Case No. 952003/2022, filed November 28, 2022

activism, and the powerful empire of music are about to collide.” McDermott was referring to Dorothy Carvello’s nomination of herself to the board of Warner Music Group (WGM) under a new SEC rule that “allows for shareholders to nominate themselves as directors for election on public company boards – on the same slate as the incumbent directors- rather than separate board slates required previously.” McDermott noted that the change “has far-reaching consequences to shareholder activism and corporate accountability to shareholders.”<sup>622</sup>

As McDermott wrote, “Carvello is seeking to become WGM’s agitator-in-chief. For years she has alleged sexual assault by current and former WGM executives against herself, other former Warner employees and WGM female artists.” According to McDermott, “Her thesis is simple: Warner Music Group cannot attract top female artists or employees in a corporate culture that she believes is beyond broken. She contends that change must happen from within, not from silencing victims with NDAs and hush money.” Her campaign sought “to force WGM to fix a culture she says is broken.”<sup>623</sup>

Furthermore, before nominating herself to WGM’s board, Carvello sent a letter to WGM’s board of directors “requesting records relating to the company’s investigations into previously-reported sexual misconduct claims and royalties accounting at the label.” The letter said that Carvello had “concerns that WGM’s management is not doing enough to investigate and act upon allegations of sexual misconduct at the company, and not monitoring the distribution of artist royalties in a manner that ensures sound accounting and payment. Both issues have the potential to expose the company to substantial liability and cause great reputational harm to WGM ... [and] raise serious concerns about the truthfulness and accuracy of the company’s statements to investors.”<sup>624</sup> Carvello also said she was “exploring other legal options to file similar requests” at Sony Music and UMG.<sup>625</sup>

**A law firm announced an investigation into whether WGM’s “board of directors or senior management failed to manage Warner Music in an acceptable manner” following the filing of Carvello’s sexual harassment and assault lawsuit.**

In January 2023, after a sexual harassment and assault lawsuit was filed against WGM and former WGM executives by Carvello the prior month, at least one law firm announced an investigation into “whether members of Warner Music’s board of directors or senior management failed to manage Warner Music in an acceptable manner, in breach of their

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<sup>622</sup> [ircinc.com](https://www.ircinc.com), November 30, 2022

<sup>623</sup> [ircinc.com](https://www.ircinc.com), November 30, 2022

<sup>624</sup> [billboard.com](https://www.billboard.com), September 13, 2022

<sup>625</sup> [rollingstone.com](https://www.rollingstone.com), September 13, 2022

fiduciary duties, and whether Warner Music and its shareholders have suffered damages as a result.”<sup>626</sup>

## **Silencing & Retaliation Against Victims**

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### **One of Ertegun’s victims was reportedly fired from Atlantic Records after alerting WMG CEO Doug Morris about ongoing sexual abuse and harassment at the label.**

In September 1990, Atlantic chairman Jason Flom, who was Carvello’s direct boss, demanded that she sit on his lap at a meeting attended by other executives, according to her lawsuit. Carvello refused and immediately wrote a memo to WMG CEO Doug Morris, stating “that she was ‘tired of this juvenile behavior by all the men at Atlantic Records,’ and she asked that Mr. Morris let her know ‘what [he] intend[ed] to do about it.’” In response, Morris had “Ertegun fire Ms. Carvello the very next morning.” According to Carvello’s complaint, “Ertegun was explicit: she was being fired at Mr. Morris’ direction for sounding the alarm in writing about the sexual harassment and sexual misconduct that she had reported to Mr. Morris in her written memo.”<sup>627</sup>

### **A former Warner Music employee claimed that Morris took “vengeful and retaliatory actions” to blacklist her from the music industry after she reported harassment by Ertegun.**

According to *The Guardian*, “After her termination by Atlantic, Carvello started working at Giant Records, another Warner Music Group subsidiary, but her employment was terminated shortly after. Carvello says in the claim ‘on information and belief’ that Morris had used his influence to have her fired and blacklist her from the industry. Carvello’s lawsuit says that if not for Morris’ ‘vengeful and retaliatory actions,’ she would still be working in the music industry.”<sup>628</sup>

### **Victims of Ertegun’s and other executives’ sexual abuse and harassment were allegedly paid off by WMG’s Atlantic Records on his behalf.**

According to the *Los Angeles Times*, Roeg alleged that Atlantic Records “was aware of Ertegun’s alleged behavior of sexual harassment and assault toward female employees at the company, as well as female business associates.” The lawsuit stated, “yet the label allowed and enabled it to

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<sup>626</sup> [businesswire.com](https://www.businesswire.com), January 18, 2023; [billboard.com](https://www.billboard.com), December 5, 2022

<sup>627</sup> [japps.courts.state.ny.us](https://japps.courts.state.ny.us), Case No. 952006/2022, filed December 4, 2022

<sup>628</sup> [theguardian.com](https://www.theguardian.com), December 13, 2022



continue for decades, imposing suffering on and hampering the careers of countless women within and outside the company.”<sup>629</sup>

In Jan Roeg’s complaint against Ertegun, she alleged that Atlantic “frequently paid money, often in the form of cash or a personal check, to women alleging sexual misconduct (as well as compromising sexual conduct) on the part of Mr. Ertegun. Mr. Ertegun’s sexual misconduct towards and predatory treatment of women was well known at Atlantic among his peers at the Label and his staff, and Ms. Roeg was far from the first target of his repeated sexual misconduct known to Atlantic.” According to her complaint, “Atlantic also is known to have regularly paid money to women accusing Mr. Ertegun of sexual misconduct.”<sup>630</sup>

Similarly, in her lawsuit against Ertegun, WMG, and Atlantic Records, Carvello alleged that when Ertegun’s and other executives’ “violence and sexual assault was reported, their victims were routinely paid settlements with corporate funds in exchange for signed non-disclosure agreements.”<sup>631</sup>

Notably, as Ertegun’s secretary, Carvello’s regular tasks included “opening his postal mail each morning.” In many instances, Carvello would open mail to “find Polaroid photographs of him naked, engaged in various sex acts with women, along with letters from women blackmailing Mr. Ertegun. This occurred so frequently that Mr. Ertegun had a protocol for how Ms. Carvello was to handle such mail: Ms. Carvello was to turn the blackmail over to another Atlantic Records executive who would make arrangements for the blackmailers to receive cash payments (taken from a safe in Atlantic Records’ office) in exchange for entering into nondisclosure agreements concerning the women’s interactions with Mr. Ertegun.”<sup>632</sup>

## Noel Fisher aka Detail

### Allegations & Criminal Charges

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**In 2020, Grammy-award winning producer Detail was arrested on 15 counts of sexual assault including forcible rape after music industry professionals and newcomers spoke publicly about his sexual aggression.**

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<sup>629</sup> [latimes.com](https://www.latimes.com), November 28, 2022

<sup>630</sup> [japps.courts.state.ny.us](https://japps.courts.state.ny.us), Case No. 952003/2022, filed November 28, 2022

<sup>631</sup> [japps.courts.state.ny.us](https://japps.courts.state.ny.us), Case No. 952006/2022, filed December 4, 2022

<sup>632</sup> [japps.courts.state.ny.us](https://japps.courts.state.ny.us), Case No. 952006/2022, filed December 4, 2022

In August 2020, Noel Christopher Fisher, the Grammy award-winning music producer known as Detail, was arrested “on more than a dozen charges of sexual assault.” According to a statement from the Los Angeles County sheriff’s department, Fisher “was charged on 31 July with 15 counts of sexual assault and five counts of felony assault” and “held on nearly \$6.3m bail.” By September 2022, Fisher faced more than 30 charges “filed against him including forcible rape, assault by means of force likely to produce great bodily injury, forcible oral copulation, sodomy by use of force and false imprisonment by violence.”<sup>633</sup>

**Fisher was ordered to pay \$15 million in a lawsuit that alleged he raped and sexually and emotionally abused an aspiring singer. Fisher reportedly told the victim that the abuse was necessary to succeed in the industry.**

In September 2019, Fisher was ordered to pay \$15 million to Kristina Buch, “a model and aspiring singer who alleged in a lawsuit that she was raped and sexually and emotionally abused” by Detail. Buch’s lawsuit included “allegations of assault and battery, sexual battery, sexual harassment, gender violence, intentional infliction of emotional distress and negligent infliction of emotional distress.” The complaint stated that the case “tells the tale of an aspiring musician who was manipulated, abused, and ferociously and repeatedly raped at the hands of a person she trusted, her supposed mentor, a critically acclaimed music producer.” According to the complaint in the case, Fisher allegedly told Buch that “she had to have sex with him and other music producers to convince them to work with her.”<sup>634</sup>

In her lawsuit, Buch said “that she met Fisher at a recording studio when she was working as a model after arriving in Los Angeles from Indiana in 2016.” Buch “said Fisher had agreed to help her launch a music career and had started making recordings with her, but soon became aggressive and abusive, demanding sex and telling her it was necessary to get somewhere in the industry, and eventually raping her when she refused.” Buch’s complaint detailed “Fisher’s ‘controlling and verbally abusive’ behavior toward Buch, with Fisher ‘viciously and violently’ raping Buch on seven occasions, two of which allegedly took place in front of other people.”<sup>635</sup>

Similarly, another artist named Peyton Ackley accused Fisher, according to *TMZ*, “of essentially making her and [Buch] his sex slaves. Peyton says she considered Detail a mentor in the industry, but he’d told her the biz was all about sex.” According to legal filings reviewed by *TMZ*, Fisher “walked in on Peyton taking a bath and forced her to have sex with him in front of another producer. She also claims he forced her to take nude photos while he masturbated --

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<sup>633</sup> [theguardian.com](https://theguardian.com), August 6, 2020; [signalsecv.com](https://signalsecv.com), September 12, 2022

<sup>634</sup> [billboard.com](https://billboard.com), December 28, 2018

<sup>635</sup> [apnews.com](https://apnews.com), September 26, 2019; [spin.com](https://spin.com), December 30, 2018

and also forced her to record him having sex with [Buch]. In March, she says he got violent and slammed her head into a wall and dragged her up a flight of stairs.”<sup>636</sup>

Buch’s lawsuit alleged “that Fisher pressured Buch to break up with her boyfriend, threatening that his ‘goons will come after him,’ insisting she should be ‘naked at all times’ and posting one of his assistants with her 24 hours a day. The allegations of sexual abuse include six more instances of alleged rape, at Buch’s apartment, again in Miami — where he allegedly forced Ackley to participate as well in an unwanted sexual encounter — a third time in Miami, during which he demanded that Ackley record the alleged assault, and a seventh time in Malibu, California, where he allegedly verbally berated her, physically assaulted her and raped her once again.”<sup>637</sup>

**In 2017, a singer released a song and music video describing how she was harassed and assaulted by a music producer. The singer later confirmed the song was about Fisher.**

In 2017, the singer Jessie Reyez, who co-wrote “Calvin Harris hits ‘One Kiss’ (with Dua Lipa) and ‘Promises’ (with Sam Smith), released a powerful short film for her song ‘Gatekeeper.’ In it, she described how she was harassed by a producer: ‘Oh I’m the gatekeeper/Spread your legs/Open up/You could be famous/If you come up anywhere else, I’ll erase you.’” The film depicts an instance of sexual assault in which others in the producer’s entourage are complicit and enabling. Screenshots from the video are shown below.<sup>638</sup>



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<sup>636</sup> [tmz.com, May 9, 2018](https://www.tmz.com/2018/05/09/justin-buch-lawsuit/)

<sup>637</sup> [billboard.com, December 28, 2018](https://www.billboard.com/2018/12/28/justin-buch-lawsuit/)

<sup>638</sup> [youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...), accessed July 28, 2023



In 2018, Reyez “identified her tormentor as music producer Noel ‘Detail’ Fisher.” In May 2018, Reyez tweeted a TMZ article describing allegations against Fisher, stating, “One night, over 6 years ago Noel ‘Detail’ Fisher tried this on me. I was lucky and I got out before it got to this. I didn’t know what to say or who to tell. I was scared. Fear is a real thing. The girls that came out are brave as hell.”<sup>639</sup>

**Fisher was sued by his former assistants who alleged that he demanded sexual favors while they performed their jobs.**

In June 2018, Janae Knox filed a lawsuit against Fisher “claiming that after she was hired as his assistant, she experienced ‘severe and pervasive sexual harassment and sexual assault by Fisher,’ according to court documents.” The suit claimed that “Fisher asked Knox to shower with him and demanded sexual favors while she performed her job.” Knox told the Associated Press, “Detail is a sexual predator and it is troubling that I was one of his victims. I want to encourage other victims to come forward because by doing so, they will begin to heal.”<sup>640</sup>

Isabella Mack, another former assistant of Fisher’s, claimed in a “lawsuit that she was forcefully held against her will while Fisher masturbated and that he demanded she pose for nude pictures and videos.” In a statement to the Associated Press, Mack said, “Detail has to be held accountable for his actions. I also hope that other music industry victims come forward because it is time to expose the system that enables men to abuse women in this business.”<sup>641</sup>

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<sup>639</sup> [twitter.com, May 10, 2018](https://twitter.com/Reyez)

<sup>640</sup> [apnews.com, March 1, 2019](https://apnews.com)

<sup>641</sup> [apnews.com, September 26, 2019](https://apnews.com)

## Work With Major Labels

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**During his career, Fisher has produced music for artists signed to Sony Music Entertainment, Universal Music Group, and Warner Music Group.**

According to the *Guardian*, Fisher “won a Grammy in 2015 for co-writing the Beyoncé and Jay-Z hit *Drunk in Love*,” which was released by Columbia Records, a subsidiary of Sony Music Entertainment (SME). Fisher also “produced hits for Lil Wayne,” including songs such as “How to Love,” “No Worries,” and “Changed It.” Those songs were released by Cash Money Records, a “subsidiary of Universal Music Group.” Fisher’s producing credits include work with Nicki Minaj (Sony Music Entertainment), the Pussycat Dolls (Universal Music Group), Lady Gaga (Universal Music Group), T-Pain (Sony Music Entertainment), Jennifer Lopez (Universal Music Group), and Wiz Khalifa (Warner Music Group).<sup>642</sup>

## Kim Fowley

### Allegations

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**In 1975, Runaways manager Kim Fowley allegedly raped the band’s bassist Jackie Fuchs in a crowded room at a party when she was 16.**

*HuffPost* reported that the Runaways’ late manager Kim Fowley raped the band’s bassist Jackie Fox, whose legal name is Jackie Fuchs, at a 1975 party when she was 16. After being given drugs by an adult man at the party, Fuchs was highly intoxicated and “having trouble staying upright. When a roadie checked to see if she was OK, Fowley asked him if he was interested in having sex with her. ‘She doesn’t mind,’ Fowley said. ‘Do you?’ [...] The roadie declined Fowley’s offer, and soon after, Jackie says she started to slip in and out of consciousness.”<sup>643</sup>

According to *HuffPost*, Fuchs tried to protest Fowley’s offer to the roadie, “but she was frozen. ‘You don’t know what terror is until you realize something bad is about to happen to you and you can’t move a muscle,’ she says. ‘I can’t move. I can’t speak. All I can do is look him in the eye and do the best I can do to communicate: Please say no. ... I don’t know what it looked like from the outside. But I know what was going on inside and it was horror.’”<sup>644</sup>

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<sup>642</sup> [theguardian.com](https://www.theguardian.com), August 6, 2020, [famousfix.com](https://www.famousfix.com), accessed July 31, 2023; [aceshowbiz.com](https://www.aceshowbiz.com), accessed July 31, 2023

<sup>643</sup> [highline.huffingtonpost.com](https://www.highline.huffingtonpost.com), July 8, 2015

<sup>644</sup> [highline.huffingtonpost.com](https://www.highline.huffingtonpost.com), July 8, 2015

According to Fuchs’s friend Helen Roessler who attended the party, Fowley then undressed Fuchs and penetrated her with the handle of a hairbrush, in view of others at the party. Fowley “invited other guys to have sex with Jackie before removing his own pants and climbing on top of her. [...] On the bed, Fowley played to the crowd, gnashing his teeth and growling like a dog as he raped Jackie.” According to band songwriter Kari Krome, “Jackie was dead, dead, dead drunk—like corpse drunk. She was just laying down on her back, sound asleep, out of it.” Krome said Fowley picked up Jackie’s arm “and it flopped down like a marionette. ... He had to manually move her body parts into positions that he wanted for himself.” Fuchs said, “I remember opening my eyes, Kim Fowley was raping me, and there were people watching me.”<sup>645</sup>

Cherie Currie said of the Runaways, “Our management, our booking agent – they were all feeding us drugs.” Currie previously called Fowley “a beast [who] should not be allowed near young girls.”<sup>646</sup> According to HuffPost, Fowley “always denied any sexual impropriety with members of the Runaways, including in a 2013 band biography: “They can talk about it until the cows come home but, in my mind, I didn't make love to anybody in the Runaways nor did they make love to me.”<sup>647</sup>

**In 2023, Runaways member Kari Krome filed a lawsuit against Fowley, accusing him of sexually assaulting her starting when she was 13.**

In 2023, the *Los Angeles Times* reported that Kari Krome, a “songwriter and co-founder of the 1970s all-female punk group the Runaways,” filed a lawsuit against the estate of the Runaways’ late manager Kim Fowley, whom Krome alleged “sexually assaulted her in the 1970s, starting when she was 13.” Court documents alleged that Fowley, as well as former KROQ DJ and nightclub owner Rodney Bingenheimer, “used their roles, status, and power as adults, as well as their connections to and work in the music industry to gain access to manipulate, exploit, and sexually assault” her.<sup>648</sup> Krome, whose legal name is Carrie Mitchell, listed sexual assault and battery as causes of action in her suit.<sup>649</sup>

According to the lawsuit, one night when Runaways members were sleeping in Fowley’s living room, “Fowley dragged Mitchell from his living room by her ankle, took her to his room, and ‘instructed plaintiff not to say anything or make any sound.’ Fowley then sexually assaulted her and forced her to sleep in his bed with him afterward, she alleges.” According to HuffPost, Fowley “told her if she didn’t give in to his sexual demands, she’d have to go back to Long

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<sup>645</sup> [highline.huffingtonpost.com](https://highline.huffingtonpost.com), July 8, 2015

<sup>646</sup> [theguardian.com](https://theguardian.com), January 24, 2023

<sup>647</sup> [highline.huffingtonpost.com](https://highline.huffingtonpost.com), July 8, 2015

<sup>648</sup> [latimes.com](https://latimes.com), April 27, 2023

<sup>649</sup> [rollingstone.com](https://rollingstone.com), April 27, 2023

Beach” where she was from. Fowley “abused her six more times over the course of the year, the suit claims. Mitchell was 14 or 15 at the time, while Fowley was 35 or 36.”<sup>650</sup>

In her complaint, Mitchell also alleged that Fowley “took credit for a number of Runaways songs that she wrote or co-wrote, including the band’s biggest hit, ‘Cherry Bomb.’ He also allegedly continued to contact Mitchell into the 1990s, and would ‘commit sexual crimes’ on Mitchell over the telephone.”<sup>651</sup> Mitchell said of Fowley, “It wasn’t just the sexual abuse, it was also the humiliation. Kim was good at shaming people, and he shamed the shit out of me. He bad-rapped me to everybody that I had a drinking problem [and] was unstable. They put these labels on you, no one will work with you anymore.”<sup>652</sup>

Mitchell told *Rolling Stone* “the allegations have weighed on her for years. In the past, she says, she felt she’d never been taken seriously when she brought up the allegations to confidants.” She said, “I never shut up about it. Just nobody wanted to hear it. Nobody seemed to care. We’re still looking at these characters through a lens of glamorization of that era and that scene instead of looking at them through a lens of doing things that are criminal.”<sup>653</sup>

**In 2001, former Runaways bassist Michael Steele said she left the band because of attention from Fowley that made her feel uncomfortable and intimidated.**

In an interview for the 2001 book “We Got The Neutron Bomb: The Untold Story Of L.A. Punk,” former Runaways bassist Michael “Micki” Steele (who would later go on to have a successful career as the bassist in The Bangles) said unwanted attention and advances from Fowley led her to leave the band. She said, “The official story [why I didn’t stay in the band] was that ideologically I wasn’t in line with the others...but early on this thing started with Kim, this sordid personal angle. He was enamored of me in a way that I found very uncomfortable. I’d been raised in a sheltered manner ... and wasn’t savvy enough to know I could say, ‘C’mon Kim, fuck off.’ I got it in my head that he would throw me out of the band. But I didn’t want to say yes because I definitely wasn’t into it. I dealt with it by trying to stay neutral, but the pressure started building and building. My performance went down the tubes. I—I started going kind of nuts from it.”<sup>654</sup>

Steele said in the interview, “When Kim finally got rid of me, he was out for blood. He’d realized I wasn’t into it, and I guess he resented my inability to simply tell him to knock it off. But I was just too intimidated. When he pulled the plug he went a little over the top. He said, ‘You have no

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<sup>650</sup> [rollingstone.com](https://www.rollingstone.com), April 27, 2023; [highline.huffingtonpost.com](https://www.highline.huffingtonpost.com), July 8, 2015

<sup>651</sup> [pitchfork.com](https://pitchfork.com), April 27, 2023

<sup>652</sup> [rollingstone.com](https://www.rollingstone.com), April 27, 2023

<sup>653</sup> [rollingstone.com](https://www.rollingstone.com), April 27, 2023

<sup>654</sup> [We Got The Neutron Bomb: The Untold Story Of L.A. Punk, 2001](#), accessed via Archive.org; [mtv.com](https://www.mtv.com), June 1, 1999

megalo, you have no magic. This is the only chance you'll ever have to be a rock star and you've blown it.' Perhaps my musical thing didn't lend itself to his slutty jailbait design, but the way Kim treated me made me depressed for a long time. Then I got angry, and I decided I was gonna show him. So it was a harsh experience, but it firmed my resolve.”<sup>655</sup>

**Fowley was known for his sexual interest in teenage girls, as well as occasional violent behavior, but “it was too risky to cross him.”**

According to *HuffPost*, Fowley was “sex-obsessed,” and “as he would admit to anyone, Fowley was mostly after teenage girls.” In 1975, he posted a personal ad, pictured below, featuring a photo of himself that read, “If you are eighteen and like it or if you are under 18 and legally emancipated (with paper work [sic]) then you may have just stumbled upon the opportunity of a lifetime.” Steve Tetsch, a guitarist who worked with Fowley and considered him a close friend, said the two “used to drive to high schools looking for teenage girls to hit on. ‘Westlake was a gold mine because these girls came from wealthy families,’ he recalls. ‘We’d all be arrested today.’ As Fowley himself put it in *Queens of Noise*, describing his taste for vulnerable women: ‘I’m like a shark. I’ll smell the blood.’”<sup>656</sup>

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<sup>655</sup> [We Got The Neutron Bomb: The Untold Story Of L.A. Punk, 2001](#), accessed via Archive.org

<sup>656</sup> [highline.huffingtonpost.com](http://highline.huffingtonpost.com), July 8, 2015





female singing group called the Murmaids and took the resulting record to the top of the US charts” in the early 1960s. He also produced music for singer Helen Reddy.<sup>659</sup> Additionally, Fowley was credited as a co-writer for “two KISS classic songs, ‘King of the Night Time World’ and ‘Do You Love Me.’”<sup>660</sup>

*HuffPost* reported, “So many people in the industry knew what Fowley was like, what he was capable of. But he had just enough clout to convince the naïve and the desperate that he could make them stars. It was too risky to cross him.” Witnesses of Fowley’s assault of Fuchs “say they felt intimidated.” Brent Williams, who witnessed the event, said that a day or two after the incident, Fowley “warned him not to talk about what he’d seen,” and “then asked Williams to pick up a guitar and gave him an on-the-spot songwriting lesson.” Williams also allegedly received a call from Joan Jett after Fuchs left the band, telling Williams that Fuchs’ parents might file a lawsuit and that “if lawyers ever contacted him, he needed to deny being in the motel room that night.”<sup>661</sup>

## Dismissal of Abuse Claims

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**Prominent Runaways members denied witnessing Fuchs’s assault, and another member claimed that many in the band regarded the incident as “kind of a running joke.”**

Fuchs said her last memory from the night of her assault was noticing Runaways members Cherie Currie and Joan Jett staring at her as Fowley raped her. In 2015, *HuffPost* reported that Currie “claims that she spoke up and stormed out of the room” during the incident. Currie later posted on her Facebook page, “All I can say is if Joan, Sandy [West, the Runaways’ drummer] and I saw an unconscious girl being brutally raped in front of us, we would have hit him over the head with a chair. [...] I have been accused of a crime. Of looking into the dead yet pleading eyes of a girl, unable to move while she was brutally raped and doing nothing. [...] I will not allow anyone to throw me under the bus and accuse me of such a foul act. I will fight for myself.”<sup>662</sup>

Joan Jett, through a representative, denied witnessing the assault as it was described by *HuffPost* and “referred all further questions to Jackie.” In July 2015, Jett issued a statement, “Anyone who truly knows me understands that if I was aware of a friend or bandmate being violated, I would not stand by while it happened.” She said, “For a group of young teenagers

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<sup>659</sup> [theguardian.com](http://theguardian.com), January 18, 2015

<sup>660</sup> [paulstanley.com](http://paulstanley.com), January 2015

<sup>661</sup> [highline.huffingtonpost.com](http://highline.huffingtonpost.com), July 8, 2015

<sup>662</sup> [theguardian.com](http://theguardian.com), July 13, 2015

thrust into 70s rock stardom there were relationships that were bizarre, but I was not aware of this incident. Obviously Jackie's story is extremely upsetting and although we haven't spoken in decades, I wish her peace and healing."<sup>663</sup>

Runaways member Kari Krome told *HuffPost* "that Jett and Currie were sitting off to the side of the room for part of the time, snickering" during Fuchs's assault. Krome said she herself "escaped to the adjoining room and began drinking" and "was confused why nobody did anything to end the attack." Following the incident, the band members did not talk to Fuchs about the assault. Victory Tischler-Blue, who replaced Fuchs in the band, described "how some of the other members made fun of what happened to Jackie. [...] 'They would talk about Kim fucking Jackie like a dog. It was kind of a running joke.'"<sup>664</sup>

Krome, who alleged she was also assaulted by Fowley, said she tried to talk to Jett and Runaways drummer Sandy West after the first time Fowley assaulted her. She said, "I told them he's abusing me. I'm powerless, and I don't know what to do. [...] They just looked at me blankly like I was the idiot. ... I remember getting really mad and saying, 'You know what? Watch your ass, because you might be next.'"<sup>665</sup>

In July 2015, Fuchs posted on Facebook, "I know some people watching the online drama unfold have been discouraged by the lack of support I've received from my former bandmates. To which I can only say that I hope you never have to walk in their shoes. My rape was traumatic for everyone, not just me, and everyone deals with trauma in their own way and time."<sup>666</sup>

## Lukasz Gottwald aka Dr. Luke

### Allegations

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**In 2014, singer Kesha claimed that she was drugged and raped by her producer, Dr. Luke, in 2005. Kesha alleged Dr. Luke, whose name is Lukasz Gottwald, psychologically tormented her throughout their partnership.**

In 2014, pop star Kesha, full name Kesha Sebert, sued Lukasz Gottwald, the producer known as Dr. Luke, "alleging he drugged and raped her nine years earlier and psychologically tormented

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<sup>663</sup> [theguardian.com](http://theguardian.com), July 13, 2015

<sup>664</sup> [highline.huffingtonpost.com](http://highline.huffingtonpost.com), July 8, 2015

<sup>665</sup> [highline.huffingtonpost.com](http://highline.huffingtonpost.com), July 8, 2015

<sup>666</sup> [facebook.com](http://facebook.com), July 13, 2015

her throughout their working relationship. She said he harangued her about her weight, denigrated her voice and lorded his power over her career.”<sup>667</sup>

Kesha claimed that Gottwald had her take “pills that she alleges turned out to be a date rape drug.” According to her lawsuit, Kesha “took the pills and woke up the following afternoon, naked in Dr. Luke’s bed, sore and sick, with no memory of how she got there.” She “immediately called her mother and made a ‘fresh complaint’ telling her that she was naked in Dr. Luke’s hotel room, she did not know where the clothes were, that Dr. Luke had raped her, and that she needed to go to the emergency room.”<sup>668</sup>

For years, cases filed by Kesha and Dr. Luke “wound their way through legal systems on two coasts. And while Kesha seemed to dominate in the arena of public opinion — culminating in an all-star performance of a survivor’s anthem at the Grammy Awards in 2018 — most of her legal claims were rejected in court or withdrawn, leaving her on the defensive in Dr. Luke’s remaining defamation suit.” Notably, in April 2016, “Kesha was dealt a major setback [...] in her legal fight against the producer Dr. Luke after a New York State Supreme Court judge in Manhattan rejected her claims of infliction of emotional distress, gender-based hate crimes and employment discrimination, citing a lack of evidence and jurisdiction.”<sup>669</sup>

## Silencing Victim

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### **Dr. Luke allegedly threatened Kesha and her family to prevent her from going public with her abuse allegations, including that he raped her in 2005.**

In her 2014 lawsuit, Kesha said that she didn’t previously report the 2005 alleged assault, explaining “that Dr. Luke threatened to ‘destroy’ her and her family if she went public with the abuse charges. She also claims that Dr. Luke forced her to enter one-sided, long-term contracts denying her ‘any meaningful profit from her work due to Dr. Luke’s exploitation of her over the last decade.’”<sup>670</sup>

In January 2014, “Kesha checked herself into a rehab for treatment for an eating disorder, which her mother blamed on Dr. Luke in an interview with People.” Her lawsuit alleged that “Kesha’s doctors ‘concluded that Dr. Luke had physically and psychologically damaged Ms. Sebert to the point where continuing such contact would be ‘life threatening’ to Ms. Sebert.’”<sup>671</sup>

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<sup>667</sup> [npr.org](http://npr.org), June 22, 2023

<sup>668</sup> [nbcnews.com](http://nbcnews.com), October 14, 2014

<sup>669</sup> [nytimes.com](http://nytimes.com), June 22, 2023; [nytimes.com](http://nytimes.com), April 7, 2016

<sup>670</sup> [nbcnews.com](http://nbcnews.com), October 14, 2014

<sup>671</sup> [nbcnews.com](http://nbcnews.com), October 14, 2014

## **Following Kesha’s lawsuit and public allegations, Dr. Luke countersued her for defamation.**

Facing rape and abuse allegations from Kesha, Dr. Luke “pursued a defamation countersuit, alleging she invented the accusation to get out of her contracts with him. (The case expanded to a separate count, ultimately upheld by a judge, that Kesha defamed Gottwald in a text to Lady Gaga that falsely claimed he raped Katy Perry.)” Lawyers for Dr. Luke argued “that the rape and abuse accusations — which they called ‘extortionist threats’ by Kesha, her lawyer at the time, Mark Geragos, and her mother — stemmed only from contentious contract negotiations that began in 2013.” At the time, Dr. Luke’s lawyer said Kesha’s allegations were “part of ‘a campaign of publishing outrageous and untrue statements.’”<sup>672</sup>

In his defamation suit, Dr. Luke “pointed to additional contracts that Kesha signed after the alleged 2005 rape, in addition to a sworn deposition, from 2011, in which Kesha said, ‘Dr. Luke never made sexual advances at me.’” Following the alleged 2005 rape, Kesha and Dr. Luke “worked together closely for the next decade, selling millions of albums and scoring two No. 1 hits, ‘Tik Tok,’ in 2009, and ‘We R Who We R,’ in 2010.”<sup>673</sup>

In June 2023, a month before the defamation case was set to go to trial, Kesha “announced that a ‘resolution’ has been made between her and producer Dr Luke after an extended legal battle.”<sup>674</sup>

## **Continued Work**

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**Despite Kesha’s allegations, Dr. Luke continued to record with major artists. His publishing company, Prescription Songs, grew into a major force, and he had a record label distributed by Sony.**

In August 2023, *Rolling Stone* reported that even before Dr. Luke seemingly settled all legal matters with Kesha stemming from her rape and abuse allegations, he “made it back to the center of pop music — and his renewed success arrived despite a series of reputational bruises that went beyond the rape accusation. The allegations of fixating on Kesha’s weight have never gone away (though he’s denied it), along with accusations of controlling behavior toward artists, and the overarching sense, as one successful songwriter puts it, that Gottwald was ‘a fucking

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<sup>672</sup> [rollingstone.com](https://www.rollingstone.com), August 16, 2023; [nytimes.com](https://www.nytimes.com), June 22, 2023

<sup>673</sup> [theguardian.com](https://www.theguardian.com), June 22, 2023; [nytimes.com](https://www.nytimes.com), June 22, 2023

<sup>674</sup> [theguardian.com](https://www.theguardian.com), June 22, 2023

dick to everybody.’ But even so, ‘he continues to just win,’ says an executive who works with producers and songwriters. (Like the other sources interviewed in this story, he asked for anonymity because of Gottwald’s power and influence.) ‘It’s unbelievable.’”<sup>675</sup>

Kesha’s 2014 lawsuit “forced Gottwald into the shadows, in contrast to what had been an unusual level of visibility for a writer-producer — he had even come close to becoming a judge on *American Idol*. Even in retreat, however, the powerful business apparatus he built at his peak kept humming. His publishing company, Prescription Songs, continued to sign songwriters of various stripes: the melody writers known as topliners, producers, beatmakers, artists, ‘vibe people.’ He also had a Sony-distributed record label, Kemosabe, and Gottwald never stopped his own production work, even as he experimented with abandoning his Dr. Luke moniker for aliases like Tyson Trax and Made in China.”<sup>676</sup>

Dr. Luke’s Prescription Songs “only grew larger during the Kesha-Gottwald battles, becoming one of the industry’s most successful pop factories: It ranked seventh on Billboard’s 2022 Year End Hot 100 Publishing Corporations list. Among the songs credited to its signees are hits for Dua Lipa, Lizzo, the Weeknd, Selena Gomez, Iggy Azalea, Troye Sivan, and dozens of others.” One L.A.-based songwriter told *Rolling Stone*, “You can’t set foot in a session here without working with someone who is signed to Prescription.”<sup>677</sup>

At Prescription Songs, “Gottwald stays in the background, and lets a crew of personable executives — almost all women — run the company.” One songwriter noted, “They’re mostly great people to work with, to be honest,” adding, “They act as a buffer between Luke and the company.”<sup>678</sup>

While some female artists avoided working with Dr. Luke following Kesha’s allegations, “he simply doubled down on working with new ones. Prescription and Kemosabe, and the scouts at each, were powerful tools to funnel new talent his way.” One industry executive noted that being a writer-producer like Dr. Luke is “such an inside job that I think you can kind of sneak your way back into the ballpark.” Dr. Luke “also began to refocus on hip-hop and R&B, where he seemed to face less scrutiny, the executive suggests.”<sup>679</sup>

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<sup>675</sup> [rollingstone.com](https://www.rollingstone.com), August 16, 2023

<sup>676</sup> [rollingstone.com](https://www.rollingstone.com), August 16, 2023

<sup>677</sup> [rollingstone.com](https://www.rollingstone.com), August 16, 2023

<sup>678</sup> [rollingstone.com](https://www.rollingstone.com), August 16, 2023

<sup>679</sup> [rollingstone.com](https://www.rollingstone.com), August 16, 2023

# Michael “Mike” Greene

## Allegations

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**Terri McIntyre, former Recording Academy executive, filed a lawsuit accusing Michael Greene of sexual harassment and assault as well as the National Academy of Recording Arts & Sciences of negligence.**

According to *Rolling Stone*, Terri McIntyre, former executive director of the Recording Academy’s Los Angeles chapter, “filed a lawsuit against former Grammys CEO Mike Greene as well as the organization itself, accusing Greene of sexually assaulting her multiple times when she was his employee.” According to the lawsuit, McIntyre claimed “that Greene, who stepped down as Grammy chief in 2002 amid other sexual misconduct claims, sexually harassed and assaulted her over the two-year period. McIntyre also named the National Academy of Recording Arts & Sciences, the longstanding organization that oversees the Grammys, as defendants, claiming it was negligent and attempted to help cover up the claims.”<sup>680</sup>

McIntyre was “suing Greene for sexual battery, battery and assault and is suing the Academy for negligent hiring, supervision and retention, negligence, harassment on the basis of sex/gender and failure to take all reasonable steps to prevent harassment.” The allegations against Greene “date back to when McIntyre started her job at the Recording Academy in 1994. According to the suit, soon after starting her job, Greene allegedly told McIntyre that ‘he expected Plaintiff to perform sex acts for Defendant Greene in order to remain employed and progress at Defendant Academy.’” Additionally, “Greene threatened to blackball McIntyre in the music business if she didn’t meet his demands.”<sup>681</sup>

As reported by *Rolling Stone*, the suit alleged that “just over two months into her employment, McIntyre claims Greene drugged and sexually assaulted her in a hotel room during the organization’s annual meeting of trustees in Hawaii.” Then, “Greene allegedly sexually assaulted McIntyre again at his home in Malibu after the alleged Hawaii incident.” It was also reported that, according to the suit, “Greene continued to sexually harass McIntyre after the alleged assault, invading her personal space at the office as well as touching McIntyre’s legs, shoulders, neck, breasts and butt.”<sup>682</sup>

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<sup>680</sup> [rollingstone.com, December 6, 2023](https://www.rollingstone.com/entertainment/music/news/terri-mcintyre-sues-grammys-ceo-mike-greene-2023-12-06/)

<sup>681</sup> [rollingstone.com, December 6, 2023](https://www.rollingstone.com/entertainment/music/news/terri-mcintyre-sues-grammys-ceo-mike-greene-2023-12-06/)

<sup>682</sup> [rollingstone.com, December 6, 2023](https://www.rollingstone.com/entertainment/music/news/terri-mcintyre-sues-grammys-ceo-mike-greene-2023-12-06/)

A former Recording Academy executive, Joanne Gardner, “tells *Rolling Stone* that McIntyre came to her home around 1995 to confide many of the same allegations detailed in Wednesday’s lawsuit. Gardner says that when she worked at the Recording Academy, both Greene and the organization cultivated a toxic and abusive workplace environment that was unsafe for women.” Gardner said, “It was a predatory place for women and Mike Greene was predator in chief,” adding, “This was deviant sexual manipulation. And it was all power-based. These young women didn’t have anybody to take care of them at that point.”<sup>683</sup>

*Rolling Stone* reported that a representative for the Recording Academy commented, “in light of pending litigation, the Academy declines to comment on these allegations, which occurred nearly 30 years ago. Today’s Recording Academy has a zero-tolerance policy when it comes to sexual misconduct and we will remain steadfast in that commitment.”<sup>684</sup>

**In 2001, the Recording Academy settled a sexual misconduct claim made against Michael Greene for \$650,000. Greene resigned in 2002 after a sexual harassment investigation but took home an \$8 million severance package.**

In 2002, the *New York Times* reported that Michael Greene “resigned on Saturday at a meeting of the academy’s board in Los Angeles. The meeting was called to discuss the organization’s investigation of a sexual harassment lawsuit against Mr. Greene.” The lawsuit concerned “a former executive in the academy’s human resources department [who] threatened to sue after accusing Mr. Greene of harassment and abuse.”<sup>685</sup>

Greene denied the charges, but the *New York Times* stated that in 2001, “Academy trustees reportedly paid her \$650,000 to settle the case out of court and then hired a private investigator to look into Mr. Greene’s conduct with female employees.” Greene ultimately resigned due to “philosophical differences with board members,” and the *New York Times* reported that “he was taking home a severance package worth as much as \$8 million.” Regarding the outcome of the investigation conducted by the Recording Academy, “Garth Fundis, chairman of the academy board, said that the investigation was complete and that it revealed no sexual harassment, sex discrimination or hostile work environment.”<sup>686</sup>

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<sup>683</sup> [rollingstone.com, December 6, 2023](https://www.rollingstone.com/entertainment/news/music/rollingstone-com-december-6-2023)

<sup>684</sup> [rollingstone.com, December 6, 2023](https://www.rollingstone.com/entertainment/news/music/rollingstone-com-december-6-2023)

<sup>685</sup> [nytimes.com, April 29, 2002](https://www.nytimes.com/2002/04/29/nytimes.com-april-29-2002)

<sup>686</sup> [nytimes.com, April 29, 2002](https://www.nytimes.com/2002/04/29/nytimes.com-april-29-2002)



## Silencing & Retaliation Against Victim

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**McIntyre alleged that she was told “Greene was beyond reproach,” Recording Academy trustees feared retaliation from him, and she was offered settlements in exchange for signing an NDA.**

In the 2023 lawsuit, McIntyre said that she “went to another Recording Academy executive to tell him she felt unsafe with Greene, and the executive gave her a new supervisor. McIntyre claims she went to the new supervisor with the same claims, but that both told her that ‘Greene was beyond reproach, bulletproof, and that there was nothing they could do to help Plaintiff.’” According to the suit, “McIntyre began asking other Recording Academy trustees if she could join their companies, but that none would hire her citing fear of retaliation from Greene.” according to the suit. In April 1996, McIntyre resigned and “came to understand that her hopes, dreams, and aspirations to work in the Music Industry were defunct and unreachable.”<sup>687</sup>

McIntyre claimed “that the Academy and Greene ‘attempted to cover up [Greene’s] sexual harassment and assault’ and claimed she declined offers to receive a severance package or payment in exchange for signing an NDA.” In another statement regarding the suit, McIntyre said, “[Greene’s] criminal, disgusting and deviant actions were devastating and soul-crushing. As a young, single mother pursuing what, until then, was a promising career in the music industry, I had nowhere to turn and received no help from the Recording Academy. [...] Mike Greene lied, of course, and the Recording Academy covered up his crimes. I, too, was offered significant settlements to silence and coerce me to sign non-disclosure agreements, which would forever protect Mike Greene and the Recording Academy from the crimes he and they committed against me.”<sup>688</sup>

## Jimmy Iovine

### Allegations

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**An unnamed Jane Doe alleged Jimmy Iovine “forcibly touched” her and sued him for sexual abuse and harassment in New York.**

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<sup>687</sup> [rollingstone.com](https://www.rollingstone.com), December 6, 2023

<sup>688</sup> [rollingstone.com](https://www.rollingstone.com), December 6, 2023

Jimmy Iovine, “a storied music executive and entrepreneur who founded Interscope Records and served as chairman and CEO of Interscope Geffen A&M,” was issued a summons by an unnamed Jane Doe in New York County “accusing him of sexual abuse and harassment, among other allegations.” According to *Variety*, “Court documents do not go into explicit detail about the nature of the allegations, but claim that Doe has ‘suffered as a result of being sexually abused, forcibly touched, and subjected to sexual harassment and retaliation in violation of anti-discrimination laws in or around August 2007.’”<sup>689</sup>

At the time the notice was filed in November 2023, *Rolling Stone* reported, “The legal filing contained little additional information regarding the woman’s specific claims, but a lawsuit is expected by the end of the year.”<sup>690</sup> In December 2023, an affidavit was filed in Jane Doe’s case by her attorney, noting that the “sexual abuse and forcible touching” took place when she “was contracted with Iovine’s record label. [...] Given the sexual abuse inflicted on Plaintiff and the graphic nature of the allegations necessary to describe what she experienced, Plaintiff has substantial privacy interests in her identity remaining anonymous, and she would suffer significant psychological harm, trauma, humiliation, and re-victimization and other harm if she is forced to reveal her identity to the public.”<sup>691</sup>

A spokesperson for Iovine commented, “We are quite shocked and baffled by this alleged claim,” adding, “this inquiry is the first we’ve heard of this matter. No one has ever made a claim like this against Jimmy Iovine, nor have we been contacted or made aware of any complaint by anyone, including this unknown plaintiff prior to now.”<sup>692</sup>

In February 2024, Jane Doe “dropped the case after ‘the matter was resolved to the satisfaction of the parties,’ according to her lawyer.” The case against Iovine “was discontinued on February 15, with prejudice—meaning the woman cannot refile—and without costs to either party, according to documents viewed by Pitchfork. Iovine’s representatives did not respond to requests for comment.”<sup>693</sup>

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<sup>689</sup> [variety.com, November 22, 2023](https://www.variety.com/2023/11/22/music-news/jimmy-iovine-lawsuit/)

<sup>690</sup> [rollingstone.com, November 22, 2023](https://www.rollingstone.com/music/news/jane-doe-lawsuit-against-jimmy-iovine-1234567890/)

<sup>691</sup> [japps.courts.state.ny.us](https://www.japps.courts.state.ny.us/index.php?app=952307/2023), Index No. 952307/2023, accessed February 14, 2024

<sup>692</sup> [variety.com, November 22, 2023](https://www.variety.com/2023/11/22/music-news/jimmy-iovine-lawsuit/)

<sup>693</sup> [pitchfork.com, February 21, 2024](https://pitchfork.com/news/jane-doe-lawsuit-against-jimmy-iovine/)

# Abbey Konowitch

## Allegations

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**Between the late 1980s and early 1990s, several employees alleged that Arista vice president Abbey Konowitch made sexually suggestive comments to female coworkers.**

In 1991, *Entertainment Weekly* reported allegations of verbal abuse by Abbey Konowitch, the former vice president for video and artist development for Arista Records, a division of Sony Music. Although several women alleged to *EW* reporters that Konowitch was verbally abusive, Joanne Smat, who had been promoted in 1987 to national manager of artist development in Konowitch's department at Arista, was "the only one willing to go on the record with charges."<sup>694</sup>

Smat recounted that Konowitch would repeatedly ask female coworkers "such questions as 'Can I bite you?' 'Can I touch your thigh?' 'Can I bite your ass?'" According to Smat, Konowitch "predicted that [Smat] would sleep with him on a company trip to Maui" and directed an intern to "[shoot] rubber bands at my ass." Another female coworker claimed that "On a day-to-day basis Abbey would say gross things," and that "If you asked him for a vacation day, he'd say, 'Scratch my back and I'll think about it.' And he was serious."<sup>695</sup>

Smat claimed that when she told Arista's vice president about Konowitch's behavior, she was told she would be given a transfer, "effectively a demotion, to a secretarial position." Smat then consulted a lawyer, who advised her against pursuing legal action because of difficulties of proof and suggested that "since she was considering other career options anyway, maybe she should just move on." She resigned from Arista in January 1988 "but also received severance pay" from the company, according to *Billboard*.<sup>696</sup>

**In 1995, *Playboy* reported that Konowitch was regarded by multiple people in the music industry as offensive or abusive.**

In 1995, during Konowitch's tenure as vice president at MTV, *Playboy* reported that "according to sources both outside and inside MTV, exercising the daily power to make or break careers ultimately went to Konowitch's head. One industry executive called him 'an egomaniac' who

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<sup>694</sup> [ew.com](http://ew.com), December 6, 1991; [sonymusic.com](http://sonymusic.com), accessed August 1, 2023

<sup>695</sup> [ew.com](http://ew.com), December 6, 1991

<sup>696</sup> [ew.com](http://ew.com), December 6, 1991; *Billboard*, December 14, 1991

managed to offend even those whose videos he did play, as well as those he didn't. 'No one could rein him in,' the executive said. 'He was incredibly abusive.' [...] Asked who specifically in the record industry Konowitch might have offended, one source laughed and said, 'It would be quicker to tell you who he didn't offend.'"<sup>697</sup>

In 1992, Konowitch left MTV and joined Maverick Entertainment, a joint venture record label launched in 1991 by Madonna and Time Warner Inc. According to *Playboy*, after reports surfaced of Konowitch's abusive behavior at Arista, two of his former MTV colleagues "laughingly called it poetic justice that he'll now be 'fetching coffee' for Madonna and her ball-busting publicist, Liz Rosenberg."<sup>698</sup> In 1995, *Variety* reported that Konowitch unexpectedly resigned from his Maverick position with more than a year left on his contract. A statement from Maverick manager Freddie DeMann read, "Though the exit comes in the wake of a sexual harassment suit, no one close to the situation said that had anything to do with the departure. Instead, they believe it was management and style differences between DeMann and Konowitch, amplified recently by the labels [sic] sudden success."<sup>699</sup> According to the *Los Angeles Times*, sources said Konowitch "had been at odds for about a year with Maverick co-Chairman Freddy DeMann regarding an expansion of his duties as well as a bigger salary."<sup>700</sup>

## Failure to Take Action by Label

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**Arista was aware of complaints about Konowitch but did not take any action against him, and instead, offered to transfer female employees to other departments.**

Konowitch's attorney denied Smat's allegations and claimed that Arista had no record of any formal complaints or discussions of Smat's charges. However, according to *Entertainment Weekly*, a woman who worked with Smat and Konowitch said "that there were several formal meetings between Smat and a top Arista manager. 'One of the vice presidents,' she says, 'called up every woman who worked with Abbey and said, 'Does he really do these kinds of things?' And all of us said yes. Their solution was to ask us if we wanted to transfer to other departments.'"<sup>701</sup>

Roy Lott, executive vice president and general manager of Arista Records, told *EW*, "Complaints were made by Joanne to me. [...] The situation was analyzed. I, and others, talked to various

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<sup>697</sup> *Playboy*, March 1, 1993

<sup>698</sup> *Playboy*, March 1, 1993

<sup>699</sup> *The Hollywood Reporter*, December 12, 1995

<sup>700</sup> [latimes.com](https://www.latimes.com), December 12, 1995

<sup>701</sup> [ew.com](https://www.ew.com), December 6, 1991

people. And we found no basis for taking any action against Abbey Konowitch.”<sup>702</sup> Konowitch's attorney Barry H. Platnick described Smat as a “disgruntled employee” attempting to use the charges against Konowitch as leverage to avoid being fired for other reasons.<sup>703</sup>

**In 1991, MTV said the accusations made against Konowitch would have no bearing on his position as MTV’s vice president of music and talent relations.**

In 1991, *Entertainment Weekly* reported that Konowitch’s career had “not been affected by any of the complaints” and noted that in 1990, he had been selected as #25 on the publication’s Power 101.<sup>704</sup> In 1991, when Konowitch was working for MTV, *Billboard* reported, “MTV officials say allegations of verbal sexual harassment made against Abbey Konowitch while he worked at Arista Records in the mid-'80s have no bearing on his current position as VP of music and talent relations at the music channel. The charges were made by a former Arista employee in the Dec. 6 issues of *Entertainment Weekly*. MTV spokeswoman Carole Robinson confirms that the article has ‘no impact on Abbey's status here.’”<sup>705</sup>

Konowitch's attorney Barry H. Platnick said “he intends to take legal action against the magazine [*Entertainment Weekly*], including a possible lawsuit for libel.” Platnick “unsuccessfully tried to block the story before it was printed.” Robin Bierstedt, deputy general counsel for Time Warner Publishing, *Entertainment Weekly*'s parent company, asserted that “the magazine stands by its story.”<sup>706</sup>

## Nigel Lythgoe

### Allegations

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**Singer and “American Idol” host Paula Abdul accused executive Nigel Lythgoe of sexual assault, and Abdul claimed she feared retaliation if she came forward, as her contracts prevented her from making “derogatory” comments about the shows and people involved.**

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<sup>702</sup> [ew.com, December 6, 1991](#)

<sup>703</sup> *Billboard*, December 14, 1991

<sup>704</sup> [ew.com, December 6, 1991](#)

<sup>705</sup> *Billboard*, December 14, 1991

<sup>706</sup> *Billboard*, December 14, 1991

In December 2023, Paula Abdul, a singer and former host of “American Idol,” filed a civil suit in Los Angeles County Superior Court “accusing American Idol executive producer and So You Think You Can Dance judge Nigel Lythgoe of sexual assault and gender-based violence against her.” According to court filings obtained by *NPR*, “the multipart complaint describes long-term harassment [...] by executives and others involved in the production of American Idol,” with the focus of the suit being “a pair of direct physical attacks Abdul, 61, allegedly experienced at the hands of the 74-year-old British TV executive, director and choreographer [Nigel Lythgoe].”<sup>707</sup>

According to *NPR*, the first attack against Abdul allegedly occurred in the early 2000s. The suit detailed that “Lythgoe and Abdul were on the road for Idol's regional auditions when Lythgoe allegedly groped and kissed Abdul in a hotel elevator.” Abdul “quickly called one of her representatives to inform them of the assault, but ultimately decided not to take action for fear that Lythgoe would have her fired from American Idol.” Then, “in 2015, shortly after Abdul agreed to be a judge on So You Think You Can Dance, Lythgoe invited Abdul to dinner, where he allegedly assaulted her again. ‘As with the earlier incident, Abdul feared she would be retaliated against or blackballed if she spoke out about the incident,’ Abdul's lawyers said in the complaint.” Additionally, “Abdul's lawyers said that Abdul signed contracts that prohibited her from publicly discussing details about the two shows and the people who worked on them that might be viewed as ‘derogatory.’”<sup>708</sup>

In addition to Lythgoe, Abdul’s “complaint accuses [co-defendants] American Idol Productions, Dance Nation Productions, 19 Entertainment and Fremantlemedia North America of being aware of Lythgoe's behavior and doing nothing about it.” Abdul’s lawsuit was “the latest in a string of high-profile California lawsuits filed ahead of the expiration, on Sunday [December 31, 2023], of part of the state's Sexual Abuse and Cover Up Accountability Act.”<sup>709</sup>

In a statement to *NPR*, Lythgoe denied the allegations. He stated, “For more than two decades, Paula and I have interacted as dear — and entirely platonic — friends and colleagues. Yesterday, however, out of the blue, I learned of these claims in the press and I want to be clear: not only are they false, they are deeply offensive to me and to everything I stand for.” He added, “While Paula's history of erratic behavior is well known, I can't pretend to understand exactly why she would file a lawsuit that she must know is untrue. But I can promise that I will fight this appalling smear with everything I have.”<sup>710</sup>

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<sup>707</sup> [npr.org, November 30, 2023](https://www.npr.org/2023/11/30/1228888888)

<sup>708</sup> [npr.org, November 30, 2023](https://www.npr.org/2023/11/30/1228888888)

<sup>709</sup> [npr.org, November 30, 2023](https://www.npr.org/2023/11/30/1228888888)

<sup>710</sup> [npr.org, November 30, 2023](https://www.npr.org/2023/11/30/1228888888)

**Two “All American Girl” contestants filed lawsuits against Nigel Lythgoe, accusing him of sexual harassment and assault. One of the victims would have been six years old at the time of the alleged assault.**

In January 2024, according to *USA Today*, “Jane Doe K.G. and Jane Doe K.N. accused Lythgoe of sexual assault/battery, sexual harassment and negligence stemming from an alleged attack in May 2003. At the time, they were contestants on ABC's talent competition show ‘All American Girl,’ which aired for one season in 2003 and was produced by Lythgoe.” The lawsuit was filed “under California's Sexual Abuse and Cover-Up Accountability Act.” However, it was filed after the one-year window closed, and the law was limited to individuals who were adults at the time of the alleged assault. *USA Today* reported that one of the victims would have been six years old at the time.<sup>711</sup>

Both Does alleged “that Lythgoe drove them to his home in Los Angeles after the ‘All American Girl’ finale party instead of a studio to meet others, according to the documents obtained by USA TODAY.” Upon arriving at the residence, “the contestants said Lythgoe ‘made sexual advances’ to both of them, including ‘attempting to kiss (Jane Doe K.G.) and pushing her body close to his.’ The contestants ‘did not consent to the contact on any occasion,’ according to the filing.” The Jane Does “say they have suffered ‘emotional distress, embarrassment, loss of self-esteem’ and ‘will continue to incur expenses for medical and psychological treatment, counseling and/or therapy.’”<sup>712</sup>

*USA Today* reported that Roe Production Company, a pseudonym, was listed “as a defendant in the lawsuit for ‘failure to maintain a work environment that was free from harm, harassment, assault, battery and/or other unlawful behavior against its employees and agents.’ It's unclear which production company to which this refers.”<sup>713</sup>

## Kenny MacPherson

### Allegations & Lawsuit

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**In October 2023, Sara Lewis, former employee of the music company Chrysalis, sued former Chrysalis president Kenny MacPherson for sexual assault.**

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<sup>711</sup> [usatoday.com, January 17, 2024](https://www.usatoday.com/story/entertainment/celebrity/2024/01/17/all-american-girl-lawsuit-lythgoe/123456789)

<sup>712</sup> [usatoday.com, January 17, 2024](https://www.usatoday.com/story/entertainment/celebrity/2024/01/17/all-american-girl-lawsuit-lythgoe/123456789)

<sup>713</sup> [usatoday.com, January 17, 2024](https://www.usatoday.com/story/entertainment/celebrity/2024/01/17/all-american-girl-lawsuit-lythgoe/123456789)

In October 2023, Sara Lewis, a former A&R executive at the music publishing company Chrysalis, filed a sexual assault lawsuit against Chrysalis’s former president Kenny MacPherson. Lewis, who worked under MacPherson from around 2004 until 2008, alleged in her suit “that MacPherson sexually assaulted her in her hotel room during a business trip in 2005, groomed and harassed her the previous year, and blackballed her when she tried seeking employment elsewhere, eventually causing Lewis to leave the music industry.”<sup>714</sup>

The lawsuit also named BMG, which bought Chrysalis in 2010, as a defendant in the lawsuit. According to *Rolling Stone*, BMG “is the largest independent music company outside of the major three record labels, and it oversees the music of artists like Tina Turner, Motley Crue and John Legend. Lewis has sued both MacPherson and BMG for sexual battery, sexual harassment and gender violence. BMG is the only defendant [sued] over claims of negligence, hostile work environment, [labor] violations, discrimination, sexual harassment in violation of the fair employment and housing act [and] failure to prevent sexual harassment.”<sup>715</sup> According to *Billboard*, Lewis “is accusing BMG and/or MacPherson of 12 different counts of civil wrongdoing, including sexual battery, gender violence, and a slew of violations of California labor and employment laws covering sexual harassment and wrongful termination.”<sup>716</sup>

**Lewis’s lawsuit claimed that MacPherson sexually assaulted, harassed, and groomed Lewis while she was working under him at Chrysalis.**

According to Lewis’s lawsuit, MacPherson “began grooming and sexually harassing her shortly after he joined Chrysalis, with him allegedly ‘invading Sara’s personal space, standing a little too closely and leaning suggestively over Sara’s desk when speaking with her.’” On a 2004 work trip to Vancouver, MacPherson allegedly “invited himself” to Lewis’s hotel room and “leaned over her, placed his hands on her thigh, and confessed that he loved her and could no longer control his feelings.”<sup>717</sup>

Subsequently, MacPherson “regularly cornered her at the office, tried to kiss her numerous times, and ‘at work lunches and dinners, he positioned himself next to her at the table, visibly groping her legs and even her vagina,’ per the filing.” The suit alleged that MacPherson would buy Lewis expensive gifts and “regularly called Lewis to talk about his issues with his marriage, flirt with her on the phone and attempt to initiate phone sex, she alleges.”<sup>718</sup>

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<sup>714</sup> [rollingstone.com, October 4, 2023](https://www.rollingstone.com/entertainment/music/news/sara-lewis-lawsuit-against-kenny-macpherson-2023-10-04/)

<sup>715</sup> [rollingstone.com, October 4, 2023](https://www.rollingstone.com/entertainment/music/news/sara-lewis-lawsuit-against-kenny-macpherson-2023-10-04/)

<sup>716</sup> [billboard.com, October 5, 2023](https://www.billboard.com/music/industry/sara-lewis-lawsuit-against-kenny-macpherson-bmg-1234868282/)

<sup>717</sup> [rollingstone.com, October 4, 2023](https://www.rollingstone.com/entertainment/music/news/sara-lewis-lawsuit-against-kenny-macpherson-2023-10-04/)

<sup>718</sup> [rollingstone.com, October 4, 2023](https://www.rollingstone.com/entertainment/music/news/sara-lewis-lawsuit-against-kenny-macpherson-2023-10-04/)



In 2005, on a work trip in Chicago, MacPherson went to Lewis's hotel room, where he allegedly told Lewis he loved her, and "tried to have sex with her anyway" after she rebuffed his advances. The suit claimed that MacPherson "forced himself upon Sara, undressing them both. MacPherson attempted to penetrate Sara, but was unable to maintain an erection. [...] MacPherson then forcibly performed oral sex on Sara as she laid motionless, repeatedly crying and saying 'no,' and pleading for MacPherson to stop. Eventually, frustrated with Sara's lack of participation, he relented. 'The words that came out of my mouth on repeat were any version of 'no, 'I don't want this,' 'this can't be,' 'leave me alone,' 'don't touch me,'" Lewis says."<sup>719</sup>

## **Silencing & Retaliation Against Victim**

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**After Lewis reported the alleged assault to her supervisor at Chrysalis, no action was taken by the company, and MacPherson "stonewalled" and "blackballed" Lewis, causing her to leave the industry.**

Lewis's lawsuit claimed that "Chrysalis did not have a human resources department to file complaints, so Lewis reported MacPherson to her direct supervisor Jamie Cerreta, who has worked with MacPherson for decades and is now also an executive at Hipgnosis Songs Group. Lewis spoke with Cerreta for over three hours about the allegations, but Cerreta 'did nothing and never mentioned the topic again,' the suit alleged. [...] After reporting MacPherson to Cerreta, Lewis claimed that MacPherson stonewalled her, making it more difficult to perform her job. She claims he wouldn't set meetings with Lewis and she couldn't arrange meetings with others, making her job impossible to perform. She sought employment elsewhere but claimed that MacPherson blackballed her, causing her to leave the music business outright."<sup>720</sup>

According to Lewis's lawyers, "MacPherson and Chrysalis created an environment wherein Sara was without recourse. [...] She either acquiesced to MacPherson's relentless and unwanted sexual advances, or faced a career-ending fate. Sara will no longer remain silent and now brings this action to seek redress for the years of sexual harassment and abuse she suffered at the hands of MacPherson, which was enabled and covered up by Chrysalis."<sup>721</sup>

On October 4, 2023, the day Lewis's lawsuit was announced, Jeff Anderson & Associates (@AndersonCause) tweeted, "Kenny stole my dreams and life from me, not just my career. I

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<sup>719</sup> [rollingstone.com](https://www.rollingstone.com), October 4, 2023

<sup>720</sup> [rollingstone.com](https://www.rollingstone.com), October 4, 2023

<sup>721</sup> [billboard.com](https://www.billboard.com), October 5, 2023

never filed a police report or tried to obtain justice because justice wasn't an option until now. I suffered in silence and was intimidated – I am no longer intimidated. - Sara Lewis, survivor.”<sup>722</sup>



Lewis said of the incident, “I told people ... and collectively everybody turned a blind eye because – I can’t speak for them – but I imagine it’s because they were concerned for their own situation. [...] I left [the music industry] with my tail between my legs. Kenny took away my worth, my privacy, my energy, my time, my intimacy, my voice, my laughter, my trust.” She added, “My career was probably one of the least concerning things in the context of what Kenny stole away from me. Fifteen years later, you move through life, I’m always guarded. I’m always ready to defend myself and I’m always ready to be angry. That’s not something that a Band-Aid heals.”<sup>723</sup>

## Continued Work in Music Industry

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**MacPherson denied Lewis’s allegations, and Chrysalis’s parent company BMG distanced itself from the alleged incidents.**

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<sup>722</sup> [twitter, October 4, 2023](#)

<sup>723</sup> [rollingstone.com, October 4, 2023](#)

MacPherson’s attorney told *Rolling Stone* in a statement, “On behalf of my client Mr. MacPherson, we vehemently deny all allegations made against Mr. MacPherson in Ms. Lewis’ unverified complaint filed earlier today.” A representative for BMG said the company “stands solidly against all forms of discrimination and abuse, and we are shocked and dismayed by the allegations. As a point of fact, BMG did not exist until October 1, 2008, years after the alleged events had taken place, and did not acquire Chrysalis until years later in 2011.”<sup>724</sup>

**MacPherson was a “respected figure in music publishing” who founded the successful music licensing company Big Deal Music, which was later renamed Hipgnosis Songs Group.**

According to *Rolling Stone*, following his tenure at Chrysalis, Kenny MacPherson was “a top executive at Hipgnosis Songs — the company that helped drive the music industry’s copyright acquisition boom while buying catalogs from stars like Justin Bieber, Justin Timberlake and the Red Hot Chili Peppers.” Hipgnosis became “one of the most prominent music companies in the industry and has played a major role in the much-covered catalog acquisition boom of the past several years. The company and its founder and chief executive Merck Mercuriadis helped drive up catalog values as they offered songwriters and artists hefty premiums for their work, leading competitors to follow suit. Since 2018, the company has bought copyrights from the likes of Neil Young, Richie Sambora, Mark Ronson, Justin Bieber and the Red Hot Chili Peppers. Mercuriadis bought MacPherson’s publishing company Big Deal Music in 2020, renaming the company Hipgnosis Songs Group.”<sup>725</sup>

MacPherson “built a reputation as a respected figure in music publishing from his tenure at Chrysalis and Big Deal, signing artists and songwriters including My Morning Jacket, St. Vincent, Sharon Van Etten, Ray Lamontagne and Teddy Geiger. MacPherson has served on the National Music Publishers’ Association’s board of directors since 2018.”<sup>726</sup>

Lewis filed suit against MacPherson “weeks before Hipgnosis Songs Fund is expected to vote on whether the fund continues as a publicly traded company, as well as whether to approve a \$440 million asset sale to sell several catalogs Hipgnosis previously purchased to pay down the company’s debt.”<sup>727</sup>

**MacPherson was placed on leave at Hipgnosis the day after Lewis filed suit against him “pending an investigation.”**

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<sup>724</sup> [rollingstone.com](https://www.rollingstone.com), October 4, 2023

<sup>725</sup> [rollingstone.com](https://www.rollingstone.com), October 4, 2023

<sup>726</sup> [rollingstone.com](https://www.rollingstone.com), October 4, 2023

<sup>727</sup> [rollingstone.com](https://www.rollingstone.com), October 4, 2023

On October 5, 2023, the day after Lewis filed suit against him, MacPherson was placed on a leave of absence from his job at Hipgnosis. In a statement to *Billboard*, Hipgnosis — which “was not named in the lawsuit nor accused of any wrongdoing — said it had placed MacPherson from his role as the CEO of the company’s publishing unit pending an investigation. ‘Hipgnosis Songs Fund has a policy of zero-tolerance to harassment or abuse,’ a spokesperson for the company said. ‘While the company is not a defendant to these historic allegations which relate to a period 15 years before Hipgnosis was founded, Kenny MacPherson was placed on leave of absence from Hipgnosis Songs Group as soon as it became aware of the allegations. Our rigorous procedures for dealing with such matters have commenced.’”<sup>728</sup>

## Lenard McKelvey aka Charlamagne Tha God

### Allegations & Criminal Charges

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**Charlamagne Tha God allegedly sexually assaulted a 15 year old at a party in 2001, for which he was arrested and pleaded guilty to “contributing to the delinquency of a minor.” He was sued over the incident in 2022.**

In 2022, Jessica Reid sued radio host Charlamagne The God, whose real name is Lenard McKelvey, “for alleged sexual assault, battery, and defamation. In 2018, The Blast broke the story that in 2001 the radio host was arrested on a warrant stemming from [sic], ‘from a charge of criminal sexual conduct with a minor in the 2nd degree, for an incident that allegedly occurred the month before.’ Court documents accused a then 22-year-old Charlamagne of ‘willfully, unlawfully, and feloniously [engaging] in penile/vaginal intercourse with a fifteen-year-old female child.’” According to *RadarOnline.com*, “Reid ended up not cooperating with the investigation,” and Charlamagne “ended up pleading to a lesser charge of contributing to the delinquency of a minor. He was sentenced to 3 years of probation.”<sup>729</sup>

In the civil case, “Reid said she met Charlamagne through a mutual friend. She said he invited her to attend his birthday party on June 8, 2001, at the Short Stay Naval Recreation Center [in Charleston, South Carolina]. At the party, she claimed to have drunk a drink provided by Charlamagne. Reid claimed the drink caused her to become dizzy and she collapsed ‘as it felt like her legs gave out and she could not walk.’” Reid, who was 15 at the time, alleged that “two men

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<sup>728</sup> [billboard.com, October 5, 2023](https://www.billboard.com/story/2023/10/05/hipgnosis-statement-kenny-macpherson/)

<sup>729</sup> [radaronline.com, April 20, 2023](https://www.radaronline.com/news/charlamagne-the-god-sexual-assault-2022/); [vibe.com, April 21, 2023](https://www.vibe.com/story/charlamagne-the-god-sexual-assault-2022/)

took her upstairs where they assaulted her. Once they left, she said Charlamagne came in and did the same.”<sup>730</sup>

*RadarOnline.com* reported that “Reid’s mom called the police to report her daughter had been raped.” The officers “found Reid intoxicated and ‘crying uncontrollably.’” Reid went to a hospital, and a rape kit was performed. However, Charlamagne’s DNA was not found. Charlamagne argued that the civil case should be dismissed because of the lack of DNA evidence, and the filing noted “that the South Carolina Solicitor in 2018 declined her request to re-open the case due to a lack of evidence while confirming that no basis existed to bring sexual assault charges against Charlamagne.”<sup>731</sup>

Speaking to *HollywoodLife.com* in 2018, Reid said, “He definitely knew how old I was. I was still in high school. He told me he was 20-years-old.” She added, “I thought Charlamagne and I were friends so I didn’t understand. He was somebody I felt I could trust. I wasn’t a groupie type. I wouldn’t just hang out at parties. I wasn’t on drugs. I wasn’t that type of person. In his interview [with DJ Akademiks] he tried to discredit me, but I wasn’t that type of person.”<sup>732</sup> In the civil case, Reid also “accused Charlamagne of defaming her when he spoke about the incident publicly years later. She said he spread ‘false, insulting’ claims about her, including calling her a ‘groupie.’”

## David Mueller

### Allegations

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**In 2017, a jury found that Denver radio host David Mueller groped singer Taylor Swift during a 2013 photo session. After Swift first made the allegations against Mueller, he sued her alleging that her accusations were false, prompting Swift to countersue.**

In August 2017, a jury found that Denver radio host David Mueller groped singer Taylor Swift “during a preconcert photo session in 2013.” Jurors ruled that Mueller’s actions “amounted to assault and battery of the star.”<sup>733</sup> Swift accused “Mueller of reaching under her dress and

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<sup>730</sup> [radaronline.com](https://radaronline.com), April 20, 2023;

<sup>731</sup> [radaronline.com](https://radaronline.com), April 20, 2023; [vibe.com](https://vibe.com), April 21, 2023

<sup>732</sup> [hollywoodlife.com](https://hollywoodlife.com), July 12, 2018

<sup>733</sup> [nytimes.com](https://nytimes.com), August 14, 2017

grabbing her buttocks while they posed for a photograph together backstage at one of Swift's concerts."<sup>734</sup>

Swift's lawsuit against Mueller "argued that the trial would 'serve as an example to other women who may resist publicly reliving similar outrageous and humiliating acts.'"<sup>735</sup> Following the verdict, Swift's lawyer said that the singer saw the \$1 in compensation that she demanded and won from Mueller "as symbolically 'immeasurable to all women,' proving that they could report an assault without fear of facing a lawsuit from the attacker."<sup>736</sup>

Mueller first initiated "the litigation with a 2015 suit that portrayed Ms. Swift's accusation as false."<sup>737</sup> He "sued Swift, the singer's mom Andrea Swift, and radio promotions director Frank Bell in 2015, accusing them of interfering with his \$150,000/year contract as a local morning radio DJ in Denver by pressuring his employer, KYGO radio, to fire him."<sup>738</sup> Subsequently, Swift "filed a federal counterclaim" in March 2015 against Mueller.<sup>739</sup>

In August 2017, Swift was dismissed from Mueller's lawsuit "after a judge ruled that there was insufficient evidence to show that Swift had acted improperly."<sup>740</sup> Additionally, a jury "rejected similar claims Mueller had made against the singer's mother."<sup>741</sup>

## Continued Work in Music Industry

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**After a jury found that Mueller groped Swift, he was hired as a DJ for a Mississippi radio station. Mueller's employers defended the hiring and dismissed the accusations made against him.**

In January 2018, the *New York Daily News* reported that Mueller "returned to the airwaves on a Mississippi station." At the time, he was "co-hosting the morning show 'Jackson & Jonbob' on Greenwood's KIX 92.7 under the on-air name Stonewall Jackson."<sup>742</sup> In Denver, Mueller broadcasted under the name Jackson, which was lengthened "to Stonewall Jackson — a reference to the Confederate Civil War general — on KIX to give his moniker a southern spin."<sup>743</sup>

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<sup>734</sup> [time.com](http://time.com), August 7, 2017

<sup>735</sup> [cnn.com](http://cnn.com), August 14, 2017

<sup>736</sup> [nytimes.com](http://nytimes.com), August 14, 2017

<sup>737</sup> [nytimes.com](http://nytimes.com), August 14, 2017

<sup>738</sup> [cnn.com](http://cnn.com), August 14, 2017

<sup>739</sup> [denverpost.com](http://denverpost.com), March 30, 2015

<sup>740</sup> [cnn.com](http://cnn.com), August 14, 2017

<sup>741</sup> [bbc.com](http://bbc.com), August 14, 2017

<sup>742</sup> [nydailynews.com](http://nydailynews.com), January 30, 2018

<sup>743</sup> [nydailynews.com](http://nydailynews.com), January 30, 2018

Delta Radio CEO Larry Fuss defended Mueller’s hiring despite Swift’s accusations. Fuss told the *New York Daily News*, “I sat down with him face-to-face in Minneapolis before I offered him the job and talked to him about it.” He added, “He’s either the world’s best liar, or he’s telling the truth. I tend to believe his version of the story and most people who have talked to him face-to-face do believe his version of the story.”<sup>744</sup>

Fuss told *CNN* that “he believes Mueller’s protestations of innocence.” He stated, “He’s very sincere and if you talk to him face to face, he comes off as sincere.” Fuller also “said many of those complaining have made the situation about their own traumas.” Additionally, he said, “I’ve been getting calls and emails from people saying, ‘My uncle molested me when I was 14’ or ‘My boyfriend beat me severely.’” He added, “I understand that and I’m sorry for those people that had to go through those ordeals, but what does that have to do with me and what does that have to do with David Mueller?”<sup>745</sup>

## Lou Pearlman

### Allegations

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**Lou Pearlman, who founded boy bands such as the Backstreet Boys and NSYNC, engaged in sexual misconduct with teenage boys that were members of his bands and/or aspired to make it in the music industry.**

In February 2009, *ABC News* reported that Lou Pearlman, who founded boy bands such as the Backstreet Boys and NSYNC, faced “allegations by young men who claim Pearlman acted inappropriately, molested them or sought to exchange sex for help with their careers.” In the November 2007 copy of *Vanity Fair*, Pearlman was “described by several former singers, aspiring singers and their parents as a lecher, who used the same deceptive charms to cop cheap feels off teenage boys.”<sup>746</sup>

According to *Vanity Fair*, “Some, especially the teenagers, shrugged and giggled when [Pearlman] showed them pornographic movies or jumped naked onto their beds in the morning to wrestle and play. Others, it appears, didn’t get off so easily. These were the young singers seen emerging from his bedroom late at night, buttoning their pants, sheepish looks on their faces.

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<sup>744</sup> [nydailynews.com](http://nydailynews.com), January 30, 2018

<sup>745</sup> [cnn.com](http://cnn.com), February 1, 2018

<sup>746</sup> [abcnews.go.com](http://abcnews.go.com), February 11, 2009

Some deny anything improper ever happened. But the parents of at least one, a member of the Backstreet Boys, complained. And for any number of young men who sought to join the world's greatest boy bands, [Pearlman's] attentions were an open secret, the price some paid for fame."<sup>747</sup>

Steve Mooney, an aspiring singer who served as Pearlman's assistant and lived in his home for two years, said, "I would absolutely say the guy was a sexual predator. All the talent knew what Lou's game was. If they say no, they're lying to you." *Vanity Fair* noted, "To a number of his former band members, Pearlman seemed so enamored of his male singers that it called into question his motivations for entering the music business in the first place." Rich Cronin, lead singer of the band LFO, said, "Honestly, I don't think Lou ever thought we would become stars." He added, "I just think he wanted cute guys around him; this was all an excuse. And then lightning crazily struck and an empire was created. It was all dumb luck. I think his motives for getting into music were very different."<sup>748</sup>

According to *Vanity Fair*, "people remarked how odd it was for a blimp-industry executive to be diversifying into boy bands. In fact, insiders raised questions about Pearlman's motivations almost from the moment the Backstreet Boys was formed." Phoenix Stone, who was one of the Backstreet Boys initial co-managers, said, "Basically this was an excuse for Lou to hang around with five good-looking boys."<sup>749</sup>

Around 1997 when the Backstreet Boys achieved success in the United States, "the first allegations of inappropriate behavior involving Pearlman appear to have surfaced. One incident centered on the youngest of the Backstreet Boys, Nick Carter, who in 1997 turned 17. Even for many of those closest to the group, what happened remains unclear. 'My son did say something about the fact that Nick had been uncomfortable staying [at Pearlman's house],' Denise McLean says. 'For a while Nick loved going over to Lou's house. All of a sudden it appeared there was a flip at some point. Then we heard from the Carter camp that there was some kind of inappropriate behavior. It was just odd. I can just say there were odd events that took place.'"<sup>750</sup>

Speaking to *Vanity Fair*, Nick Carter's mother, Jane Carter, stopped "just short of acknowledging Pearlman made improper overtures to her son." However, she noted, "Certain things happened." Told that *Vanity Fair* was writing an article detailing allegations of misconduct against Pearlman towards young men, Jane Carter said, "If you're doing that, and

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<sup>747</sup> [vanityfair.com](http://vanityfair.com), October 3, 2007

<sup>748</sup> [vanityfair.com](http://vanityfair.com), October 3, 2007

<sup>749</sup> [vanityfair.com](http://vanityfair.com), October 3, 2007

<sup>750</sup> [vanityfair.com](http://vanityfair.com), October 3, 2007



exposing that, I give you a big flag. I tried to expose him for what he was years ago.... I hope you expose him, because the financial [scandal] is the least of his injustices.”<sup>751</sup>

On one occasion at his Orlando residence, Julian Bensch, a member of Pearlman’s third boy band, Take 5, recalled “one sleepover when he and another boy were dozing and Pearlman appeared at the foot of their bed, clad only in a towel.” According to Tim Christofore, another member of Take 5, “Pearlman performed a swan dive onto the bed, wrestling with the boys, at which point his towel came off.” Christofore recalled, “We were like, ‘Ooh, Lou, that’s gross.’” He added, “What did I know? I was 13.”<sup>752</sup>

In another instance, “Christofore and another band member telephoned Pearlman to say they were coming to his home to play pool. When they arrived, Pearlman met them at the door naked, explaining he was just getting out of the shower. Another time, Christofore remembers, Pearlman showed him security-camera footage of his girl group, Innosense, sunbathing topless. On still another occasion, Pearlman invited all five band members to watch the movie Star Wars in his viewing room. At one point the film switched off and was replaced by a pornographic movie. At the time, Christofore says, ‘We just thought it was funny. We were kids. We were like, ‘Great!’”<sup>753</sup>

**Pearlman hired a 20-year-old singer as a personal assistant, who said he was promised a chance to join his new boy band. However, the assistant alleged that Pearlman made it clear that joining the group required sexual favors.**

Steve Mooney “was trying to get started as a singer when a Pearlman aide approached him at an Orlando mall.” Mooney subsequently performed for Pearlman at his offices and was then offered “a job as his personal assistant,” saying that JC Chasez of NSYNC got his start that way. Mooney accepted the offer, “and Pearlman soon invited him to live in his home. All the time Pearlman held out the chance that Mooney could join one of the groups he was planning, called O-Town. According to Mooney, Pearlman told him, ‘By this time next year, you’ll be a millionaire.’”<sup>754</sup>

Mooney quickly “noticed how Pearlman enjoyed hugging him, rubbing his shoulders, and squeezing his arms, usually in conjunction with one of his odd pep talks.” Mooney recalled, “He would say, ‘Do you trust me?’ [And I would say], ‘Of course I trust you, Lou.’” According to Mooney, it reached a point “where every time they were alone Pearlman would rub his muscles.” He added, “It’s like you have this creepy friend who’s always touching you.”<sup>755</sup>

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<sup>751</sup> [vanityfair.com](http://vanityfair.com), October 3, 2007

<sup>752</sup> [vanityfair.com](http://vanityfair.com), October 3, 2007

<sup>753</sup> [vanityfair.com](http://vanityfair.com), October 3, 2007

<sup>754</sup> [vanityfair.com](http://vanityfair.com), October 3, 2007

<sup>755</sup> [vanityfair.com](http://vanityfair.com), October 3, 2007

Mooney alleged that “he saw firsthand the price many young men were paying. Pearlman’s bedroom lay behind a pair of double doors, and when they were closed, Mooney knew not to intrude. More than once, he says, he encountered young male singers slipping out of those doors late at night, tucking in their shirts, a sheepish look on their faces. “There was one guy in every band—one sacrifice—one guy in every band who takes it for Lou,’ says Mooney.” He added, “That’s just the way it was.” Mooney’s sentiment echoed that of several individual who spoke to *Vanity Fair*.<sup>756</sup>

In 2000, as Pearlman was in the final stages of selecting members to join his new boyband called O-Town, Pearlman called Mooney telling him to come over to his house, “explaining he needed someone to take out the garbage.” Phoenix Stone, a manager who had worked with the Backstreet Boys, was with Pearlman when he called Mooney. Stone recalled, “It was very clear to me what was going on.” He told Pearlman, “If it’s about the garbage, there’s plenty of people who can take out your garbage. If it’s not, well, leave the kid alone. It’s late.”<sup>757</sup>

After Stone left, Pearlman called Mooney a second time insisting that he come to his mansion at 2am. Mooney allegedly “found Pearlman in his office, clad in a white terry-cloth bathrobe. A long argument ensued. It climaxed, Mooney says, when he beseeched Pearlman, ‘What do I have to do to get in this band?’ At that point, Mooney says, Pearlman smiled. ‘I’ll never forget this as long as I live,’ Mooney says. ‘He leaned back in his chair, in his white terry-cloth robe and white underwear, and spread his legs. And then he said, and these were his exact words, ‘You’re a smart boy. Figure it out.’”<sup>758</sup>

## Silencing Victims

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**Pearlman’s suspected victims reportedly would not speak out against him over fear of what it would do to their careers.**

Questions regarding Pearlman’s alleged misconduct, according to *Vanity Fair*, remained a “sensitive topic among former members of his boy bands. For every young man or parent who says he experienced or saw something inappropriate, there are two who won’t discuss it and three more who deny hearing anything but rumors. More than a dozen insiders told me they heard stories of Pearlman’s behavior while insisting they experienced nothing untoward themselves. Asked who might have been targets of Pearlman’s overtures, the names of seven or

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<sup>756</sup> [vanityfair.com](http://vanityfair.com), October 3, 2007

<sup>757</sup> [vanityfair.com](http://vanityfair.com), October 3, 2007

<sup>758</sup> [vanityfair.com](http://vanityfair.com), October 3, 2007

eight performers are repeatedly mentioned. Only two of these men would talk to me, and while one acknowledges hearing stories from other boys of inappropriate behavior, both strenuously deny experiencing it themselves.” One attorney who previously sued Pearlman stated, “None of these kids will ever admit anything happened.” The attorney added, “They’re all too ashamed, and if the truth came out it would ruin their careers.”<sup>759</sup>

## Harve Pierre

### Allegations

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**A former assistant of Harve Pierre, former president of Sean Combs’s Bad Boy Entertainment, sued Pierre for grooming and sexual assault and sued Bad Boy companies for negligence and gender violence.**

In November 2023, Harve Pierre, former president of Sean “Diddy” Combs’s Bad Boy Entertainment, was “sued for allegedly grooming and sexually assaulting his assistant.” He was “accused of preying on the Jane Doe plaintiff ‘on multiple occasions in New York City and other locations throughout the country,’ the complaint filed in New York County Supreme Court and obtained by *Rolling Stone* reads.” The filing stated, “Pierre used his position of authority as plaintiff’s boss to groom, exploit, and sexually assault her,” alleging he “engaged in a year-long pattern of grooming plaintiff, leading to sexual harassment of plaintiff, and sexual assault.” The incidents took place between 2016 and 2017.<sup>760</sup>

The complaint filed by the former assistant under New York’s Adult Survivors Act also named “Bad Boy Entertainment, Bad Boy Records, and Combs Enterprises as co-defendants, accusing the companies of negligence and gender violence. ‘Defendants knew or should have known that Pierre was unfit to be in a position of authority before Pierre sexually assaulted plaintiff,’ the lawsuit states. It claims the companies failed to ‘properly supervise’ Pierre, especially considering his access to ‘individuals like plaintiff.’”<sup>761</sup>

**Pierre, Combs, and a third defendant were sued for gang raping a 17-year-old at Combs’s recording studio after Pierre used his connections to Combs to convince the teenager to fly to New York City.**

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<sup>759</sup> [vanityfair.com, October 3, 2007](https://www.vanityfair.com/magazine/2007/10/pearlman)

<sup>760</sup> [rollingstone.com, November 22, 2023](https://www.rollingstone.com/music/news/harve-pierre-sued-2023-11-22)

<sup>761</sup> [rollingstone.com, November 22, 2023](https://www.rollingstone.com/music/news/harve-pierre-sued-2023-11-22)

In December 2023, an unnamed Jane Doe filed suit against Pierre, Sean “Diddy” Combs, and a third unidentified defendant alleging that they “gang raped her when she was a 17-year-old in her junior year of high school.” The lawsuit sought “unspecified compensatory damages for lost wages, as well as ‘mental pain and anguish and severe emotional distress.’” Unlike prior lawsuits filed against Pierre and Combs under the Adult Survivors Act, “this lawsuit was filed under New York City’s gender-motivated violence protection law,” and it stated, “seeing two other women bravely speak out ... gave Ms. Doe the confidence to tell her story as well.”<sup>762</sup>

Jane Doe’s complaint said that “Pierre approached the 17-year-old in 2003 at a lounge in Michigan, telling her he was ‘best friends’ with Combs. After calling Combs to prove their relationship, the woman alleges Pierre and Combs convinced her to take a private jet to Daddy’s House Recording Studio, owned and operated by Diddy.” At the studio, the defendants “then plied the plaintiff, referred to as ‘Jane Doe,’ with drugs and alcohol, the suit claims, and ‘viciously’ gang raped her.” Doe’s attorney said that “Combs and Pierre ‘preyed on a vulnerable high school teenager as part of a sex trafficking scheme that involved plying her with drugs and alcohol and transporting her by private jet to New York City where she was gang raped by the three individual defendants at Mr. Combs’ studio.’”<sup>763</sup>

## Neil Portnow

### Allegations

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**Neil Portnow was accused of drugging and sexually assaulting a female recording artist in 2018 with the plaintiff claiming the Recording Academy “aided and abetted Portnow’s conduct.”**

In November 2023, a recording artist, listed as Jane Doe, filed a lawsuit against former Recording Academy CEO Neil Portnow “just two days before the Academy is slated to announce the nominations for this year’s Grammy Awards ceremony.” According to *Rolling Stone*, the suit alleged “that Portnow drugged and sexually assaulted her in his hotel room in New York in June 2018, and that the Recording Academy ‘aided and abetted Portnow’s conduct to protect their reputations and silence Plaintiff’s and other women in the music industry who have stood up and spoken up.’”<sup>764</sup>

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<sup>762</sup> [usatoday.com, December 6, 2023](https://www.usatoday.com/story/entertainment/music/2023/12/06/jane-doe-lawsuit-pierre-combs/1234567890/); [cbsnews.com, December 6, 2023](https://www.cbsnews.com/news/jane-doe-lawsuit-pierre-combs/)

<sup>763</sup> [usatoday.com, December 6, 2023](https://www.usatoday.com/story/entertainment/music/2023/12/06/jane-doe-lawsuit-pierre-combs/1234567890/)

<sup>764</sup> [rollingstone.com, November 8, 2023](https://www.rollingstone.com/music/news/jane-doe-lawsuit-pierre-combs-1234567890/)

The plaintiff was identified as “a former Academy member who lives in New York and was 37 years old at the time of the allegation.” The lawsuit “alleged that she met Portnow in January 2018 at a Grammy event.” After their initial meeting, according to the suit, Portnow reached out to Jane Doe in June 2018, and “she met him at the Kitano Hotel to conduct an interview for her magazine.” Upon entering his hotel room, “Portnow allegedly gave her some Grammy memorabilia then offered her a glass of wine, which she alleged was spiked with drugs that disoriented her.” The lawsuit claimed the plaintiff tried to leave the hotel, “but Portnow allegedly told her it was too late and there weren’t taxis available.” Doe then “alleges she repeatedly lost and regained consciousness while Portnow sexually assaulted her.” The plaintiff recalled one instance where “she awoke to Portnow forcing Plaintiff’s hand to manipulate his penis, telling her that it was ‘okay.’ Portnow then forcibly penetrated Plaintiff’s vagina with his penis.”<sup>765</sup>

After the incident, “the accuser alleged that she woke up in the hotel room the next morning ‘woozy and confused.’” Doe claimed “that she attempted to contact Portnow multiple times after the alleged assault ‘to understand and gain clarity as to what had occurred,’ and that by October [2018], she reached out to the Recording Academy regarding the allegation.” An Academy representative responded and requested to schedule a phone call with her. Despite this request, “the plaintiff alleged in her suit on Wednesday that no one from the Recording Academy had ever interviewed her regarding the allegation.” Three weeks after the alleged call request, “according to the suit, the plaintiff got an email from who she said was Portnow’s legal representative, containing a personal message from Portnow to her that didn’t address the allegations directly.” Following this, in December 2018, “the plaintiff filed a police report with the NYPD, according to the suit.”<sup>766</sup>

*Rolling Stone* reported, “the causes of action list Portnow as the lone defendant on a count of sexual battery, while the Academy was listed on a count of negligent hiring, supervision and retention. Both defendants were listed as defendants on counts of gender-motivated violence.” The lawsuit, which was filed under New York’s Adult Survivors Act, claimed, “As a result of Portnow’s sexual assault, enabled by Defendant the Recording Academy, Plaintiff has suffered severe emotional, physical and psychological distress, including shame, guilt, economic loss of earning capacity, and emotional loss.”<sup>767</sup>

A representative for the Recording Academy commented on the complaint, “We continue to believe the claims to be without merit and intend to vigorously defend the Academy in this lawsuit.” A representative for Portnow “denied the allegations, calling them ‘completely

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<sup>765</sup> [rollingstone.com](https://www.rollingstone.com), November 8, 2023

<sup>766</sup> [rollingstone.com](https://www.rollingstone.com), November 8, 2023

<sup>767</sup> [rollingstone.com](https://www.rollingstone.com), November 8, 2023

false.” Portnow’s representative further stated, “The claims are the product of the Plaintiff’s imagination and undoubtedly motivated by Mr. Portnow’s refusal to comply with the Plaintiff’s outrageous demands for money and assistance in obtaining a residence visa for her.”<sup>768</sup>

**Deborah Dugan, who succeeded Portnow as CEO, called the Recording Academy “a ‘boys’ club’ network,” experienced sexual harassment by its general counsel, and was pressed by the board chair to hire Portnow as a consultant after his departure.**

Portnow stepped down as Recording Academy CEO when his contract expired in the summer of 2019, announcing it as he faced “significant backlash after the 2018 Grammy Awards, when he told reporters that women needed to ‘step up’ for better representation in the business after minimal representation at that year’s awards.”<sup>769</sup> In January 2020, Deborah Dugan, who was named CEO after Portnow’s departure, filed a complaint against the Recording Academy with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) for gender discrimination. Her complaint stated, “the Academy is a ‘boys’ club’ network where men work together to the disadvantage of women and disenfranchised groups in order to line their own pockets and maintain a firm grip of control on the Academy’s dealings.”<sup>770</sup>

Dugan’s EEOC complaint was the first time the rape allegations against Portnow were made public.<sup>771</sup> According to her complaint, Dugan was “asked by the then-current Chair of the Board, John Poppo to hire former CEO Neil Portnow as a consultant for the hefty sum of \$750,000. [...] As Ms. Dugan came to learn after she agreed to take the CEO position (for which she was paid substantially less than her two male predecessors), Mr. Portnow also allegedly raped a female recording artist, which was, upon information and belief, the real reason his contract was not renewed.”<sup>772</sup>

Additionally, Dugan’s complaint alleged that she was sexually harassed by Joel Katz, “general counsel to the Academy and a former Board member and Board Chair,” in May 2019 before she “began her work at the Academy” and was attending a “meeting of the Academy’s Board.” She said that Katz invited her to a one-on-one dinner before the meeting, and during the dinner, “Mr. Katz acted extremely inappropriately.” She alleged that he “repeatedly referred to Ms. Dugan as ‘baby,’ rather than by her name,” and “repeatedly commented on Ms. Dugan’s physical appearance, telling her multiple times that she was ‘very pretty.’” She said he continued to act this way “in every one-on-one conversation Ms. Dugan had with Mr. Katz” after the dinner. He

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<sup>768</sup> [rollingstone.com](https://www.rollingstone.com), November 8, 2023

<sup>769</sup> [rollingstone.com](https://www.rollingstone.com), November 8, 2023

<sup>770</sup> [Deborah Dugan vs. National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences, Complaint, January 21, 2020](#)

<sup>771</sup> [rollingstone.com](https://www.rollingstone.com), November 8, 2023

<sup>772</sup> [Deborah Dugan vs. National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences, Complaint, January 21, 2020](#)

also ended the dinner by attempting to kiss her, even though she said she “made it clear that she was not interested in Mr. Katz’s advances.”<sup>773</sup>

In January 2020, Dugan was put “on administrative leave” by the Academy board, which she alleged was retaliation due to her December 2019 email complaint to HR “and came with thinly veiled threats of termination in the event that Ms. Dugan persisted in pursuing claims against the Academy.” The Academy claimed that Dugan was placed on leave due to an allegation of hostile behavior towards Portnow’s executive assistant. However, Dugan’s complaint noted that the board was prepared to rehire Portnow “even after he was accused of rape, made misogynistic comments and resigned in disgrace.” She also argued that the assistant’s allegations “accusations are not of the sort that would ever result in a CEO being put on administrative leave.”<sup>774</sup> Dugan later settled her complaint in 2021.<sup>775</sup>

## Antonio “L.A.” Reid

### Allegations

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**Music executive L.A. Reid resigned as head of Sony Music Entertainment’s Epic Records following sexual harassment allegations. According to one of his victims, industry executives knew about Reid’s misconduct.**

In May 2017, *Billboard* reported that Antonio “L.A.” Reid’s exit from the head of Sony Music Entertainment’s Epic Records “followed a claim by a female assistant alleging ‘unlawful harassment of an employee.’” Sources told *Billboard* that “the claim prompted a company investigation into his conduct.” Subsequently, “there have been ‘multiple’ claims made against Reid.”<sup>776</sup>

In a letter to Sony, an attorney representing Reid’s assistant “detailed alleged harassment his client had faced on a daily basis, which included alleged inappropriate remarks about her appearance and clothing and alleged propositions that caused her embarrassment and distress, making it impossible for her to continue working at the label.” The letter “threatened litigation if a settlement wasn’t reached.”<sup>777</sup>

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<sup>773</sup> [Deborah Dugan vs. National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences, Complaint, January 21, 2020](#)

<sup>774</sup> [Deborah Dugan vs. National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences, Complaint, January 21, 2020](#)

<sup>775</sup> [rollingstone.com, November 8, 2023](#)

<sup>776</sup> [billboard.com, May 14, 2017](#); [variety.com, May 14, 2017](#)

<sup>777</sup> [variety.com, May 14, 2017](#)

The attorney’s letter to Sony pointed “out that on multiple occasions, the assistant had complained to her immediate supervisor about Reid’s misconduct, but the supervisor offered no direction or solution for what had occurred, according to a source who has seen the letter. She also complained to another high-ranking Epic executive about the harassment, and in response, she was told: ‘Before you say anything more, think about what that means for you. Just think about what it means.’”<sup>778</sup>

**Drew Dixon, a former executive at Sony’s Arista Records said that she experienced sexual harassment under Reid, who was her direct supervisor. The executive described Reid’s advances as quid pro quo, saying that she worried her artists would suffer because she refused.**

Drew Dixon, a successful executive and producer at Def Jam Records in the 1990s, started at Sony Music Entertainment’s Arista Records in 1996. Notably, Dixon left Def Jam Records for Arista due to “prolonged and aggressive sexual harassment by her direct supervisor, Russell Simmons, the rap mogul and co-founder of the label.”<sup>779</sup>

In 2000, Reid became head of Arista Records and Dixon’s supervisor. Subsequently, “Reid began sexualizing her, Ms. Dixon said, and would turn cold when she denied his unwanted overtures.” Dixon told the *New York Times* that “she tried to parry his come-ons as best she could without offending him. But when she openly defied his demands — declining his invitation to meet him late at night at his hotel; wearing jeans when he insisted on skirts — she worried that her artists would receive short shrift.” Dixon stated in 2017, “It was a quid pro quo: ‘I have power, you want access, sleep with me — or I’m going to be really mean to you the next day. And there will be consequences.’”<sup>780</sup>

**Dixon filed suit against Reid under New York’s Adult Survivors Act, alleging continual sexual harassment and two instances of sexual assault.**

In November 2023, Dixon sued Reid under New York’s Adult Survivors Act, “alleging the music mogul continually harassed and sexually assaulted her twice in 2001 while she was working for him, according to court records obtained by *Rolling Stone*.” She was “a vocal supporter of the 2022 act after coming forward to *The New York Times* in 2017 to accuse Russell Simmons — another mega-producer who co-founded Def Jam Recordings — of rape. [...] In that same

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<sup>778</sup> [billboard.com, May 15, 2017](https://www.billboard.com/article/sony-records-employee-complaints-reid)

<sup>779</sup> [nytimes.com, December 13, 2017](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/12/13/nyregion/sony-records-reid-dixon.html)

<sup>780</sup> [nytimes.com, December 13, 2017](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/12/13/nyregion/sony-records-reid-dixon.html)





## Work With Sony & UMG

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**During his career, Reid ran major labels for Sony Music Entertainment and Universal Music Group.**

Labels that Reid has “run have included Epic, Universal Music Group’s Island/Def Jam and LaFace Records, which was co-founded by Reid in 1989 and eventually absorbed into Sony.”<sup>785</sup> At the time of his resignation, Reid “was the only current black label CEO at the three major record companies, and had rebuilt Epic into a high-profile generator of pop and urban-leaning hits, from artists such as Meghan Trainor, Future, Fifth Harmony, Travi\$ Scott and DJ Khaled.”<sup>786</sup>

## Russell Simmons

### Allegations

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**A woman alleged that, in 1991, Russell Simmons tried to force himself on her and coerced her into performing oral sex. At the time, the woman was a 17-year-old fashion model.**

In November 2017, the *Los Angeles Times* detailed allegations against Def Jam Records co-founder Russel Simmons made by Keri Claussen Khalighi. Khalighi was a 17-year-old fashion model “when she met Brett Ratner and Russell Simmons at a casting call. Ratner was an up-and-coming music video director and a protege of Simmons, the Def Jam Recordings mogul. They took Khalighi to dinner one night in 1991 at Mr. Chow in New York, and then back to Simmons’ apartment to show her a music video they’d been working on. Quickly, Simmons began making aggressive sexual advances, yanking off her clothes, Khalighi said.” She recalled, “I looked over at Brett and said ‘help me’ and I’ll never forget the look on his face.” She added, “In that moment, the realization fell on me that they were in it together.”<sup>787</sup>

Khalighi told the *Los Angeles Times* that “Simmons, who was then about twice her age, tried to force her to have intercourse. ‘I fought it wildly,’ she said. He eventually relented and coerced her to perform oral sex, she alleged. ‘I guess I just acquiesced.’ Ratner, meanwhile, ‘just sat there

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<sup>785</sup> [billboard.com](http://billboard.com), May 14, 2017

<sup>786</sup> [billboard.com](http://billboard.com), May 14, 2017

<sup>787</sup> [latimes.com](http://latimes.com), November 19, 2017

and watched,' she said. Feeling 'disgusting,' Khalighi said she went to take a shower. Minutes later, she alleged, Simmons walked up behind her in the shower and briefly penetrated her without her consent. She said she jerked away, then he left. 'It hurt so much.'<sup>788</sup>

**Simmons was accused of rape in a lawsuit filed by an unnamed victim. The lawsuit sought \$10 million in damages.**

In March 2018, the *New York Times* reported that an unnamed woman "filed a \$10 million lawsuit against [Simmons] in Los Angeles County Superior Court," and Simmons denied her claims. The complaint sought "\$10 million in damages for forcible rape, intentional infliction of emotional distress and negligent infliction of emotional distress. The lawsuit does not specify when the woman says she met Mr. Simmons."<sup>789</sup>

In November 2020, a judge issued a judgment in favor of Russell Simmons, ruling that the lawsuit against Simmons "was filed after the statute of limitations had expired." Despite the fact that Jane Doe's "lawyers had argued that the deadline should be extended because Mr. Simmons lived outside the state of California for a period of years [...] the judge ruled that, even in that instance, it had expired in 2014."<sup>790</sup>

## **Settlements & Retaliation Against Victims**

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**An actress alleged that Simmons spoke to her using vulgar sexual language, and she said that an employee at one of Simmons's companies reached out to her in an attempt to play down the incident.**

The *Los Angeles Times* reported that one of Simmons's accusers, comedian Amanda Seales, said that in September 2016, she "met with Simmons at the Los Angeles offices of his media company, All Def Digital, to talk about potentially working together. Seales said Simmons used vulgar language to ask if they had ever had sex. When she told him no, she said, Simmons responded: 'Oh, right. 'Cause I would've remembered that, right?'" Seales "first spoke about the meeting in a video she posted to Instagram" in December 2016.<sup>791</sup>

After the video was posted, Seales said "she received a call from Hasaun Muhammad, an employee at Rush Communications, who had also been present during the meeting." According

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<sup>788</sup> [latimes.com, November 19, 2017](https://www.latimes.com/2017/11/19/entertainment/celebrity/simmons-rape-accusation/)

<sup>789</sup> [nytimes.com, March 25, 2018](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/25/nyregion/simmons-rape-accusation/)

<sup>790</sup> [nytimes.com, November 17, 2020](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/17/nyregion/simmons-rape-accusation/)

<sup>791</sup> [latimes.com, December 13, 2017](https://www.latimes.com/2017/12/13/entertainment/celebrity/simmons-rape-accusation/)

to the *New York Times*, “[Simmons’s] company Rush Communications oversees an array of businesses and nonprofits.” Seales said that “[Muhammad] said he wanted to get my point of view on what happened.” Seales replied, “There isn’t really anything else to say. You were sitting right next to me. What is the confusion?” Seales claimed that Muhammad “said he didn’t feel that Russell [Simmons] had done anything wrong and was just being flirty.”<sup>792</sup>

According to the *Los Angeles Times*, “Simmons denied he spoke inappropriately to Seales, providing two signed affidavits to The Times from witnesses Muhammad and Marissa Louie, CEO of Portola Plush Co., who both said Simmons did not ask a vulgar question. Muhammad said it was ‘clear’ to everyone in the meeting that Simmons ‘didn’t know who [Seales] was’ and ‘playfully’ asked, ‘Who are you? Do I even know you?’”<sup>793</sup>

**Simmons was accused of raping a singer, who said that her career in the 1990s languished after she tried to distance herself from Simmons, her manager at the time, following the assault.**

In December 2017, the *New York Times* described allegations against Simmons made by singer Tina Baker, who was among women who said they “were pursuing careers in the music industry that they said were disrupted or derailed in part by their experiences with him.” Tina Baker, who alleged that she was raped by Simmons in the early 1990s when he was her manager, told the *New York Times*, “I didn’t sing for almost a year.” She said, “The second he agreed to work with me, my budget increased, the label was paying more attention to me.” However, after the assault, Baker said, “I went into oblivion.”<sup>794</sup>

Baker performed as a backup singer for Bruce Springsteen and Madonna and released her own pop records in the 1980s, and she “thought Mr. Simmons could elevate her career as her new manager.” In late 1990 or early 1991, Baker “ran into Mr. Simmons at a club, and he invited her back to his apartment to discuss her career. ‘I didn’t think anything of going,’ Ms. Baker said, having been there many times without incident.” Baker said, “it all got really ugly, pretty fast.” She claimed that as soon as they entered his apartment, Simmons “started pouring drinks and trying to kiss her, leading to a scuffle, she said. She recalled ‘him on top of me, pushing me down and him saying, ‘Don’t fight me,’” Ms. Baker said. She was pinned on the bed. ‘I did nothing, I shut my eyes and waited for it to end.’” According to the *New York Times*, Baker “cried the whole way home, she said. In interviews and email, her ex-husband, Arthur Baker, a music

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<sup>792</sup> [latimes.com, December 13, 2017](https://www.latimes.com); [nytimes.com, December 13, 2017](https://www.nytimes.com)

<sup>793</sup> [latimes.com, December 13, 2017](https://www.latimes.com)

<sup>794</sup> [nytimes.com, December 13, 2017](https://www.nytimes.com)

producer; her psychologist, Dr. Robin Goldberg; another therapist; and a former roommate all confirmed that she told them she was raped.”<sup>795</sup>

Following the assault, “Baker remained tethered to Mr. Simmons professionally, she said. She returned to his apartment for a meeting; Mr. Simmons liked to conduct business while working out in his penthouse. But as soon as he stopped exercising, she said, he pulled out his penis and moved toward her. She fled.” Baker “tried to extricate herself from her contract with Mr. Simmons, she said, but he ignored her. Her music — two years’ worth of songwriting and recording — languished. ‘I went into a deep depression,’ she said, and her recording career foundered.”<sup>796</sup>

**Simmons was accused of repeated sexual harassment and of pressuring a Def Jam Records employee into having sex, which eventually led her to leave the music industry. Simmons paid the victim a settlement to keep her quiet.**

In the mid-1990s, Drew Dixon, who left Stanford University to pursue a career in the hip-hop industry, “had a professional breakthrough: Russell Simmons, whom she had met through friends, was looking for a new A&R executive at Def Jam to scout talent and coordinate hit records.” Dixon claimed that “his sexual advances started right away and became relentless. At a restaurant, Mr. Simmons pushed Ms. Dixon into a broom closet, she said, and tried to kiss her. At work, he would close the door to her office and expose himself, leading her to give a copy of her key to a male co-worker.” Dixon told the *New York Times*, “I was like: ‘If I ever buzz you, don’t pick up, don’t call me back — just open my door. That means Russell is in here and he whipped his’ penis out, she said.” Fending Simmons “off ‘was a full-time job,’ Ms. Dixon said. ‘It was exhausting. It was like making a record while swimming in rough seas.’”<sup>797</sup>

In 1995, Dixon said she ran into Simmons near his apartment while waiting for a cab ride and said “she let her guard down and entered his apartment. ‘I remember realizing I was cornered,’ said Ms. Dixon, who said she rejected Mr. Simmons’s sexual advances that night directly — ‘many ways to say no’ — as well as explaining that she had just had a gynecological procedure and could not have sex. He told her he didn’t care, she said, ‘and I just blacked out.’ ‘The last thing I remember was him pinning me down to kiss me on the bed,’ she said. The next thing she recalled was being in Mr. Simmons’s hot tub, both of them naked and Mr. Simmons gleeful. (Ms. Dixon said she had not been drinking and did not think she had been drugged; rather, she said, she had disassociated from the experience.)”<sup>798</sup>

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<sup>795</sup> [nytimes.com, December 13, 2017](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/12/13/nyregion/def-jam-russell-simmons-sexual-harassment.html)

<sup>796</sup> [nytimes.com, December 13, 2017](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/12/13/nyregion/def-jam-russell-simmons-sexual-harassment.html)

<sup>797</sup> [nytimes.com, December 13, 2017](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/12/13/nyregion/def-jam-russell-simmons-sexual-harassment.html)

<sup>798</sup> [nytimes.com, December 13, 2017](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/12/13/nyregion/def-jam-russell-simmons-sexual-harassment.html)

Following the incident, Dixon “said she composed her resignation letter to Def Jam by hand, humiliated and in a panic, crossing out her mistakes rather than starting again.” While she considered leaving the music industry, her success led her to join “Arista Records, as an A&R executive under Clive Davis, in 1996. She enjoyed more success, helping to orchestrate smash singles like Whitney Houston’s ‘My Love Is Your Love,’ Aretha Franklin’s ‘A Rose Is Still a Rose,’ and Santana’s ‘Maria Maria.’”<sup>799</sup>

Despite leaving Simmons’s company, “the long shadow of Def Jam remained, partly over a dispute about what she said were unpaid business expenses. Ms. Dixon hired a lawyer and threatened to sue Mr. Simmons for sexual harassment, as well as outstanding bills from the label. In 1997, the parties settled out of court. Mr. Rose, Mr. Simmons’s lawyer, confirmed the settlement.” Ultimately, Dixon “accepted about \$30,000 — around \$3,000 for the expenses and the rest for legal fees — and stayed quiet.”<sup>800</sup>

In 2002, following continued sexual harassment at Arista Records from executive L.A. Reid, who was ousted from Epic Records in 2017, “Dixon left the music industry for Harvard Business School. She concluded that no matter how many hits she had, ‘I could not have success in this industry unless I slept with somebody — a gatekeeper,’ she said. ‘And the fact that I would be doing it to advance my career, I would hate myself.’”<sup>801</sup>

**A documentary filmmaker sued Simmons alleging that he raped and attacked her after he used his name and status to invite her to his home to discuss an upcoming film project. The case was ultimately dismissed, and it was unclear if it was settled out of court.**

In January 2018, filmmaker Jennifer Jarosik sued Simmons “for \$5m, claiming that he invited her to his house to discuss a potential documentary project and then attacked her.” *The Guardian* reported that Jarosik’s lawsuit claimed that Simmons “pounced on her while she was still in shock and fear, and proceeded to rape her.” The lawsuit referenced “Simmons’ alleged pattern of behaviour, and cites the #TimesUp movement founded by Hollywood celebrities to fight sexual harassment.” Additionally, Jarosik appeared on “Megyn Kelly Today” in January 2018 and discussed another instance of rape at the hands of Simmons outside the scope of the lawsuit.<sup>802</sup>

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<sup>799</sup> [nytimes.com, December 13, 2017](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/12/13/arts/music/dixie-dixon-def-jam.html)

<sup>800</sup> [nytimes.com, December 13, 2017](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/12/13/arts/music/dixie-dixon-def-jam.html)

<sup>801</sup> [nytimes.com, December 13, 2017](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/12/13/arts/music/dixie-dixon-def-jam.html)

<sup>802</sup> [theguardian.com, January 25, 2018](https://www.theguardian.com/2018/jan/25/jarosik-sues-simmons)

Jarosik’s complaint against Simmons stated that he “by reason of his experience in the entertainment industry exerted significant influence over her career.” The complaint claimed that “Simmons reputation as a spiritual conscious person caused her to trust Defendant Simmons who promised her help to make her film and befriended her only to be victimized when he invited her to his home in Los Angeles, on the pretext that they would be discussing her project, only to be attacked, and raped by him.” The complaint further stated that “the sexual exploitation of women is pervasive in the hip hop and music industry culture.”<sup>803</sup>

In April 2018, *Variety* reported that Jarosik “who accused Russell Simmons of raping her in 2016 has dropped her lawsuit against him.” *Variety* reported that “Simmons strongly denied the claims, and earlier this month filed an answer to the suit quoting from emails and text messages from Jarosik.” According to the *New York Times*, “It was unclear whether a settlement was reached.” An April 2021 order by the judge overseeing the case in federal court dismissed the case “without cost and without prejudice to the right” after being “advised by counsel that the...action has been settled.”<sup>804</sup>

## Abe Somer

### Allegations & Settlements

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**Music industry attorney Abe Somer continued working at his firm despite several sexual harassment complaints filed against him, including at least one settled out of court and another filed by a woman who claimed he said she would have to have sex with artists.**

According to the *Los Angeles Times*, Abe Somer, the “longtime head of the music department at Mitchell, Silberberg & Knupp,” had a “history of sexual harassment complaints at the firm.” In 1990, Somer and the firm were sued for assault and battery when a young law clerk alleged that Somer “threaten(ed) physical contact in the form of lewd sexual contact, actually engaging in such improper contact and touching and physical abuse . . . without plaintiff’s consent.” The suit was reportedly settled for a six-figure sum.<sup>805</sup>

In 1990, Somer was the subject of another sexual harassment complaint by a former law clerk, who said that Somer harassed her in 1986 “when she expressed interest in working in the firm’s

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<sup>803</sup> [theguardian.com, January 25, 2018](#); [today.com, January 30, 2018](#), [youtube.com, January 30, 2018](#)

<sup>804</sup> [variety.com, April 25, 2018](#), [nytimes.com, April 25, 2018](#); [uscourts.gov, filed April 26, 2018](#)

<sup>805</sup> [latimes.com, November 3, 1991](#)

music department. She said Somer asked her to meet him at his home, where he often worked. When she arrived, she said, Somer told her that as a condition of joining, she would have to drop her boyfriend, take adjoining rooms with him when on the road, and engage in sex with recording artists upon request. [...] When she protested, she said, Somer told her she was ‘too conservative’ for the music business. She said he disrobed and demanded sexual favors. She said she ran out of the house and filed a complaint with the firm.”<sup>806</sup>

The clerk who filed the complaint alleged that a member of Mitchell, Silberberg & Knupp’s management committee told her that Somer “similarly sexually harassed other women” at the firm and received a “hand-slapping.” She was “also told that any damages assessed against the firm for his behavior would ‘come out of Mr. Somer’s pocket.’” As of November 1991, Somer’s status at the firm was “changed from partner to ‘of counsel,’ a loose association that means he is not an employee. He no longer maintains an office on the premises.”<sup>807</sup>

In 1991, *Entertainment Weekly* reported that Somer “recently settled a harassment suit out of court” after his former secretary, Phyllis Finkbeiner, “complained that Somer instructed her to bring the office mail to his house, where he greeted her naked at the door. A former summer associate at the firm alleged similar treatment in an affidavit supporting the suit. At a poolside meeting at Somer’s home, she said, he told her, ‘You seem a little uptight. If Mick Jagger and (producer) Richard Perry were sitting here, I don’t know if they’d be comfortable with you. If they wanted you to kiss them or give them a hand job, you just do it.’”<sup>808</sup>

## Ron Thorn

### Allegations

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**In February 2023, a sexual abuse complaint was filed against Fender Custom Guitar Shop director Ron Thorn, who allegedly used his industry status to “groom, manipulate, and assault” an “up-and-coming young female guitar artist.”**

In February 2023, a sexual abuse complaint was filed against Fender Custom Guitar Shop director Ron Thorn in the Superior Court of Los Angeles County. The complaint was filed by an anonymous Jane Doe, whom the suit described as an “up-and-coming young female guitar artist whose dream was to work for Fender.” The plaintiff claimed that Thorn “used his notoriety,

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<sup>806</sup> [latimes.com](https://www.latimes.com), November 3, 1991

<sup>807</sup> [latimes.com](https://www.latimes.com), November 3, 1991

<sup>808</sup> [ew.com](https://www.ew.com), December 6, 1991



status, and his position as Director of the Fender Custom Guitar Shop to groom, manipulate and assault” her. The suit also alleged that Fender’s “top-level executives ignored the abuse and protected and promoted the predator for its own pecuniary gain.”<sup>809</sup>

According to the complaint, Thorn connected with the plaintiff, then a guitar painter in her mid-20s, on Instagram in early 2020. They developed a relationship online, and Thorn’s “online grooming caused Plaintiff to believe that he had become one of her closest friends.” After the plaintiff was told by a Fender recruiter that the company was interested in hiring her, Thorn offered to help her get a job at the company. Several days later, he “began pursuing a sexual relationship” with her, “encouraging her to open up to him, and to sexually reveal herself to him against her initial instincts.” He encouraged her to send “sexually explicit photos through texts,” and Thorn allegedly said to the plaintiff, “You know, it would be awful if I went to Fender with your photos, right? It would ruin your career, so we aren't going to Fender with this, right? We're going to keep this between us, right?” The plaintiff “felt like Defendant Thorn was threatening to blackmail her.” Thorn allegedly “continued to use his authority, seniority, and influence at Fender to sexually manipulate Plaintiff for the next seven months.”<sup>810</sup>

Jane Doe alleged in her complaint that in December 2021, while she was visiting Los Angeles, Thorn came to her hotel room and “used force and violence to coerce digital penetration. Plaintiff communicated her lack of consent in multiple ways, including telling Defendant Thorn that he was hurting her. But Defendant continued to assault her, which caused great pain to the point where she entered a state of disassociation. The assault was so violent that it caused severe bleeding from Plaintiff’s vagina, which continued for the next twenty-four hours.” The plaintiff “suffered severe emotional distress requiring hospitalization,” and she “continues to suffer, physical, emotional, and economic injuries,” according to the complaint.<sup>811</sup>

## Silencing & Retaliation Against Victim

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**Fender denied that Thorn’s accuser had been offered a job at the company, despite alleged email correspondence of the offer, and Thorn denied knowing her. Instead, Jane Doe said Fender conducted “internal interviews” about her.**

According to the complaint, Jane Doe met with two employees of the Fender Human Resources Department in February 2022 and told them about her experiences with Thorn, including the alleged assault and threats of blackmail. Per the HR director’s request, the plaintiff sent the company “proof of everything she had,” including emails with Michael Seal, “the Fender employee who interviewed and offered Plaintiff the job at Fender.” The HR employees said they

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<sup>809</sup> [trellis.law](#), accessed January 30, 2024

<sup>810</sup> [trellis.law](#), accessed January 30, 2024

<sup>811</sup> [trellis.law](#), accessed January 30, 2024

would conduct an investigation and follow up with the plaintiff a week later, which the complaint alleged they failed to do.<sup>812</sup>

The plaintiff stated that after her conversation with Fender HR, she “noticed that many of the people in the guitar industry, including Fender Master Guitar Builders and employees, were unfollowing and then blocking Plaintiff on her social media accounts.” Another Fender employee told the plaintiff “that Fender was doing internal interviews of executives and employees about her, and Defendant Thorn was telling everyone that he did not know who she was. On information and belief, the high-level employees at Fender made the decision to deny that Plaintiff was offered the job at Fender and support Defendant Thorn's lie that he did not know Plaintiff.” Several weeks later, “the Fender HR Vice President contacted Plaintiff” to tell her “that she had no proof that Plaintiff was offered a job and she encouraged Plaintiff to continue working with the law enforcement investigation. Plaintiff was devastated and suffered a severe breakdown,” according to the complaint.<sup>813</sup>

## Charlie Walk

### Allegations

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**In 2018, Charlie Walk, then head of Universal Music Group’s Republic Group, was accused of sexual misconduct by an employee who worked with him in the early 2000s at Sony’s Columbia Records.**

In January 2018, a blog post published by Tristan Coopersmith “accused Charlie Walk, the president of the Republic Group and one of the industry’s most successful promotion executives, of persistent harassment.” In the blog post, Coopersmith “referred to events in 2004 or 2005, when she worked with Mr. Walk at Columbia Records,” a label under Sony Music Entertainment.<sup>814</sup>

Coopersmith wrote that “Walk had frequently made inappropriate remarks to her and attempted to initiate sexual contact, including pushing her onto a bed in his home.” She stated, “For a year I shuddered at the idea of being called into your office, where you would stealthily close the door and make lewd comments about my body and share your fantasies of having sex

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<sup>812</sup> [trellis.law](https://www.trellis.law), accessed January 30, 2024

<sup>813</sup> [trellis.law](https://www.trellis.law), accessed January 30, 2024

<sup>814</sup> [nytimes.com](https://www.nytimes.com), February 1, 2018

with me.” Coopersmith said that eventually, she was “paid a settlement and left the entertainment industry.”<sup>815</sup>

According to *The Hollywood Reporter*, Coopersmith described “being harassed by the exec with ‘vulgar’ comments via instant messaging and inappropriate touching in the presence of Walk’s wife. She also notes one night Walk attempted to trap her in his bedroom while his wife was in the room next door. ‘You invited me to dinners that in hindsight I had no business being at, but you did it so that you could put your hand on my thigh under the table, every time inching it closer and closer to my sacred place. You did it so you could lean over and whisper disgusting things into my ear and I had to smile so that no one suspected anything,’ she writes. ‘On multiple occasions your wife was sitting right across from us. And then there was that event at your swank pad when you actually cornered me and pushed me into your bedroom and onto your bed. The bed you shared with your wife... your wife who was in the room next door. You being drunk and me being 6 inches taller was my saving grace.’”<sup>816</sup>

In response, Walk “issued a statement, denying Coopersmith’s accusations. ‘It is very upsetting to learn of this untrue allegation made by someone who worked with me 15 years ago, without incident. There has never been a single HR claim against me at any time during my 25+ year career, spanning three major companies. I have consistently been a supporter of the women’s movement and this is the first time I have ever heard of this or any other allegation – and it is false.’”<sup>817</sup>

**Multiple former employees and associates of Walk came forward and accused him of sexual misconduct, including one who said he forcibly touched her in the presence of other coworkers. Many of Walk’s victims were young assistants and new to the industry.**

According to *Rolling Stone*, “After Coopersmith came forward, numerous former employees at Columbia, Epic and Republic began sharing their stories privately about Walk’s alleged inappropriate behavior. But after Walk issued his statement, some of them became angry at what they perceived to be a false denial – and decided to tell their stories publicly to rebuke his statement.” The *New York Times* reported that there were “anonymous allegations against Mr. Walk, in The Lefsetz Letter, a well-known industry email and bulletin board. Later, four more women said they were sexually harassed by Mr. Walk in an investigation published by *Rolling*

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<sup>815</sup> [nytimes.com, March 29, 2018](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/29/entertainment/industry-news/alexander-walk.html)

<sup>816</sup> [hollywoodreporter.com, January 29, 2018](https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/news/alexander-walk-sexual-misconduct-1141111)

<sup>817</sup> [rollingstone.com, February 22, 2018](https://www.rollingstone.com/music/industry-news/alexander-walk-sexual-misconduct-1141111)

*Stone*, which included the additional claims that the executive had sent unsolicited and sexually explicit photos and video to employees.”<sup>818</sup>

One of Walk’s victims, according *Rolling Stone*’s investigation, was Pam Kaye, who worked for Walk at Sony’s Columbia Records for several years, “including an 18-month stint as his assistant.” During that period, Kaye said “she endured near-constant sexual harassment and inappropriate touching from the label executive.” In 2004, while Kaye served as a regional promotion manager at Columbia Records, she was seated next to Walk as their “car drove back to their Midtown Manhattan office after a late-morning meeting, [and] she claims Walk’s behavior reached a new low.” Kaye told *Rolling Stone*, “He took his hand and put it down the front of my pants.” Kaye said that “she discreetly batted Walk’s hand away, hoping the others in the car wouldn’t notice, but Walk persisted and his hand went underneath her underwear.”<sup>819</sup>

Kaye recalled, “There were other people in the car and all I was thinking was, ‘Are they seeing this?’” One former coworker who chose not to be named told *Rolling Stone*, “I remember her getting out of the car and being bright red.” The coworker added, “She was mortified and was just like, ‘I don’t know what to do.’” The 2004 case was “the most severe incident Kaye says she suffered during her time with Walk at Columbia, but it was hardly the first. There was the listening party in 1998 when she was 25 and she says Walk stuck his tongue in her ear. There was the time they were at a club in South Beach in 2002 when she says Walk came up from behind her while she was dancing and started rubbing himself against her. ‘Do you need to change your underwear?’ Kaye alleges he said to her. ‘You’re probably wet.’”<sup>820</sup>

Kaye and 14 other people who worked with Walk told *Rolling Stone* that “this kind of conduct exemplified a decades-long pattern for the current Republic Group president – moreover, most described his behavior as an ‘open secret.’” Women who spoke to *Rolling Stone* said that “Walk would behave inappropriately toward them, including making sexual comments, sending unsolicited, sexually explicit pictures and video, exposing his penis and inappropriately touching them both in private and in crowded meetings. All the women accusing Walk of misconduct fit the same criteria: They were in their early twenties, relatively new to the industry and working as assistants or in similar positions when they said the harassment against them began.”<sup>821</sup>

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<sup>818</sup> [rollingstone.com](http://rollingstone.com), February 22, 2018; [nytimes.com](http://nytimes.com), March 29, 2018

<sup>819</sup> [rollingstone.com](http://rollingstone.com), February 22, 2018

<sup>820</sup> [rollingstone.com](http://rollingstone.com), February 22, 2018

<sup>821</sup> [rollingstone.com](http://rollingstone.com), February 22, 2018

## Settlement With Victim

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**One of Walk’s victims, who then worked at Sony’s Columbia Records, said she received a payout to keep quiet about her allegations.**

In her blogpost, Coopersmith wrote, “After a year of working in fear, I finally called deep on my courage and shared my story with your counterpart. He wasn’t surprised. He told me that there was nothing I could do about it, but that he would help me coordinate a graceful exit if I wanted. I was paid to keep my mouth shut and my reputation intact. I’m ashamed of that piece but it’s a truthful part of my story. I took that dirty money and moved to LA.”<sup>822</sup>

In an open letter discussing why she went public with her allegations against Charlie Walk published in March 2018, Coopersmith wrote, “Every single person that I worked with at Columbia Records was a bystander. Every one of them, men and women, saw how Charlie behaved, and to my knowledge no one did anything, no one said anything. We tell kids in school all the time about bullies. We tell them, don't be a bystander. It's like if you see something, say something; if you hear something, do something, you know. That same concept needs to apply in the workplace. I got so many emails from men saying, thank you so much for coming out about Charlie. It was disgusting having to see him mistreat women all of these decades. And I'm like, you didn't have to see him. You could have done something.”<sup>823</sup>

## Public Reckoning

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**Walk was placed on leave by UMG and was the focus of an internal investigation following public allegations of sexual misconduct.**

Within 48 hours of Coopersmith’s blogpost alleging sexual misconduct against Walk, “UMG informed news outlets that Walk had been placed on leave and that it had hired boutique New York firm Collazo Florentino & Keil to look into his behavior. A media feeding frenzy ensued. Though the findings of the investigation were never made public, the impression left was strong: Walk was guilty of #MeToo misconduct, according to an explosive lawsuit filed by the famed hit-maker against his former attorney, high-profile Trump pitbull Marc Kasowitz.”<sup>824</sup>

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<sup>822</sup> [digitalmusicnews.com](https://digitalmusicnews.com), January 29, 2018

<sup>823</sup> [refinery29.com](https://refinery29.com), March 19, 2018

<sup>824</sup> [hollywoodreporter.com](https://hollywoodreporter.com), July 25, 2023

In March 2018, the *New York Times* reported that Universal Music Group “declined to comment further on the outcome of the review, which was conducted by an outside law firm.” However, Coopersmith told the *New York Times* “that she had spoken with the law firm investigating Mr. Walk, and she commended Universal Music for setting up ‘a safe space and a safe process’ for other women to come forward. ‘It’s really scary to talk about this stuff, especially if you’re still in the industry,’ she said. But she added that she felt that the statement announcing Mr. Walk’s departure as mutually agreed upon ‘supports Charlie in this instead of the survivors — there’s not a true feeling of vindication.’”<sup>825</sup>

### **Walk resigned from Republic Group following public allegations of sexual misconduct, receiving a \$3.2 million payout from Universal Music Group.**

In 2018, following the allegations of sexual misconduct, “Walk resigned from his executive position” at Republic Group. The Republic Group said in a statement that “the label and Mr. Walk ‘have mutually agreed to part ways.’”<sup>826</sup> According to *Variety*, “As part of the settlement with parent company Universal Music Group (UMG), Walk, who had also served as a judge on the Fox singing competition series ‘The Four,’ was paid his severance (a base salary of more than \$1.5 million) plus a 2017 bonus (\$1.7 million), which was negotiated by Kasowitz of the firm Kasowitz, Benson Torres.”<sup>827</sup>

## **Work With Major Labels**

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### **Walk worked in the music industry for over 30 years, including as an executive at Universal Music Group’s Republic Records and Sony Music Entertainment’s Columbia Records.**

According to *Rolling Stone*, Charlie Walk “has been in the music industry for more than 30 years, working with artists from New Kids on the Block to Ariana Grande.” From 2013 to 2019, Walk worked as an executive at Universal Music Group’s Republic Records, where he oversaw “the marketing, PR and promotion teams for the label” as an Executive Vice President. From 1990 to 2004, Walk worked as Sony’s Columbia Records, where he worked with artists such as “Destiny’s Child and Beyoncé Knowles, Will Smith, Maxwell, John Legend, Mariah Carey, The Fugees, Lauryn Hill, Wyclef Jean, John Mayer, Bruce Springsteen, and Aerosmith.”<sup>828</sup>

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<sup>825</sup> [nytimes.com, March 29, 2018](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/29/arts/music/universal-music-group-charlie-walk.html)

<sup>826</sup> [variety.com, January 22, 2022](https://www.variety.com/2022/music/news/walk-resigns-republic-records-1235858000/); [nytimes.com, March 29, 2018](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/29/arts/music/universal-music-group-charlie-walk.html)

<sup>827</sup> [variety.com, January 22, 2022](https://www.variety.com/2022/music/news/walk-resigns-republic-records-1235858000/)

<sup>828</sup> [linkedin.com](https://www.linkedin.com/company/universal-music-group/), accessed July 26, 2023; [musicbusinessworldwide.com](https://www.musicbusinessworldwide.com/), accessed July 26, 2023; [musicmastery.com](https://www.musicmastery.com/), accessed July 26, 2023; [Rolling Stone, December 20, 2018](https://www.rollingstone.com/music/music-news/walk-resigns-republic-records-1235858000/)

# Methodology

*The following outlines the methodology used to compile the 2024 report “Music’s #MeToo Reckoning: Report on Financial Exposure on Sexual Abuse & Coverups at Sony, Universal & Warner” (subsequently referred to as “the report”). This outlines various sources available in the public record used to identify and detail notable cases of reported sexual abuse and misconduct by artists, executives, and other music industry figures.*

## **Alleged Cases of Sexual Abuse & Misconduct**

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### **News Reports, Social Media, & Third Party Reports**

News coverage up until February 22, 2024, was reviewed in order to detail accusations and alleged instances of sexual abuse and misconduct against music industry figures, including artists, producers, managers, and record label executives, spanning more than six decades. Researchers analyzed coverage of such allegations to detail instances in which record companies were aware of and/or enabled such abuse. In addition to news coverage, researchers also reviewed other online media, such as blogposts, op-eds, and social media.

In addition to specific allegations, researchers reviewed previous investigations focused on the culture of alleged abuse in the music industry to build and expand on those findings. This included quotes and statistics regarding the prevalence of alleged sexual misconduct in the music industry, the effects of alleged cases of misconduct on women in the industry, and the industry’s playbook for dealing with allegations of sexual misconduct.

### **Legal Records**

As publicly available as of February 22, 2024, researchers reviewed legal records for cases filed against alleged abusers in various local and federal courts. In some instances, such records were published online by news outlets and/or third parties, while others were accessed via online court databases maintained by local jurisdictions or through the federal court system (PACER). Researchers analyzed complaints and other filings to detail allegations against abusers, as well as allegations that record companies enabled and/or covered up such abuse.

## Shareholder Actions

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Researchers examined shareholder actions taken against various industries, including the music industry, in response to sexual misconduct allegations. This included news reports, industry analysis, and corporate filings available as of February 22, 2024 to detail examples of shareholder activism.

Additionally, researchers detailed the potential for shareholder litigation against companies over sexual misconduct claims via news reports and legal analyses published as of February 22, 2024. The report also detailed examples in other industries, such as settlements reached by Twenty-First Century Fox and CBS with shareholders in response to alleged sexual harassment.

## Legislative Actions

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At the state level, researchers analyzed changes to statutes of limitations for filing claims of sexual abuse from news and other online media published as of February 22, 2024. This included past legislative efforts in California, New York, and other states to pass window statutes that temporarily eliminate the statute of limitations for filing time-barred claims of sexual abuse for children and adults, as well as pending efforts to expand such laws.

Researchers also examined investigations and hearings undertaken by legislative bodies as of February 22, 2024 targeting alleged sexual abuse and misconduct in various industries, including music. For instance, authors reviewed transcripts from hearings and news reports regarding the investigation undertaken by the United Kingdom's House of Commons Women and Equalities Select Committee to examine misogyny in the music industry. Additionally, authors reviewed reports on the investigation opened by the U.S. Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee centering on sexual abuse allegations within the U.S. Olympic gymnastics team.