

DETROIT NATIVE SUN

HBO, Warner Bros. Face \$20 million lawsuit from Russell Simmons over assault allegations film



By Stacy M. Brown
Senior National Correspondent

Hip Hop pioneer and business mogul Russell Simmons has filed a \$20 million lawsuit in New York against HBO, Warner Bros. Discovery, and the producers of the 2020 documentary *On the Record*, alleging defamation, emotional distress, and invasion of privacy. The lawsuit claims the film deliberately omitted key evidence, including testimony from more than 20 individuals who Simmons says contradicted the sexual assault allegations featured in the movie. Simmons, who currently resides in Bali, argues that high-level executives at WarnerMedia, including CEO John Stankey, were made aware of exculpatory evidence but allowed the documentary to proceed without it. He also alleges that several civil rights leaders and members of Congress urged HBO to reconsider airing the film. The lawsuit notes Oprah Winfrey's public departure from the project, stating that she withdrew after expressing concerns about inconsistencies in the accusations.

The documentary, which premiered on HBO Max and debuted at the Sundance Film Festival, profiles women who accused Simmons of sexual misconduct, including Drew Dixon, Sheri Hines, Sil Lai Abrams, Alexia Norton Jones, and Jenny Lumet. Simmons has denied allegations and said he has never been violent toward anyone. Speaking with *Black Press USA* in 2020, Simmons said he had taken and passed nine lie detector tests administered by the president of the California Polygraph Association. A source close to Simmons at the time said neither HBO nor filmmakers Amy and Kirby Dick sought his input or statement before releasing the film. In an interview with *CBS This Morning*, Oprah

Force escalation and 45 LA arrests

By April Ryan
SPECIAL TO THE SUN

"Can you imagine all of this for 45 arrests?" Juan Proano of the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) asked. Proano is in Los Angeles after President Trump deployed the National Guard in response to ICE raids in what he calls "An attack on a sanctuary city."

As the sun rose this morning in Los Angeles, it was quiet after what resembled a police state over the weekend. On this morning's *Coffee With segment* on the *Contrarian*, Proano said since Thursday, "45" migrants have been arrested. The head of the organization, which focuses on the advancement of Hispanics, discussed the discriminatory nature of these arrests, lending "the only criteria they need to have is brown skin."

Proano says the ICE raids "were not planned very well" as the ICE centers are already "overcrowded and moving to accelerated deportations" and stepping around due process for the new ICE arrests.

Winfrey later explained her departure from the project, stating, "Houston, I think we have a problem here," referring to new information she had received. Sources close to Simmons indicated he believed Winfrey's decision stemmed from recognizing the potential backlash, comparing it to the Tawana Brawley case from the 1980s.

Among the statements submitted in support of Simmons were accounts from individuals challenging the credibility of some accusers. A former intern who worked with Drew Dixon wrote a letter to Winfrey questioning Dixon's claims and providing her observations. Music industry figure Jayson Jackson, who once dated Dixon, said she was willing to do anything to gain fame, while model Kara Young said Dixon had attempted to share unrelated abuse claims on Tyra Banks' talk show. Allegations from Sheri Hines were also challenged based on factual discrepancies. Hines claimed Simmons raped her in 1983 after they met at the Hotel Diplomat, which had reportedly closed several years earlier. Rapper Kurtis Blow, who Hines said was present during her time with Simmons, denied elements of her account, including limousine travel and Simmons' ability to offer record deals at that time.

Former Def Jam president Carmen Ashurst submitted an affidavit stating that Sil Lai Abrams had confided in her about consensual sex with Simmons and frustration about being used by men. Kenneth Lee, Simmons' former driver, also provided an affidavit denying that he ever transported anyone against their will, countering Abrams' claims. Alexia Norton Jones has publicly stated Simmons raped her during their first and only date, but multiple individuals familiar with the two told *Black Press USA* their relationship lasted about five months. Kenneth Jennings, a driver for Simmons, submitted an affidavit supporting that claim.

Jenny Lumet's allegations were also addressed in the lawsuit. Though Lumet claimed Simmons directed a driver to take her to his home, where he assaulted her, she acknowledged that Simmons did not use physical force and that they remained in social contact afterward. Simmons said he felt compassion for Lumet, believing she was convinced of her account.

Actress Rae Dawn Chong, a former girlfriend, told the *Black Press* she thought the situation offered a chance for all involved to learn and heal, adding that Simmons has always been someone willing to listen. Actress Rebecca Gayheart also voiced support for Simmons, telling *Black Press USA*, "I absolutely believe and love Russell. He's a great human being."

Proano, the head of LULAC, said they [the Trump administration] originally hoped to achieve 3,000 deportations daily. Los Angeles has a large migrant population, with the most significant numbers in the Asian and Hispanic communities. California Governor Gavin Newsom blames President Trump for the tensions in the Los Angeles area related to the latest ICE raids. This morning, President Trump retorted on the South Lawn of the White House, stating Newsom should be arrested as "he is grossly incompetent."

President Trump deployed the National Guard to handle the LA protests stemming from the ICE raids in Los Angeles. LULAC, the NAACP, and other rights organizations have blamed President Trump for escalating the tensions there. Marines at Camp Pendleton are on high alert for possible deployment to Los Angeles. Currently, 2000 National Guard are deployed to the City of Angles, with only 300 on the ground. California is suing the Trump administration for the unlawful deployment of the National Guard in their state.

Members of Congress charged with "forcibly impeding" ICE officials in latest escalation by Trump



By Lauren Burke
SPECIAL TO THE SUN



New Jersey Congresswoman LaMonica McIver was indicted on the evening of June 10 on federal charges. Acting U.S. Attorney for New Jersey Alina Habba an-

nounced the rare indictment of a member of Congress involving DHS officials on the Elon Musk-owned platform X. The charges against Rep. McIver are related to a confrontation between ICE officials and elected officials at Delaney Hall Immigration Detention Center in Newark, New Jersey on May 9. The confrontation led to the arrest of Newark Mayor Ras Baraka for "trespassing."

Though the charges were later dropped many said that it was another example of intentional intimidation by the Trump Administration. Habba wrote that individuals can express themselves but must, "must not do so in a manner that endangers law enforcement and the communities those officers serve." The moment is another example of the Trump Administration's building aggressiveness toward Democratic members of Congress and other elected officials. Threats of censure and arrest are increasing. Yesterday, President Trump threatened to arrest another Democrat, California Governor Gavin Newsom. "I would do it if I were Tom [Homan]," answered President Trump on June 9 after being asked if he would arrest Gov. Newsom.

Though Habba is alleging that Rep. McIver "assaulted and interfered with im-

migration officers outside a New Jersey detention center" the video demonstrates a different set of facts on the scene as ICE agents prevented members of Congress, who are constitutionally permitted to entering such facilities, from proceeding into the facility.

"The facts of this case will prove I was simply doing my job and will expose these proceedings for what they are: a brazen attempt at political intimidation," McIver said in a June 10 statement.

On May 19, Habba's office announced they were dropping previously filed charges against Mayor Ras Baraka for "trespassing." "Rep. McIver was doing her job and conducting oversight as a duly elected member of Congress. Trump is using baseless legal tactics to smear & silence this honorable Black Congresswoman — but it won't work. This won't intimidate us, and we stand with Rep. McIver," wrote Congresswoman Ayanna Pressley (D-MA) after news of the indictment of her CBC colleague.

"This is a travesty. DOJ is filing charges that never would have been brought by prior Departments of either party. From Rep. McIver here to Judge Dugan in WI to David Huerta in LA — injustice. The congresswoman is vigorously contesting this, and I think she will be successful," wrote attorney Norm Eisen on June 10, who is also a co-founder of *The Contrarian*. The federal charges against Rep. McIver are an unprecedented arrest of a member of Congress. There is no known previous public case that has involved a DHS-led arrest of a current member of Congress. Rep. McIver, 38, represents Newark and entered Congress in September 2024 after winning the seat of the late Congressman Donald Payne, Jr.

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