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Actor Julia Ormond sues Harvey Weinstein and Disney over sexual assault

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Harvey Weinstein trial



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By Max Matza**Actor Julia Ormond has filed a lawsuit against Harvey Weinstein, claiming he sexually assaulted her in 1995 after a dinner in New York.**

The Legends of the Fall star is also seeking damages from Disney, Miramax and her former talent agency who she says failed to protect her from abuse.

The case was filed in New York under a law that allows sex cases to be filed outside of the statute of limitations.

Weinstein is currently serving a 23-year prison sentence for rape.

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Ormond - best known for roles in 90s films First Knight, Smilla's Sense of Snow and Sabrina - alleges that her career never recovered after the attack by Weinstein.

The suit argues that at the peak of her career, she and Weinstein returned from a business dinner to an apartment provided by the production company, where he "stripped naked and forced her to perform oral sex on him".

"That sexual assault on Ormond could have been prevented if Miramax or Disney had properly supervised Weinstein and not retained him while knowing that he was a danger to the women he encountered at work," states the lawsuit, which was filed on Wednesday.

Weinstein's attorney Imran Ansari told the Associated Press that his client "categorically denies the allegations made against him by Julia Ormond and he is prepared to vehemently defend himself".

Ormond is also suing the Creative Artists Agency (CAA), her former talent agency which she says failed to warn her about Weinstein's abuse and "suggested that if she reported Weinstein to the authorities, she would not be believed, and he would seriously damage her career".

"Still worse, not long after Weinstein's assault on Ormond and her reporting of the assault to them, CAA lost interest in representing her, and her career suffered dramatically," the lawsuit adds.

"The damage to Ormond's career because of Weinstein's assault and the aftermath was catastrophic both personally and professionally," the lawsuit says, adding that she "nearly disappeared from the public eye" since the alleged attack and retaliation by the defendants.

In a statement issued through her lawyers, the British actor said: "After living for decades with the painful memories of my experiences at the hands of Harvey Weinstein, I am humbled and grateful to all those who have risked speaking out."

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The "courage" of other survivors has "shed light on how powerful people and institutions like my talent agents at CAA, Miramax and Disney enabled and provided cover for Weinstein to assault me and countless others".

"I seek a level of personal closure by holding them accountable to acknowledge their part and the depth of its harms and hope that all of our increased understanding will lead to further protections for all of us at work."

The lawsuit asks the court to award Ormond, 58, an unspecified amount for lost wages, and for "mental pain and anguish and severe emotional distress".

CAA said they take allegations of sexual assault seriously and "has compassion" for Ms Ormond but denied the claims made against the firm.

"Ms Ormond's claims against CAA are baseless, and the agency will vigorously refute them in court," the organisation said in a statement.

The BBC has also contacted Disney and Miramax for comment.

More than 80 people have made rape and misconduct claims against Weinstein, 74, dating back as far as the late 1970s.



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