

Cassie's husband and fellow artists express support amid her legal battle against Sean 'Diddy' Combs

By Lisa Respers France, Brynn Gingras, Kristina Sgueglia and Alli Rosenbloom CNN

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Neilson Barnard/Getty Images

Sean "Diddy" Combs and Cassie in 2018.

(CNN) — There's been an outpouring of support for Cassie Ventura since news broke Thursday that she is suing producer Sean "Diddy" Combs over allegations he raped and subjected her to years of abuse when they were in a relationship.

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The singer, model and actress, who professionally goes simply by Cassie, made the claims in a suit filed in federal court in New York City in which she alleges Combs was physically violent toward her, controlled all aspects of her personal life, “introduced” her to a lifestyle of “excessive alcohol and substance abuse.” And, in the complaint, she alleges that through threats of violence, he forced her to engage in various sex acts with male sex workers during that time.

Ben Brafman, attorney for Combs, said in a statement emailed to CNN via Combs’ publicist that “Mr. Combs vehemently denies these offensive and outrageous allegations” and accuses her of demanding \$30 million from his client “under the threat of writing a damaging book about their relationship.”

But Ventura’s attorney, Douglas Wigdor responded to Brafman, alleging Combs tried to pay her off to keep quiet.

“Mr. Combs’ offered Ms. Ventura eight figures to silence her and prevent the filing of this lawsuit. She rejected his efforts and decided to give a voice to all women who suffer in silence. Ms. Ventura should be applauded for her bravery,” he wrote in an email to CNN.



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Cassie and Alex Fine

On Thursday, Ventura’s husband, personal trainer and model Alex Fine, shared a photo from their wedding day in 2019 on his Instagram stories with a red heart emoji.

The post has since been taken down, though it is unclear as to why it was removed.

Ventura also received a show of support from members of the group Danity Kane who, like her, were artists on Combs’ Bad Boy label.

Singer Dawn Richard, a member of the group, posted a message with a red heart emoji on X, formerly known as Twitter, that reads, “Praying for Cassie and her family, for peace and healing. you are beautiful and brave.”

Another member of the group, Aubrey O'Day, also took to social media to share her thoughts.



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O'day says she was fired by Combs and has been highly critical of her former boss in the past.

On Instagram, she shared multiple posts, including a screen grab of a story about the suit in which she wrote on the photo, "Been trynna tell y'all for years. Prayers up for this Queen [two raised hands emoji] @Cassie." On another screen grab, she wrote, "One day y'all are gonna put some respect on my name when I tell you things. Thank you!"

In a separate statement to Rolling Stone magazine, O'Day said, "I am in full support of Cassie."

"It isn't easy to take on one of the most powerful people in this industry and be honest about your experience with them. I know what her heart is feeling right now, because I have done so as well," O'Day said. "May her voice bring all the others to the table, so we can start having more transparent conversations about what is actually happening behind the scenes. There is a lot more to all of our stories!"

Danity Kane was formed by Combs in 2005 via the MTV reality competition show "Making the Band."

CNN has reached out to Fine, Richard and O'Day for comment.



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lifestyle, and into a romantic relationship with him" within a few years of their meeting in 2005 or 2006. Combs signed her to his Bad Boy Records record label shortly after, according to the suit.

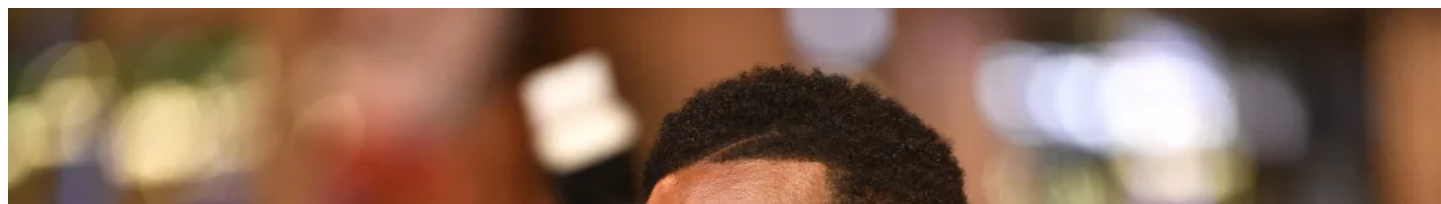
The complaint, which contains a trigger warning due to the graphic nature of some of the claims, also states she was 19 and Combs was 37 when they met, and alleges that during their business relationship, which lasted until 2019, he "exerted his power and influence" over her, initially using drugs and alcohol to coerce her into a sexual relationship.

Ventura, an R&B singer most known for her song "Me & U," is filing her suit under the New York's Adult Survivors Act, which allows adult survivors of sexual abuse to sue their abusers in New York - even after the statute of limitations on their claims. It is set to expire on Nov. 24.

"After years in silence and darkness, I am finally ready to tell my story, and to speak up on behalf of myself and for the benefit of other women who face violence and abuse in their relationships," Ventura said in a statement to CNN on Thursday.

It's unclear where the acts Ventura is alleging against Combs took place or whether Ventura has reported any of the allegations to police.

When contacted for further comment regarding possible criminal charges, Ventura's attorney Michael J. Willemin told CNN, "We cannot comment on any potential criminal filings. Apologies."





Paras Griffin/Getty Images

Sean "Diddy" Combs in 2021.

Combs' company, Bad Boy Records, is based in New York.

When asked if the New York Police Department is looking into the allegations, a DCPI spokesperson told CNN: "There is no such investigation, at present. The NYPD always treats allegations of sexual assault and rape extremely seriously, and urges anyone who has been a victim to file a police report so that support and services can be offered to survivors and a comprehensive investigation can be conducted."

Combs, 54, founded the music label Bad Boy in 1993, and has gone by the stage names Puff Daddy, Puffy, Diddy and P. Diddy. In 2021, he announced that he had legally changed his middle name to "Love."

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In the late 80's, I worked at Jim McMullen's in NYC. One night after we closed the restaurant, A future US president came in with his then-wife Ivana, their kids, and their friends. There were about 12 of them. The check was about \$1,300. Jim said, 'No check' and brushed me away. When I bussed the table after, under Donald's plate was a neatly foalded note

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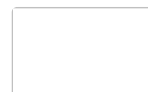
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