

'Diddy' apology video: Sean Combs speaks out after surveillance tape shows him assaulting Cassie Ventura

[cnn.com/2024/05/19/entertainment/diddy-combs-apology-video-cassie/index.html](https://www.cnn.com/2024/05/19/entertainment/diddy-combs-apology-video-cassie/index.html)

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CNN —

Almost 48 hours after being shown physically assaulting his then-girlfriend Cassie Ventura in 2016 in a [surveillance video](#) obtained exclusively by CNN, Sean “Diddy” Combs has apologized.

Just before 1pm ET on Friday, CNN published the video in which Combs is seen grabbing, shoving, dragging and kicking Ventura during an altercation that matches allegations in a [now-settled](#) federal lawsuit filed by Ventura in [November](#). At publication time, representatives for Combs, an influential figure in the music industry who founded the music label Bad Boy in 1993, had not responded to requests for comment.

Combs, a rapper, producer and business mogul, was silent for nearly two days as backlash mounted – including in the comments section of his old social media posts – and a media storm swirled.

Just after 11am ET on Sunday, Combs released a video on Instagram, in which he apologized for an incident he’d previously denied ever happening in the first place.

“It’s so difficult to reflect on the darkest times in your life, but sometimes you got to do that,” Combs said in a video statement posted to Instagram. “I was f**ked up — I hit rock bottom — but I make no excuses. My behavior on that video is inexcusable.”

He continued: “I take full responsibility for my actions in that video. I am disgusted. I was disgusted then when I did it. I’m disgusted now.”

Combs did not mention Ventura by name.

Ventura’s attorney Meredith Firetog said in a statement on Sunday following the release of Combs’ apology: “Combs’ most recent statement is more about himself than the many people he has hurt. When Cassie and multiple other women came forward, he denied everything and suggested that his victims were looking for a payday. That he was only compelled to ‘apologize’ once his repeated denials were proven false shows his pathetic desperation, and no one will be swayed by his disingenuous words.”

Combs previously issued a blanket denial of the allegations in Ventura’s November lawsuit, in which [Ventura claimed](#) she was raped in 2018 and subjected to years of repeated physical and other abuses by Combs.

He has also denied through his spokesperson the allegations from the five other civil suits that were filed against him following Ventura's, and his attorney has called the claims "lies" and suggested the plaintiffs are motivated by financial gain and public notoriety.

His vehement denials were amplified given how prominent an entertainment figure Combs, who has gone by various stage names including Puff Daddy, was once considered to be. Credited with work that is regarded as instrumental in the growth of the hip-hop genre, Combs has won three Grammys in his career and is a notable entrepreneur under the Combs Global banner.

Combs added in his statement that he "went and I sought out professional help."

"I got into going to therapy, going to rehab. I had to ask God for his mercy and grace. I'm so sorry," he said. "But I'm committed to be a better man each and every day. I'm not asking for forgiveness. I'm truly sorry."

November lawsuit

In November, Ventura accused Combs of rape and abuse in a 35-page complaint.

In that document, in which there were multiple allegations that Combs was physically violent toward Ventura and forced her to engage in various sex acts with other men during their time together, there were details about an altercation that occurred "around March 2016" at the now-closed InterContinental Hotel in Century City, Los Angeles.

During this incident, the complaint said, Combs became "extremely intoxicated and punched Ms. Ventura in the face, giving her a black eye."

After Combs fell asleep, Ventura attempted to leave the hotel room, but he woke up and "followed her into the hallway of the hotel while yelling at her," the complaint said.

"He grabbed at her, and then took glass vases in the hallway and threw them at her, causing glass to crash around them as she ran to the elevator to escape," the complaint alleged.

After Ventura got in the elevator, her complaint states that she took a cab to her apartment.

"Upon realizing that her running away would cause Mr. Combs to be even angrier with her, and completely stuck in his vicious cycle of abuse, Ms. Ventura returned to the hotel with the intention of apologizing for running away from her abuser," the complaint claims. "When she returned, hotel security staff urged her to get back into a cab and go to her apartment, suggesting that they had seen the security footage showing Mr. Combs beating Ms. Ventura and throwing glass at her in the hotel hallway."

The complaint alleges Combs paid the InterContinental Century City \$50,000 for the hallway security footage.

When contacted by CNN, a representative for InterContinental Hotels said on Friday, “This hotel is no longer under IHG management, and we do not have any access to prior incident records or footage.”

Ventura, a singer who was formally signed to Combs’ label, claimed in her suit that he “exerted his power and influence” over her throughout the course of their professional and romantic relationship. According to the complaint, she was 19 when they met and Combs was 37, and their business relationship lasted until 2019. Their off-and-on relationship lasted from 2007 – 2018.

Denials

Ben Brafman, an attorney for Combs, said in a statement to CNN on the day after Ventura’s suit was filed that Combs “vehemently denies these offensive and outrageous allegations.”

The suit was resolved the following day. At the time, Brafman told CNN in a statement that the “decision to settle a lawsuit” was “in no way an admission of wrongdoing.”

Brafman’s statement added: “Mr. Combs’ decision to settle the lawsuit does not in any way undermine his flat-out denial of the claims. He is happy they got to a mutual settlement and wishes Ms. Ventura the best.”

Details of the settlement were not disclosed.

Since November, Combs has faced five other civil lawsuits accusing him of a range of sexual misconduct and other illegal activity. He has denied the allegations, and the cases remain active.

Combs continued this denial. On December 6, 2023, he posted a note to [Instagram](#) that said: “Enough is enough.”

“For the last couple of weeks, I have sat silently and watched people try to assassinate my character, destroy my reputation and my legacy,” he wrote. “Sickening allegations have been made against me by individuals looking for a quick payday. Let me be absolutely clear: I did not do any of the awful things being alleged. I will fight for my name, my family and for the truth.”

As of this article’s publication, the comments on Combs’ December Instagram post were turned off.

The surveillance video

On Friday, CNN published surveillance video compiled from multiple camera angles dated March 5, 2016 that appeared to show the Combs during the 2016 incident at the InterContinental Hotel in Century City that was mentioned in Ventura's complaint.

CNN verified the location based on publicly available photos of the former hotel's interior.

In the video, Ventura exits a hotel room and walks to a bank of elevators. Combs, holding a towel around his waist, runs down a hall after Ventura. He grabs her by the back of the neck and throws her to the floor. Still holding his towel closed with one hand, he then turns to kick her, the video shows.

As Ventura is on the ground, Combs retrieves a purse and suitcase from the floor near the elevators. He turns around and kicks Ventura again as she lies motionless on the floor. About four seconds transpire between the two kicks, according to the video. He then briefly drags Ventura by her sweatshirt toward a room before walking away.



Sean Combs and Cassie Ventura are seen in security video in 2016.

Obtained by CNN

Ventura is then seen slowly standing up. She gathers items from the floor and moves to pick up a phone on the hallway wall near the elevators. Combs, still in a towel and socks, returns. A mirror directly across from the security camera shows Combs appearing to shove Ventura.

Seconds later, he sits down on a chair, grabs an object off a table and forcefully throws it toward Ventura. Combs is seen walking away, then turns toward Ventura once again when an elevator door opens and someone appears to exit.

Ventura, who reached an undisclosed settlement with Combs, declined to comment on the video obtained by CNN.

Ventura's other attorney, Douglas H. Wigdor, said in a statement on Friday: "The gut-wrenching video has only further confirmed the disturbing and predatory behavior of Mr. Combs. Words cannot express the courage and fortitude that Ms. Ventura has shown in coming forward to bring this to light."

Reaction to the video

Ventura received an outpouring of support on social media in the days that followed the release of the video, with many highlighting Ventura's story as a way to support other victims of domestic violence.

Combs also faced widespread backlash from many online, including Aubrey O'Day, a former member of the group Danity Kane who, like Ventura, was represented by Combs' Bad Boy label. On Friday, she wrote on her X page that "the picture is getting a lot more clear for you all I can imagine."

Danity Kane was formed by Combs in 2005 via the MTV reality competition show "Making the Band." O'Day says she was fired by Combs and has previously been highly critical of him.

Following the release of the video, the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office issued a statement saying it was "aware of the video that has been circulating online allegedly depicting Sean Combs assaulting a young woman in Los Angeles."

"We find the images extremely disturbing and difficult to watch," the statement posted on Instagram reads. "If the conduct depicted occurred in 2016, unfortunately we would be unable to charge as the conduct would have occurred beyond the timeline where a crime of assault can be prosecuted. As of today, law enforcement has not presented a case related to the attack depicted in the video against Mr. Combs, but we encourage anyone who has been a victim or witness to a crime to report it to law enforcement or reach out to our office for support from our Bureau of Victims Services," the district attorney's office said.

Video Ad Feedback

'I take full responsibility': Sean 'Diddy' Combs reacts to 2016 video showing him assaulting then-girlfriend

02:39 - Source: [CNN](#)

The Los Angeles Police Department said it was also “aware of the video” but did not have an open investigation involving Combs, the department told CNN in a statement early Saturday. The LAPD did not respond to CNN’s question on whether a report was ever filed regarding the assault.

On Friday, Alex Fine, a personal trainer and Ventura’s husband, issued an apparent response to the surveillance video in a “letter to women and children” posted to Instagram. He said in the caption that he wrote the letter “awhile back but the words ring true not just today but everyday.”

“Men who hit women aren’t men. Men who enable it and protect those people aren’t men,” he wrote in the letter. “As men violence against women shouldn’t be inevitable, check your brothers, your friends, and your family. Our daughters, sisters, mothers, and wives should feel protected and loved. Hold the women in your life with the upmost regard. Men who hurt women hate women.”

Fine and Ventura have been married since 2019. They have two daughters.

At the end of the letter, Fine included the phone number of the National Domestic Violence hotline and wrote in part “to the abusers, you’re done, you’re not safe anymore, you’re not protected anymore.”

Editor’s Note: If you or someone you know is struggling with intimate partner violence, there are resources available, including the National Domestic Violence Hotline.