GIRARD BENGALI, APC

# GIRARD BENGALI, APC 355 S. GRAND AVENUE, SUITE 2450 LOS ANGELES, CA 90071

## TRIGGER WARNING:

## THIS DOCUMENT CONTAINS HIGHLY GRAPHIC INFORMATION OF A SEXUAL NATURE, INCLUDING SEXUAL ASSAULT

Plaintiff Vanessa LeMaistre ("Plaintiff" or "Ms. LeMaistre") hereby alleges, by and through her undersigned counsel, Wigdor LLP, as and for her Complaint against Defendant Leland T. "Metro Boomin" Wayne ("Wayne" or "Defendant") as follows:

### PRELIMINARY STATEMENT

- 1. Wayne is an award-winning music producer and artist who has found fame in his successful partnerships with rappers Future, 21 Savage and Big Sean. He is considered to be one of the most significant producers in the rap and hip-hop community, having been nominated for Album of the Year at the 65th Annual Grammy Awards and Producer of the Year at the 66th Annual Grammy Awards.
- 2. Wayne released his first studio album, Not All Heroes Wear Capes, in 2018, which debuted at number one on the Billboard 200 chart.<sup>3</sup> His second album, Heroes & Villains, was released in 2022 and was nominated for Best Rap Album at the 66<sup>th</sup> Annual Grammy Awards.<sup>4</sup>
- 3. In February 2016, Ms. LeMaistre suffered from the greatest loss possible when her 9-month-old son, Kamden, passed away as a result of a rare and fatal disease.

See https://www.npr.org/2024/04/18/1245528781/metro-boomin-future-we-still-dont-trust-you

See https://www.grammy.com/artists/metro-boomin/51984.

<sup>3 &</sup>lt;u>See https://www.billboard.com/pro/metro-boomin-not-all-heroes-wear-capes-number-1-billboard-200.</u>

See https://www.grammy.com/artists/metro-boomin/51984.

- 4. Ms. LeMaistre was deeply distraught and in mourning when she met Wayne in the Spring of 2016 in Las Vegas, Nevada.
- 5. When Wayne invited Ms. LeMaistre to visit him at recording studios in California, where she lived, she was happy for the opportunity to watch him work because she was passionate about music, but more importantly because music provided an escape from the pain she was in after losing her son.
- 6. Devastatingly, however, meeting Wayne resulted in Ms. LeMaistre suffering from the second worst thing that ever happened to her being raped by someone who pretended to be her friend for months.
- 7. Under the guise of friendship and a shared love of music, Wayne gained Ms. LeMaistre's trust as she shared her grief over her son's death. Ms. LeMaistre believed that they had bonded over the ability of music to help people in their darkest moments.
- 8. However, any bond Ms. LeMaistre believed they formed was shattered in or around September 2016 when Wayne invited her to the studio to watch him work.
- 9. Ms. LeMaistre arrived and was immediately given a shot of alcohol. She also ingested half of a Xanax bar which she used to cope with her anxiety after her son's loss.
- 10. Ms. LeMaistre and Wayne sat on a couch and discussed their mutual depression, with Wayne telling Ms. LeMaistre that he was depressed because he had just broken up with his long-term girlfriend and Ms. LeMaistre sharing again how difficult it was since her son died.
- 11. Wayne then went into the studio to begin working and Ms. LeMaistre settled onto the couch for what she believed would be a normal night watching Wayne work and enjoying the music.

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- 12. However, the next thing Ms. LeMaistre can recall is waking up on a bed in a different location with Wayne raping her and being completely unable to move or make a sound. She was in and out of consciousness for an unknown amount of time but awoke again at some point to Wayne performing oral sex on her.
- 13. At no point during this encounter was Ms. LeMaistre able to consent to any sexual activity, and Wayne's conduct without question constituted rape and sexual assault.
- 14. A few weeks after the sexual assault, Ms. LeMaistre found out that she was pregnant. She had not had sex with anyone else, so Ms. LeMaistre knew that the pregnancy was the result of Wayne raping her.
- 15. Given the recent loss of her son and the traumatic cause of her pregnancy, Ms. LeMaistre knew that she could not continue the pregnancy and maintain any semblance of her declining mental health.
  - 16. As a result, Ms. LeMaistre had an abortion in November 2016.
- 17. Approximately one year later, Wayne produced the song, "Rap Saved Me" with the lyrics:

She took a Xanny, then she fainted I'm from the gutter, ain't no changing From the gutter, rap saved me

She drive me crazy, have my baby

- 18. The lyrics were horrifying for Ms. LeMaistre to hear over and over again, as they recounted the situation that happened to her and caused further trauma.
- 19. Many years later, Ms. LeMaistre is still working to put herself back together after experiencing such an extraordinary amount of trauma at the hands of

Wayne – someone she truly believed to be her friend but turned out to be her worst nightmare.

### JURISDICTION AND VENUE

- 20. This Court has jurisdiction pursuant to Cal. Civ. Proc. Code § 410.10. This Court has personal jurisdiction over Defendant because he purposefully avails himself of the forum's benefits, the controversy giving rise to this lawsuit arises out of Defendant's contacts with the forum and the assertion of personal jurisdiction comports with fair play and substantial justice.
- 21. Venue is proper in this Court pursuant to Cal. Civ. Proc. Code § 395(a) because the incidents, harm and injuries complained of herein occurred within Los Angeles County, California.

#### **PARTIES**

- 22. Plaintiff Vanessa LeMaistre is a 38-year-old woman domiciled in Los Angeles, California.
- 23. Defendant Leland T. "Metro Boomin" Wayne is, upon information and belief, domiciled in Cartersville, Georgia.

### **FACTUAL ALLEGATIONS**

- I. Wayne Has Established Himself as an Award-Winning Producer and <u>Musical Artist and a Disturbing Misogynist</u>
- 24. Wayne is a Grammy-nominated producer and artist known for his collaborations with rappers Future, 21 Savage, and Big Sean among many others.
- 25. According to the Grammy Awards, "Metro Boomin has been behind the board of more than 100 Billboard Hot 100 songs, including top 10 hits like the Migos' 'Bad and Boujee' and 21 Savage's 'Mr. Right Now' with Drake."<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5 &</sup>lt;u>See https://www.grammy.com/news/how-metro-boomin-became-in-demand-rap-producer-2024-grammys.</u>

- 26. In 2022, Wayne "created the soundtrack to the animated blockbuster 'Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse.'"
- 27. Wayne also recorded and released his own music including the album Not All Heroes Wear Capes, in 2018, which debuted at number one on the Billboard 200 chart<sup>7</sup> and the album Heroes & Villains, in 2022, which was nominated for Best Rap Album at the 66<sup>th</sup> Annual Grammy Awards.<sup>8</sup>
- 28. Wayne's 2022 album included collaborations with several notable artists, including John Legend, Future, Chris Brown, Travis Scott, and A\$AP Rocky.<sup>9</sup>
- 29. In 2017, Wayne launched his own record label called Boominati Worldwide in partnership with Republic Records and Universal Music Group.<sup>10</sup>
- 30. Most recently, in May 2024, Wayne received a significant amount of publicity because of his role in a feud that erupted between artists Drake and Kendrick Lamar.
- 31. In response, dozens of misogynistic tweets that Wayne wrote resurfaced, bringing his flippant attitude toward sexual assault and drugging women to the forefront.
- 32. The tweets were so problematic that the hashtag #metrogroomin began trending on social media.
- 33. Although Wayne (or someone else at his direction) quickly went on a deleting spree, screenshots were taken of the following offensive tweets and retweets, among others:

<sup>7</sup> <u>See https://www.billboard.com/pro/metro-boomin-not-all-heroes-wear-capes-number-1-billboard-200.</u>

<sup>6 &</sup>lt;u>Id.</u>

See https://www.grammy.com/artists/metro-boomin/51984.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> See https://hypebeast.com/2022/12/metro-boomin-heroes-and-villains-album-stream.

See <a href="https://www.universalmusic.com/metro-boomin-announces-boominati-worldwide-label-partnership-republic-records-universal-music-group">https://www.universalmusic.com/metro-boomin-announces-boominati-worldwide-label-partnership-republic-records-universal-music-group</a>.

- Rule #10: Lez Do It Again! Lmao...
- 35. When Wayne's offensive tweets resurfaced, he attempted to defend them by posting yet another offensive tweet: lol I can't be a pedophile @ 15 nigga #nopedo.
- 36. Once it was pointed out that he could not have been 15 years old when the tweets were written, Wayne quickly deleted the tweet, never bothering to disavow his penchant for tweeting about drugging and assaulting women.

## II. Ms. LeMaistre Meets Wayne and Believes She Forms a Friendship with Him

- 37. On February 23, 2016, Ms. LeMaistre's nine-month-old son, Kamden, passed away as a result of a rare and fatal disease.
- 38. A month or two later, while deep in mourning, Ms. LeMaistre took a weekend trip to Las Vegas with the hope that new scenery would be a brief distraction from the overwhelming grief she was feeling and allow her to dull the pain, even if just temporarily.
- 39. A friend introduced her to Wayne in Las Vegas that weekend during a day party. Ms. LeMaistre and several other people hung out at a hotel after the day party and then went to club together that evening.
- 40. In the SUV on the way from the day party to the hotel, Ms. LeMaistre was with Wayne and several other people. During that ride, Ms. LeMaistre told everyone that she had recently turned 30 and, although she tried not to talk about it, she told everyone about losing her son as well. Everyone got very quiet and eventually expressed their sympathy.
- 41. Throughout the day and night, Wayne and Ms. LeMaistre had several discussions about music and life in general. Wayne invited her to visit him while he worked at studios in California, which was where Ms. LeMaistre was living.

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- 42. When they returned to California, a mutual friend who was in Las Vegas invited Ms. LeMaistre to go to the studio to see one of Wayne's studio sessions.
- 43. Over the next few months, Ms. LeMaistre went back to the studio several times.
- 44. Ms. LeMaistre's interactions were friendly at first, and she found the studio and the music to be a really useful distraction to her grief. It became something of a refuge for her, as she could get away from her thoughts for a short period of time and just focus on the music.
- 45. She and Wayne mostly had light-hearted conversations about music, but occasionally they would discuss heavier topics like her grief.
- 46. Ms. LeMaistre grew to feel safe and comfortable in Wayne's presence and thought of him as a friend.
- 47. However, there were moments – due to Wayne's excessive codeine use that broke that illusion of safety because Wayne was much less predictable when using large amounts of codeine. Yet, he was never threatening to her, so she did not think much of it at the time.
- 48. On some visits, Wayne's friends warned him about the risk of taking so much codeine, but he refused to allow anyone to measure his intake.
- 49. While Ms. LeMaistre developed a friendly bond with Wayne, she was not in any position to pursue a relationship or intimacy with him.

#### III. Wayne Horrifically Sexually Assaults Ms. LeMaistre

- 50. In or around September 2016, Ms. LeMaistre arrived at the studio to see Wayne, as she had done many times over the last few months.
- 51. It was a particularly difficult day from a mental health perspective – as she continued working through her grief and trying to accept that her son was gone.

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- 52. When she arrived, she took half a Xanax, which she used to help get through difficult days and numb the pain, and was given a shot of alcohol.
- 53. It was shortly after Wayne's mid-September birthday, and they discussed feeling mutually depressed. Wayne mentioned that he was upset about a recent break up or trial separation from his long-term girlfriend.
- 54. After their discussion, Wayne then went into the studio and Ms. LeMaistre sat on the couch to watch and listen, as she normally did.
- However, shortly after she began drinking her shot of alcohol, she 55. blacked out.
- The next time Ms. LeMaistre regained consciousness, she woke up on 56. a bed with Wayne on top of her. She had no idea where she was or how she got there.
- 57. Ms. LeMaistre was unable to move or make a sound - she felt incapacitated in a way that she never before experienced.
- 58. She then lost consciousness again and woke up at some point later to Wayne performing oral sex on her.
  - 59. Needless to say, Ms. LeMaistre was incapable of giving consent.
- 60. Several hours later, Ms. LeMaistre woke up again. She was alone in a hotel room but had no idea what hotel she was in or how she got there.
- 61. She felt unsteady but tried to quickly gather her clothing and other possessions that were thrown around the room.
- Just a few minutes later, Wayne walked into the room and told her to 62. get her things.
- 63. Ms. LeMaistre asked Wayne where she was, and he said a hotel in Beverly Hills.

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- 64. Ms. LeMaistre, completely confused, overwhelmed and traumatized by the brief flashes of memory she had, was desperate to get out of the room, so she followed Wayne's lead as he walked out of the hotel to a side street where two black SUVs were waiting.
- 65. Wayne told her to get into one of the SUVs and he got into the other one and drove away. The SUV drove her back to the studio where her car was waiting.

#### IV. Ms. LeMaistre Discovers She is Pregnant as a Result of Being Raped

- 66. Ms. LeMaistre continued to have flashbacks of the two memories she had of Wayne vaginally and orally raping her.
- 67. However, as a result of the trauma of losing her son, Ms. LeMaistre was not emotionally prepared to deal with another traumatic incident and tried as hard as she could to forget the feeling of complete helplessness and terror. She desperately wanted to pretend it never happened.
- 68. However, a few weeks later, Ms. LeMaistre found out that she was pregnant. She had not had sex with anyone else, so Ms. LeMaistre knew that the pregnancy was the result of Wayne raping her.
- 69. Given the recent loss of her son and the traumatic cause of her pregnancy, Ms. LeMaistre knew that she could not continue the pregnancy and maintain any semblance of her declining mental health.
  - 70. As a result, Ms. LeMaistre had an abortion in November 2016.
- Approximately one year later, Wayne produced the song, "Rap Saved 71. Me" with the lyrics:

She took a Xanny, then she fainted

I'm from the gutter, ain't no changing

From the gutter, rap saved me

She drive me crazy, have my baby

- 72. The lyrics were horrifying for Ms. LeMaistre to hear over and over again, as they recounted the situation that happened to her and caused further trauma.
- 73. For a very long time after, Ms. LeMaistre tried to convince herself that the rape did not happen despite knowing that it did. She even occasionally reached out to Wayne to ask how he was and say a kind word. She thought in doing so that she could trick her own mind into thinking he was an actual friend to her.
- 74. Unfortunately, trauma does not simply disappear regardless of how much you try to push it aside. After a lot of therapy and learning healthy coping mechanisms, Ms. LeMaistre now understands that her trauma continues to resurface.
- 75. She has worked relentlessly to improve her mental health and general well-being and realizes now that she cannot simply pretend one of the most traumatic events of her life did not happen.
- 76. As a result, Ms. LeMaistre is determined to seek justice for the pain and devastation she endured, and to make sure others are warned that Wayne's offensive tweets are more than just lip service they are in fact a blueprint to his behavior toward women.

## FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION (Battery - Civil Sexual Assault)

- 77. Plaintiff repeats and realleges each and every allegation in all of the preceding paragraphs as if fully set forth herein.
- 78. Defendant committed a battery against Plaintiff when he engaged in unlawful, intentional, and offensive touching or application of force to Plaintiff's person when touched her for the purpose of sexual arousal, sexual gratification or

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sexual abuse, where Plaintiff did not act freely and voluntarily, and the actions were against Plaintiff's will, as defined in Cal. Penal Code § 243.4.

- 79. Additionally, Defendant committed a rape against Plaintiff, as defined in Cal. Penal Code § 261.
- 80. As a result of Defendant's alleged conduct, Plaintiff has suffered severe emotional distress, humiliation, embarrassment, anxiety, economic harm, and other consequential damages.
- 81. The conduct of Defendant described above was willful, wanton, and At all relevant times, Defendant acted with conscious disregard of malicious. Plaintiff's rights and feelings, acted with knowledge of or with reckless disregard for the fact that his conduct was certain to cause injury and/or humiliation to Plaintiff, and intended to cause fear, physical injury, and/or pain and suffering to Plaintiff. By virtue of the foregoing, Plaintiff is entitled to recover punitive and exemplary damages from Defendant according to proof at trial.
- 82. This cause of action is timely under California's Sexual Abuse and Cover-Up Accountability Act, AB 2777 because it is "based on conduct that occurred on or after January 1, 2009, and is commenced []after January 1, 2019," and is thereby revised by Cal. Code Civ. Proc. § 340.16(b)(3).

## SECOND CAUSE OF ACTION (Sexual Battery - Cal. Civ. Code § 1708.5)

- Plaintiff repeats and realleges each and every allegation in all of the 83. preceding paragraphs as if fully set forth herein.
- 84. Defendant committed a sexual battery under Cal. Civ. Code § 1708.5 when he intended to and did cause harmful and/or offensive contact with intimate parts of Plaintiff.

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- 85. Plaintiff did not act freely and voluntarily, and the actions were against Plaintiff's will.
- 86. As a result of Defendant's alleged conduct, Plaintiff has suffered severe emotional distress, humiliation, embarrassment, anxiety, economic harm, and other consequential damages.
- 87. The conduct of Defendant described above was willful, wanton, and malicious. At all relevant times, Defendant acted with conscious disregard of Plaintiff's rights and feelings, acted with knowledge of or with reckless disregard for the fact that his conduct was certain to cause injury and/or humiliation to Plaintiff, and intended to cause fear, physical injury, and/or pain and suffering to Plaintiff. By virtue of the foregoing, Plaintiff is entitled to recover punitive and exemplary damages from Defendant according to proof at trial.
- This cause of action is timely under California's Sexual Abuse and 88. Cover-Up Accountability Act, AB 2777 because it is "based on conduct that occurred on or after January 1, 2009, and is commenced []after January 1, 2019," and is thereby revised by Cal. Code Civ. Proc. § 340.16(b)(3).

## THIRD CAUSE OF ACTION (RALPH ACT - Cal. Civ. Code § 51.7)

- Plaintiff repeats and realleges each and every allegation in all of the 89. preceding paragraphs as if fully set forth herein.
- 90. Defendant committed a violent act against Plaintiff, motivated by her sex, by penetrating her vagina without her consent, in that he would not and could not have committed the same violence against a man, and that violent act was a substantial factor in the resulting physical and mental harm suffered by Plaintiff.

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91. As a result of Defendant's alleged conduct, Plaintiff has suffered severe emotional distress, humiliation, embarrassment, anxiety, economic harm, and other consequential damages.

- 92. The conduct of Defendant described above was willful, wanton, and malicious. At all relevant times, Defendant acted with conscious disregard of Plaintiff's rights and feelings, acted with knowledge of or with reckless disregard for the fact that his conduct was certain to cause injury and/or humiliation to Plaintiff, and intended to cause fear, physical injury, and/or pain and suffering to Plaintiff. By virtue of the foregoing, Plaintiff is entitled to recover punitive and exemplary damages from Defendant according to proof at trial.
- 93. This cause of action is timely under California's Sexual Abuse and Cover-Up Accountability Act, AB 2777 because it is "based on conduct that occurred on or after January 1, 2009, and is commenced []after January 1, 2019," and is thereby revised by Cal. Code Civ. Proc. § 340.16(b)(3).

## FOURTH CAUSE OF ACTION (GENDER VIOLENCE - Cal. Civ. Code § 52.4(c)(2))

- Plaintiff repeats and realleges each and every allegation in all of the 94. preceding paragraphs as if fully set forth herein.
- 95. Defendant committed the act of sexual penetration in contravention of California Penal Code for the purpose of, upon information and belief, arousal, gratification or abuse against Plaintiff's will and by force and is therefore liable for gender violence.
- 96. As a result of Defendant's alleged conduct, Plaintiff has suffered severe emotional distress, humiliation, embarrassment, anxiety, economic harm, and other consequential damages.

97. The conduct of Defendant described above was willful, wanton, and malicious. At all relevant times, Defendant acted with conscious disregard of Plaintiff's rights and feelings, acted with knowledge of or with reckless disregard for the fact that his conduct was certain to cause injury and/or humiliation to Plaintiff, and intended to cause fear, physical injury, and/or pain and suffering to Plaintiff. By virtue of the foregoing, Plaintiff is entitled to recover punitive and exemplary damages from Defendant according to proof at trial.

98. This cause of action is timely under California's Sexual Abuse and Cover-Up Accountability Act, AB 2777 because it is "based on conduct that occurred on or after January 1, 2009, and is commenced []after January 1, 2019," and is thereby revised by Cal. Code Civ. Proc. § 340.16(b)(3).

## FIFTH CAUSE OF ACTION (Bane Act - Cal. Civ. Code § 52.1)

- 99. Plaintiff incorporates herein by reference, as though set forth in full, all preceding paragraphs of this Complaint.
- 100. At all relevant times herein, Defendant interfered or attempted to interfere by threat, intimidation or coercion and by physical force, with Plaintiff's exercise or enjoyment of her right to be free from sexual assault and sex discrimination as secured by the laws of California.
- 101. As a result, Plaintiff has suffered and will continue to suffer mental and physical pain and suffering.
- 102. This cause of action is timely under California's Sexual Abuse and Cover-Up Accountability Act, AB 2777 because it is "based on conduct that occurred on or after January 1, 2009, and is commenced []after January 1, 2019," and is thereby revised by Cal. Code Civ. Proc. § 340.16(b)(3).

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## **PRAYER FOR RELIEF**

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff prays judgment be entered in her favor against Defendant, and each of them, as follows:

- money judgment representing A. compensatory damages including consequential damages, lost wages, earning, and all other sums of money, together with interest on these amounts, according to proof;
- For a money judgment for mental pain and anguish and severe В. emotional distress, according to proof;
  - C. For punitive and exemplary damages according to proof;
  - For attorneys' fees and costs; D.
  - For prejudgment and post-judgment interest; and E.
  - F. For such other and further relief as the Court may deem just and proper.

## **JURY DEMAND** 1 2 Plaintiff hereby demands a trial by jury on all issues of fact and damages stated 3 herein. 4 Dated: October 29, 2024 Respectfully submitted, 6 WIGDOR LLP 7 8 By: 9 10 Michael J. Willeman Monica Hincken 11 (To be admitted *pro hac vice*) 12 85 Fifth Avenue, Fifth Floor New York, NY 10003 13 Telephone: (212) 257-6800 14 Facsimile: (212) 257-6845 mwillemin@wigdorlaw.com 15 mhincken@wigdorlaw.com **16** GIRARD BENGALI, APC **17 18** By: 19 Omar H. Bengali 20 Robert J. Girard II 21 355 S. Grand Ave., Suite 2450 22 Los Angeles, California 90071 Telephone: (323) 302-8300 23 Facsimile: (323) 302-8310 24 obengali@girardbengali.com rgirard@girardbengali.com 25 **26** Attorneys for Plaintiff Vanessa LeMaistre **27**

COMPLAINT SEEKING DAMAGES

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