

#METOO RECKONING

# FKA twigs files lawsuit against Shia LaBeouf, alleges 'relentless abuse'

The singer claims the actor knowingly gave her a sexually transmitted disease, among other allegations of abusive and volatile behavior.



— FKA twigs in London in February. *Jim Dyson / Redferns file*

Dec. 11, 2020, 4:25 PM PST

By **Daniel Arkin** and **Diana Dasrath**

LOS ANGELES – Electronic music singer FKA twigs filed a lawsuit Friday against Shia LaBeouf, accusing the actor of sexual battery, assault and infliction of emotional distress during a relationship that lasted just under a year.

In the lawsuit, filed in Los Angeles Superior Court, FKA twigs – born Tahliah Debrett Barnett – accuses LaBeouf of "relentless abuse," including choking her and throwing her against a car on Valentine's Day 2019. She also claims he knowingly gave her a sexually transmitted disease.

"Shia LaBeouf hurts women," the claim states in its introduction. "He uses them. He abuses them, both physically and mentally. He is dangerous. For too long, LaBeouf has sought to excuse his reprehensible actions as the eccentricities of a free-thinking 'artist.'"

The lawsuit was first reported by [The New York Times](#).

Karolyn Pho, a stylist who also had a relationship with LaBeouf, described alarming experiences with the actor to The Times, including some allegations outlined in the lawsuit.

In 2012 at a New York City hotel, the filing claims, the actor "held her down by her arms, causing intense pain and leaving multiple bruises."

Then he head-butted Pho, causing her to bleed, it alleges.

"Shia LaBeouf has abused Ms. Barnett, Ms. Pho and others," Bryan Freedman, an attorney for FKA twigs, said in a statement. "We tried to resolve this matter privately on the condition that Mr. LaBeouf agree to receive meaningful and consistent psychological treatment.

"Since he was unwilling to get appropriate help, Ms. Barnett filed this suit to prevent others from unknowingly suffering similar abuse by him," he added.

On [Instagram on Friday](#), FKA twigs said it was difficult to "process" that she was in an abusive relationship.

"my second worst nightmare is being forced to share with the world that i am a survivor of domestic violence," she said. "my first worst nightmare is not telling anyone and knowing that i could have helped even just one person by sharing my story."

LaBeouf, best known for his role in the "Transformers" film series, did not immediately respond to a request for comment through his representatives. But in a statement to The Times, the actor said in part: "I'm not in any position to tell anyone how my behavior made them feel."



— Shia LaBeouf attends the "Honey Boy" premiere during the 2019 Toronto International Film Festival at Roy Thomson Hall on Sept. 10, 2019 in Toronto, Canada. *Kevin Winter / Getty Images for TIFF file*

"I have no excuses for my alcoholism or aggression, only rationalizations," LaBeouf told The Times. "I have been abusive to myself and everyone around me for years. I have a history of hurting the people closest to me. I'm ashamed of that history and am sorry to those I hurt.

"There is nothing else I can really say."

LaBeouf, 34, has made headlines in recent years for his volatile public behavior.

In 2014, LaBeouf was charged with disorderly conduct, criminal trespass and harassment after disrupting a Broadway play, [according to The Associated Press](#). He eventually [pleaded guilty](#) to disorderly conduct.

In 2017, he went on a racist tirade against Georgia police officers arresting him for public drunkenness, [the AP reported](#). He subsequently [pleaded guilty to obstruction](#) and was placed on a year's probation. The public drunkenness allegation was dropped.

LaBeouf apologized for the tirade.

FKA twigs' lawsuit seeks undisclosed compensatory and punitive damages.

*Arkin reported from New York City and Dasrath from Los Angeles.* 🐦

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