

## MUSIC

## Diplo denies sexual misconduct allegations as criminal charges loom



Diplo arrives at the 2020 Grammy Awards in Los Angeles. (Allen J. Schaben / Los Angeles Times)

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EDM artist Diplo has denied allegations of sexual misconduct that could result in criminal charges brought by the Los Angeles city attorney’s office.

In a statement provided Wednesday to the Los Angeles Times, Diplo’s attorney accused a woman, who claims she was sexually assaulted by [the DJ and producer](#), of launching “an unceasing campaign of harassment against” the musician, whose legal name is Thomas Wesley Pentz.

According to [BuzzFeed News](#), a 25-year-old woman filed a complaint with the Los Angeles Police Department in October 2020 accusing Pentz of recording and distributing sexually explicit videos without her consent, as well as knowingly infecting her with chlamydia.

The city attorney’s office told BuzzFeed this week that, following a police investigation into the woman’s allegations, it is considering charging [the “Electricity” hitmaker](#) with invasion of privacy and intentionally giving someone a sexually transmitted infection.

Representatives for the city attorney’s office and the LAPD did not immediately respond Wednesday to The Times’ requests for comment.

“Yet more lies from the same disturbed individual who has been stalking and menacing Wes, his family and his friends for years,” Bryan Freedman, attorney for Pentz, told The Times in a statement.

“As is well known, this person tried to extort Wes for millions of dollars and, after he refused to pay her a penny, ... has been peddling her lies around the country in a desperate attempt to harm Wes and those he loves, but she will not succeed.”

The allegations leveled in last year’s complaint to the LAPD correspond with claims outlined in a separate lawsuit filed in L.A. earlier this year.

The court documents accused the Grammy winner, 42, of soliciting a female plaintiff for sex when she was a minor, raping her and knowingly giving her STIs. When the Los Angeles woman, who dated Pentz, spoke out about his “abusive behavior,” the complaint alleged, Pentz “retaliated against her by posting photos of her vagina and breasts on social media without her consent.”

Diplo is a powerful figure in the music industry who has collaborated with Justin Bieber, Sia, Britney Spears, Bad Bunny, Madonna, Usher and many more.

The woman named in the suit “fell into the cycle of Diplo’s abuse,” it reads. “For years, DIPLO would become upset ... and put her down if she did not give into his demands. He would gaslight her and make her believe it was her fault that he was upset or that she was not pleasing him. ...

“He knew she was an impressionable and vulnerable young woman as he had groomed her since she was a teenager. DIPLO knew that [she] would do whatever DIPLO asked in order for him to forgive her.”

After the woman granted a temporary restraining order against Pentz in November 2020, [the DJ](#) sued her for stalking, trespassing and distribution of private materials. The “Thunderclouds” artist’s complaint paints her as a “relentless and unstable fan” who “entered Pentz’s life for the purpose of obtaining intimate and personal information about him in order to gain fame and notoriety with her friends, the media, and her social media following.”

The court documents also accused the woman of using burner social media accounts to send “sexually explicit photographs and videos of Pentz to his friends and family,” as well as posting a nude photo of the musician on her Instagram page and spreading “false and offensive rumors about him online.” Pentz was granted a temporary restraining order against the woman.

This is not the only time Pentz has been accused of sexual misconduct. While appearing on the podcast “Cheapys Two Cents” last year, rapper Azealia Banks alleged she “used to have sex with Diplo” when she was 17 and accused him of constantly “preying on young ethnic girls.”

In July, another woman sued the record producer for allegedly forcing her to perform oral sex on him and recording it without her consent, according to [TMZ](#).

In a statement to TMZ, Freedman dismissed the lawsuit as “completely outrageous” and “wildly untrue” while accusing the plaintiff of cooperating with the aforementioned other accuser to wage a smear campaign against his client.

“We have irrefutable evidence that this is a completely meritless claim and we will be providing it to a court as quickly as we possibly can to put an end to this shakedown by [another accuser] and her accomplices once and for all,” Freedman told TMZ.

Days later, the anonymous woman withdrew that July lawsuit “in light of evidence and after consultation” with her legal team.

“No payment was offered or requested,” she said in a statement. “I regret filing the lawsuit.”

#### Updates

3:12 p.m. Oct. 6, 2021: The name of the woman accusing Diplo of rape has been removed from this story. It is not The Times’ policy to name rape victims in most cases.



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