

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT**  
*for the SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK*

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CIVIL ACTION NO.: 24-CV-8494

JOSEPH SHERMAN

*Plaintiff*

-vs-

THALIA GRAVES  
GLORIA ALLRED  
ALLRED MAROKO & GOLDBERG PC  
MARIANN MEIER WANG  
HEATHER GREGORIO  
JAZLY LIRIANO  
CUTI HECKER WANG LLP

*Defendants*

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**VERIFIED COMPLAINT**

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Plaintiff, Joseph Sherman, by and through his attorney, Darnell D. Crosland, Esq. sues Defendants, Thalia Graves, Gloria Allred, Esq., Allred Maroko & Goldberg P.C., Mariann Meier Wang, Esq., Heather Gregorio, Esq., Jazly Liriano, Esq., and Cuti Hecker Wang L.L.P. for Defamation, Negligent Infliction of Emotional Distress, Intentional Infliction of Emotional Distress, Negligence, Vexatious Litigation, Abuse of Process, and Malicious Prosecution, seeking compensatory and punitive damages, along with other appropriate relief, and hereby makes the following allegations against the Defendants:

## INTRODUCTION

1. On September 24, 2024, the above named Defendants sued and went on a media tour touting, claiming, publishing, stating and telling the whole world (*without any proof*), that Joseph Sherman “viciously raped” Thalia Graves in 2001 while he was working for Sean Combs *aka* P. Diddy.<sup>1</sup>

2. The Defendants made outrageous, disgusting, and life altering statements and publishings about the Plaintiff without *any* regard for the truth.

3. These disgusting and outrageous statements could not be further from the truth.

4. Joseph Sherman has never met Thalia Graves, let alone raped her.

5. Joseph Sherman did not work for Sean Combs in 2001. He stopped working for him three years prior to that – in 1999.

6. And if accusing the wrong man of rape was not bad enough, Thaila Graves wrote to Joseph Sherman (*after* her and her team of lawyers had *already* sued him) in what can only be seen as an attempt to blackmail him into providing false testimony against Sean Combs, when she wrote, in relevant part, “*if you will be my witness against Diddy, then my attorneys will leave you out of any proceedings ...*” and going on to promise him “*I will make sure the state does not pick up charges or rape charges against you.*”<sup>2</sup>

7. In other words, Thaila Graves and her team of lawyers promise to not destroy Joseph Sherman’s life with lies – so long as he serves as their witness against Sean Combs *aka* P. Diddy.

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<sup>1</sup> See, e.g., Complaint at ¶ 1 (Dkt. # 1:24-cv-07201, SDNY)

<sup>2</sup> See Exhibit A (Instagram Text Messages from Thalia Graves to Joseph Sherman starting November 29, 2024)

**JURISDICTION & VENUE**

8. This Court has diversity jurisdiction pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1332 because the amount in controversy exceeds \$75,000, exclusive of interest and costs, and all the parties are diverse from one another.

9. This Court has supplemental jurisdiction over Plaintiffs' state law claims pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1367.

10. Venue is appropriate in this Court under 28 U.S.C. § 1391(b) because a substantial part of the acts forming the basis of this Complaint occurred in this District.

**PARTIES**

11. Plaintiff, **JOSEPH SHERMAN**, is and was, at all times material hereto, a resident of New Jersey, over the age of eighteen (18) years, and is otherwise *sui juris*.

12. Defendant, **THALIA GRAVES**, is and was, at all times material hereto, a resident of Harris County, Texas, over the age of eighteen (18) years, and is otherwise *sui juris*.

13. Defendant, **GLORIA ALLRED**, is and was, at all times material hereto, a resident of California, over the age of eighteen (18) years, and is otherwise *sui juris*.

14. Defendant, **ALLRED MAROKO & GOLDBERG PC**, is a California professional corporation with offices in New York and California and its principal place of business located at: 6300 Wilshire Blvd #1500, Los Angeles, CA 90048.

15. Defendant, **MARIANN MEIER WANG**, is and was, at all times material hereto, a resident of New York, over the age of eighteen (18) years, and is otherwise *sui juris*.

16. Defendant, **HEATHER GREGORIO**, is and was, at all times material hereto, a resident of New York, over the age of eighteen (18) years, and is otherwise *sui juris*.

17. Defendant, **JAZLY LIRIANO**, is and was, at all times material hereto, a resident of New York, over the age of eighteen (18) years, and is otherwise *sui juris*.

18. Defendant, **CUTI HECKER WANG LLP**, is a New York limited liability partnership with its principal place of business at: 305 Broadway, Suite 607, New York, New York 10007.

### **GENERAL ALLEGATIONS**

19. On or about September 24, 2024, the Defendants filed a lawsuit against Plaintiff, Joseph Sherman, in the Southern District of New York, Dkt. No. 1:24-cv-07201, alleging, among other things, that Plaintiff raped Thalia Graves at Bad Boy Records Studio in 2001.

20. Defendants also stated that Plaintiff was acting as a bodyguard for Sean Combs, also known as "Puff Daddy" or "P. Diddy," at the time of the alleged incident, and that both Plaintiff and Mr. Combs engaged in sexual misconduct towards her.

21. Defendants then stated "Combs and the Plaintiff gave [Thalia Graves] a drink, likely laced with a drug" and that "[s]he awoke to find herself bound and restrained" and being "brutally sexually abuse[d] and violate[d]."

22. Defendants also stated on or around November 27, 2023, "she learned" that "Combs and Sherman had video-recorded the horrific rape."

23. The above mentioned statements, along with all those asserted by Defendants in the Complaint (Dkt. No. 24-cv-7201), and all those that Defendants put forth in the media, *e.g.*, on CNN, against Sherman are utterly and entirely false.

24. The Plaintiff has never met the Defendant, never engaged any sexual or non-consensual physical interaction with her, and did not participate in the events alleged.

25. Any video that Thalia Graves claims she “learned” of absolutely does not show the Plaintiff Joseph Sherman in it.

26. In fact, the Plaintiff, Joseph Sherman, stopped working for Sean Combs *aka* “P.Diddy” in 1999 – and this is the last time he was even in the same room as him.

27. Simply put, there is no possible way that the Plaintiff Joseph Sherman, touched, taped, or had anything to do with Thalia Graves.

28. Indeed, Plaintiff, Joseph Sherman, was a *persona non grata* at Bad Boy Records, and anything Sean Combs related having left Combs’ employ in 1999 to work in association with a direct competitor – Def Jam records.

29. Plainly said, the Plaintiff, Joseph Sherman, was not even allowed into Bad Boy records studios or near Sean Combs after 1999. Consequently, he could not have videotaped or raped Thalia Graves

30. On or about November 29, 2024, Defendant, Thalia Graves, contacted Plaintiff *via* Instagram Direct Message, stating, “If you will be my witness against Diddy, then my attorneys will leave you out of any proceedings . . . I will make sure that the state does not pick up charges or rape charges against you.”

31. In her communication with Plaintiff, Defendant, Thalia Graves, never accused Plaintiff of any rape or sexual assault but instead sought to persuade Plaintiff, Joseph Sherman, to serve as her witness against Mr. Combs. These statements imply that Defendant, Thalia Graves, is aware that Plaintiff, Joseph Sherman, is innocent of any alleged sexual assault but is attempting to leverage baseless allegations as part of her broader litigation strategy.

32. Graves lawsuit and subsequent communications constitutes a calculated and malicious attempt to defame Plaintiff by making knowingly false accusations with the intent of

coercing Plaintiff, Joseph Sherman, into supporting Defendant's separate legal action against Mr. Combs.

33. For example, Defendant, Gloria Allred had an opportunity to mitigate the damages of her Defamatory lawsuit filed against, Plaintiff, Joseph Sherman, when she received a call from famed journalist, Sarah Wallace, of NBC, at which time Wallace shared with her instagram messages written from her client, Thalia Graves, to Plaintiff, Joseph Sherman, asking him: "If you will be my witness against Diddy, then my attorneys will leave you out of any proceedings . . . I will make sure that the state does not pick up charges or rape charges against you." Instead of investigating or performing due diligence, Allred arrogantly wrote back in an email on September 30, 2024 at 4:46 p.m. "The complaint speaks for itself. Our client looks forward to her day in court."

34. Instead of seeking the truth out, verifying facts, and bringing justice for women who were *actually* raped, the Defendants here have set women's rights back, and at the same time victimized Joseph Sherman turning his life upside and ruining it with these salacious lies.

35. As a result of Defendants' defamatory statements, Plaintiff has suffered and continues to suffer severe reputational harm, emotional distress, and financial damages, including, but not limited to, the costs of defending against Defendant's meritless allegations.

### **COUNT 1 - DEFAMATION**

#### ***Against all Defendants***

36. Plaintiff incorporates by reference all preceding paragraphs as if fully set forth herein.

37. Defendants' statements, in the legal filing, through media, and her direct communications with Plaintiff and others falsely and maliciously claim that the Plaintiff, Joseph

Sherman, committed heinous crimes, including, but not limited to, rape and sexual assault, thereby damaging Plaintiff's reputation and causing harm to his standing in the community, his professional reputation, and his personal relationships.

38. Defendants made these statements with knowledge of their falsity or with reckless disregard for the truth.

39. Defendants' defamatory statements were made with malice, as demonstrated by the communications with the Plaintiff that clearly sought to coerce him into acting as their witness against Mr. Combs by threatening him with unfounded criminal allegations.

40. As a direct and proximate result of the defamatory conduct alleged herein, the Plaintiff has substantially and irreparably been damaged in excess of \$75,000.

41. Plaintiff has suffered significant damages as a direct and proximate result of Defendant's defamatory statements, including several emotional distress, damages to his personal and professional reputation, and financial harm, all in an amount to be proven at trial.

## **COUNT 2 - NEGLIGENCE INFLICTION OF EMOTIONAL DISTRESS**

### ***Against all Defendants***

42. Plaintiff incorporates by reference paragraphs 1 - 35 as if fully set forth herein.

43. Under New York law, a plaintiff may recover for negligent infliction of emotional distress when a defendant's conduct unreasonably endangers the plaintiff's physical safety or causes emotional distress that results in physical manifestations.

44. Defendants owed a duty to the Plaintiff, Joseph Sherman, to verify the truth, perform due diligence, and act with reasonable care before making statements and allegations such as rape, against the Plaintiff.

45. Defendants breached this duty of care by recklessly filing a baseless lawsuit and making false statements in the lawsuit and in the media that the Plaintiff committed heinous acts, including rape.

46. Had the Defendants done any due diligence, acted with reasonable care first, and verified the veracity of such statements the Defendants knew or should have known that such statements were utterly false and untrue.

47. Defendants' reckless and negligent conduct created an unreasonable risk of causing severe emotional distress to the Plaintiff.

48. As a direct and proximate result of Defendants' negligent and reckless actions, Plaintiff has suffered severe emotional distress, including, but not limited to, anxiety, embarrassment, humiliation, and anguish, all of which have manifested in physical symptoms such as insomnia, depression, anxiety, vomiting, headaches, and other health complications.

49. Plaintiff has incurred damages as a result of Defendant's conduct and seeks compensation for the physical and emotional harm caused by Defendant's negligent actions.

### **COUNT 3 - INTENTIONAL INFLICTION OF EMOTIONAL DISTRESS**

#### ***Against all Defendants***

50. Plaintiff incorporates by reference paragraphs 1 - 35 as if fully set forth herein.

51. Under New York law, a plaintiff may recover for intentional infliction of emotional distress if the defendant's conduct is so extreme and outrageous that it transcends all bounds of decency.

52. Defendants engaged in extreme and outrageous conduct by falsely accusing Plaintiff of rape and other heinous crimes, fully aware that such allegations were baseless and/or



without verifying any such allegations and knowing such allegations are likely to inflict severe emotional distress.

53. Defendants' actions were intentionally calculated to harm Plaintiff's reputation, career, and personal life, causing Plaintiff to experience severe emotional distress.

54. As a direct and proximate result of Defendants' conduct, Plaintiff has suffered and continues to suffer from severe emotional distress, including, but not limited to, anxiety, mental anguish, loss of reputation, and physical manifestations of distress, such as insomnia, depression, anxiety, vomiting, headaches, and other health complications.

55. Plaintiff seeks compensatory and punitive damages due to Defendants' intentional and malicious actions.

#### **COUNT 4 - NEGLIGENCE**

##### ***Against all Defendants***

56. Plaintiff incorporates by reference paragraphs 1 - 35 as if fully set forth herein.

57. Defendants owed a duty of care to Plaintiff, including a duty to verify allegations and statements of rape and sexual assault before publicly making serious and damaging accusations of criminal conduct.

58. Defendants breached this duty by negligently and recklessly publishing and pursuing false claims that Plaintiff committed serious criminal acts, knowing these claims to be unsupported and inaccurate.

59. Defendants' negligent conduct caused Plaintiff to suffer reputational harm, emotional distress, and financial losses.

60. As a direct and proximate result of Defendants' negligence, Plaintiff has incurred damages, including costs related to defending against these baseless accusations, and seeks compensatory damages.

**COUNT 5 - VEXATIOUS LITIGATION**

*Against all Defendants*

61. Plaintiff incorporates by reference paragraphs 1 - 35 as if fully set forth herein.

62. Defendants initiated legal proceedings against Plaintiff with malicious intent, knowing the allegations were baseless and without probable cause.

63. Defendants engaged in this litigation with the intent to harass and coerce Plaintiff into providing favorable testimony against a third party, Sean Combs, as part of their broader strategy.

64. Defendants' conduct constitutes vexatious litigation, causing Plaintiff undue harm and distress, along with significant financial losses related to defending against these baseless claims.

65. Plaintiff seeks compensatory and punitive damages to deter Defendants from engaging in future frivolous and malicious litigation.

**COUNT 6 - ABUSE OF PROCESS**

*Against all Defendants*

66. Plaintiff incorporates by reference paragraphs 1 - 35 as if fully set forth herein.

67. Defendants utilized legal process, including filing a baseless lawsuit, not for its intended purpose but to exert pressure on Plaintiff to cooperate in litigation against a third party.

68. Defendants' use of process in this manner constitutes an abuse of process, as they used legal mechanisms to threaten and coerce Plaintiff with the intention of achieving unrelated goals.

69. As a result of Defendants' abuse of process, Plaintiff suffered damages, including reputational harm, emotional distress, and financial harm from defending against this meritless action.

70. Plaintiff seeks compensatory and punitive damages as a result of Defendants' abuse of process.

### **COUNT 7 - MALICIOUS PROSECUTION**

#### ***Against all Defendants***

71. Plaintiff incorporates by reference paragraphs 1 - 35 as if fully set forth herein.

72. Defendants initiated and pursued a legal proceeding against Plaintiff without probable cause, with full knowledge that the allegations were baseless and intended to harm Plaintiff.

73. Defendants acted with malice, filing claims against Plaintiff solely to damage his reputation, cause him emotional harm, and achieve leverage in an unrelated case.

74. Defendants' malicious prosecution caused Plaintiff significant reputational and financial harm, emotional distress, and mental anguish.

75. As a result, Plaintiff is entitled to compensatory and punitive damages for Defendants' malicious prosecution.

### **PRAYER FOR RELIEF**

**WHEREFORE**, Plaintiff, Joseph Sherman, respectfully requests that this Court grant the following relief:

- a. Compensatory damages, in an amount to be determined at trial;
- b. Punitive damages in an amount sufficient to deter Defendants from engaging in similar reckless misconduct in the future;
- c. Costs, expenses, and attorneys' fees incurred in this action;
- d. Any other relief the Court deems just and proper

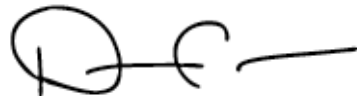
**DEMAND FOR JURY TRIAL**

Plaintiff demands a trial by jury on all issues so triable.

THE PLAINTIFF:

JOSEPH SHERMAN

By his lawyer:



\_\_\_\_\_  
Darnell D. Crosland, Esq.  
CROSLAND LAW GROUP LLC  
1200 Summer Street, Ste 202  
Stamford, Connecticut 06905  
Tel. (203) 921-1782  
Fax (203) 921-1223

Dated: November 7, 2024

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
for the SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK**

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Joseph Sherman .

Case No.

*Plaintiff*

-vs-

**COMPLAINT VERIFICATION**

Thalia Graves *et. al.*

Date: November 7, 2024

*Defendants*

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I, Joseph Sherman, the undersigned affiant, having reviewed the foregoing Complaint, hereby verify and declare under penalty of perjury that the facts contained therein are true and accurate to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Dated: November 7, 2024

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
JOSEPH SHERMAN


# EXHIBIT A

6:42



<  Instagram User


NOV 29 AT 10:54 PM

 Hey  
Were you a security guard for puff

NOV 30 AT 2:45 PM

lol who are u

 Call

 Please call me 972-885-8010

NOV 30 AT 5:17 PM

Like I explained before, if you will be my witness against Diddy , then my attorneys will leave you out of any proceedings because we have statements that you physically showed over eight people videos of me and you to people in the studio so if you are willing to give me a statement

**You've blocked this account**

You can't message or video chat with Instagram User.

Unblock

Delete



6:43



<  Instagram User

NOV 06 AT 5:17 PM

Like I explained before, if you will be my witness against Diddy , then my attorneys will leave you out of any proceedings because we have statements that you physically showed over eight people videos of me and you to people in the studio so if you are willing to give me a statement about my rape against Puffythen the attorneys won't go after you for revenge porn or distribution of a sexual act without consent. That's why I asked you to call me so I don't have to keep writing this.



I will make sure that the state does not pick up charges or rape charges against you. I also understand that was 2001 but this was the normal behavior for you guys but then we women have to deal with the repercussions and the trauma



**You've blocked this account**

You can't message or video chat with Instagram User.

Unblock

Delete







6:43





<  Instagram User

 you guys but then we women have to deal with the repercussions and the trauma you guys leave us.

I don't know what the fuck you talking about know who the fuck you are. You can Sumi shoot me throw me out the window

 Did you work for Bad Boy ? Did you show a video to people in the studio of Conrads? That's why I asked you to call so I can make sure it's the right person

Don't know what the fuck you talking about. Tell your lawyer do what the fuck he want. God bless you I am not in the industry.

 Dude just call 972-885-8010  
When you hear  voice you will know

**You've blocked this account**

You can't message or video chat with Instagram User.

Unblock

Delete

6:43



jasmine.danae Instagram User

jasmine.danae started a live video.

Please stop threatening me and sending me intimidating messages



You are not in the industry now, but you wear back then .

I don't have a clue who you are, nor seen your video, nor no of your video nor ever seen you in my life

It is not a threat. I'm just trying to connect the dots. Like I said I am one of Puffy 's victims so I was just made aware that you had shown some tape of me and you to people in the studio. I didn't even know you recorded anything between us



Did you work for Bad Boy , they called you big Joe, right, did you manage Camr



**You've blocked this account**

You can't message or video chat with Instagram User.

Unblock


Delete



6:43




<  Instagram User



 Did you work for Bad Boy , they called you big Joe, right, did you manage Camron?

Once again, Miss I don't know nothing you are talking about you can call Jesus you can save all these messages. I have no problem with you doing that.

I'm trying to make sure I have the right person

 Do you know a Conrad a.k.a. Rad used to work at Bad Boy ?

I'm curious what you fucking this guy you call big Joe cause you definitely was never having sex with me. I never saw you in my life.

 Just answer the  estion did you work for Bad Boy ever?

**You've blocked this account**

You can't message or video chat with Instagram User.

[Unblock](#) [Delete](#)

6:43



<  Instagram User

Goodbye

And just because you tried to threaten me if anybody calls for my assistance against you, they can definitely have this content I just put out . You pick the right motherfucker to threaten .

That's definitely not true I know nothing of you Diddy, or anybody you are on my phone, threatening my life, my livelihood and my safety. I never did anything to you nor seen you in my life.

Miss you are on my page I'm sure if the guy on the page was someone that did something to you or was videoing you you would know lol was you fucking Joe Sherman

I'm not understanding none of this

**You've blocked this account**

You can't message or video chat with Instagram User.

Unblock

Delete



6:43




<  Instagram User

I'm not understanding none of this



Just call I can better explain

Well, since you say it wasn't you, then we would just wait for the witnesses to say whatever they have to say in court, and they would figure it out. Thanks for your time, and nobody made any threats against you. I said specifically, if it was you in that video and the witness statements I would make sure that no charges were brought against you, if you are the same Joe and can testify for me against Diddy , because the other six people that gave statements in New York said that Joe showed them a video of me and him, so thank you for your time I would let  m figure it out



**You've blocked this account**

You can't message or video chat with Instagram User.

Unblock

Delete

6:44




<  Instagram User

Because I am trying to protect myself from the media and the bullshit and whatever video is out there from 2001 and also save Joe from any bullshit or repercussions from that same video but if you're not him then I apologize I would just let old man Prince and the attorneys figure out what's going on

lol I don't no u do u no this joe Sherman ?did u sucked his did ? If no what he looks like Why u on my page. Threatening me.

lol 😂 here we go with the threats again who's Prince Is that one of your boyfriends?

No one made any threats towards you. I specifically said there is a video of big Joe that used to work at  Boy as a security guard also confirmed

**You've blocked this account**

You can't message or video chat with Instagram User.

Unblock

Delete



6:44



<  Instagram User

No one made any threats towards you. I specifically said there is a video of big Joe that used to work at Bad Boy as a security guard also confirmed that he worked there and also confirmed there is a video of me and him from 2001 also confirmed that this video was shown on a camcorder by Big Joe to at least eight different men including Diddy at Bad Boy studios, I am trying to get a statement from Big Joe on my behalf because I am going after Diddy for my sexual assault so if you're not the same person, like I said, then I apologized, and Prince is not my boyfriend he is Mr. Jay Prince everybody in the industry knows who he is. So if you're not the same Joe, then it's all good, but if you are, then I would like to have a conversation with you, so that way I could tell you what the attorneys in New York after what happened with

**You've blocked this account**

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Unblock

Delete

6:44



<  Instagram User

I just don't get nothing you're saying if there's a video you sucking big Joe's dick you should know who dick you were sucking and who's big Joe

Well that's why we've got people to identify who big Joe is, Jean also confirmed it so did Roger and Diddy 's lawyer and that was the picture they sent me asking if this was the same person so I guess when I fly to New York in two weeks. I will see what they have, you have a good day

I don't give a fuck about no Jay Prince never heard of him don't know him, not intimidated by your threats of him. Fuck out of here.

You don't have a fucking clue what you doing threatening me

**You've blocked this account**

You can't message or video chat with Instagram User.

Unblock

Delete



6:44



<  Instagram User

here.

You don't got a fucking clue what you doing threatening me

As you can see, I'm responding to all your threats on these texts shows you how much I give a fuck. You got a problem with Diddy but you going out your way threatening other people I never saw you before don't know what the fuck you talking about. Never showed no video nor had one of you, so why the fuck are you threatening me with Jay, Prince and lawyers like I give a fuck.

It's hundreds of strippers, prostitutes bottle, girls, models, married women, regular women that's going to be coming after Diddy for his money. All you women know what you was doing with Diddy sexually you just found . A way to turn

**You've blocked this account**

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Unblock

Delete

6:44



<  Instagram User

what the fuck you talking about. Never showed no video nor had one of you, so why the fuck are you threatening me with Jay, Prince and lawyers like I give a fuck.

It's hundreds of strippers, prostitutes bottle, girls, models, married women, regular women that's going to be coming after Diddy for his money. All you women know what you was doing with Diddy sexually you just found . A way to turn consensual, sex into rape. You all was fucking him and loving it just like women do all these other rappers and singers, and tell y'all get the shot to get some money out of them then it's rape has been a little stressed out

From being broke. That's the real problem. Old in Broke

**You've blocked this account**

You can't message or video chat with Instagram User.

Unblock

Delete