

Actor Hammer under scrutiny after woman's sex assault charge

His accuser says she was attacked for more than four hours in 2017. He denies it.

BY AMY KAUFMAN AND RICHARD WINTON

Los Angeles police are investigating Armie Hammer after a woman reported she was sexually assaulted by the actor.

On Feb. 3, sex crimes detectives in the LAPD's West Bureau took a report from a woman who said she was attacked by Hammer, according to Norma Eisenman, a department spokeswoman.

Eisenman said she could not disclose further details about the report, but a source close to the investigation confirmed that it was filed by the same woman who alleged in a Wednesday news conference that she was "violently raped" by Hammer.

That woman, who was identified as Effie, appeared alongside her attorney, Gloria Allred, on a video call to claim that Hammer assaulted her for over four hours on April 24, 2017. During the attack, she said, he "repeatedly slammed" her head against the wall and beat her feet with a crop.

"I tried to get away, but he wouldn't let me. I thought that he was going to kill me," Effie, who is 24 and lives in Europe, said through tears. "He then left with no concern for my well-being. I was completely in shock and couldn't believe someone I loved did that to me. I tried so hard to justify his actions, even to the point of responding to him in a way that did not reflect my true feelings."

In her own remarks, Allred said that a woman has a right to withdraw consent "at any point," even if she has agreed "to certain sexual activity." "If she does withdraw her consent and asks her partner to stop for any reason, he is legally and morally obligated to stop. If he does not stop, he is then at risk of committing a crime against her," Allred said.

Through his lawyer, Andrew Brettler, Hammer strongly denied Effie's claims, noting that all of his sexual encounters have been "completely consensual, discussed and agreed upon in advance and mutually participatory." Brettler argued that Effie's claims are undermined by a July 18, 2020, text message they allege she sent to Hammer in which the texter expresses graphic sexual requests.

"It was never Mr. Hammer's intention to embar-



JORDAN STRAUSS Invision/AP

ARMIE HAMMER said his sexual encounters have been consensual.

rass or expose [Effie's] fetishes or kinky sexual desires," Brettler said, referring to the screenshot of the text message exchange he provided to reporters, "but she has now escalated this matter to another level by hiring a civil lawyer to host a public press conference."

In response to the screenshot, Allred said she challenged Hammer to "present all, not some of his communications with Effie to the Los Angeles Police Department and answer all of their questions directly rather than through his lawyers."

Over the course of their on-and-off-again four-year relationship, which Effie said began after she met Hammer on Facebook at age 20, Effie said she was abused

"mentally, emotionally and sexually."

She added that she has since suffered from suicidal ideations, night terrors and emotional distress. Though Allred would not confirm that Effie was the woman behind the Instagram account HouseOfEffie — which began sharing similar claims about Hammer in January 2020 — a photograph of Effie provided by Allred matched one posted by the woman behind the social media account.

In early January, HouseOfEffie was the first account to publicly accuse Hammer of nonconsensual sexual behavior. Subsequently, two other women came forward in the press claiming that Hammer pressured them into engaging in BDSM acts they later said they felt uncomfortable with.

At the time, Hammer said the allegations were "bull— claims" that were both "vicious and spurious." Still, he stepped away from a romantic comedy costarring Jennifer Lopez that he was set to film in the Dominican Republic last month.

He has since exited another high-profile project, a Paramount+ series about the making of "The Godfather," and has been dropped by his representatives at William Morris Endeavor.

wildfire risk when approving a massive international resort in Lake County that includes 1,400 homes and 850 hotel rooms.

Smith writes for the San Diego Union-Tribune. The Associated Press contributed to this report.

ning Commission, Environmental and Transportation Advisory Commission, Historic Resources Commission, Workforce Development Board, and Board of Recreation and Parks.

Brazil writes for Times Community News.

MTA says bus and train service will be restored by autumn

BY DAKOTA SMITH

A new round of federal funding will allow Metropolitan Transportation Authority to restore bus and train rides throughout Los Angeles County, ensuring that pre-pandemic service can resume by this fall.

President Biden's stimulus package, the American Rescue Plan, will deliver \$1.6 billion to Southern California transit agencies, with a significant amount of that money going to Metro, transit officials said Thursday.

The exact amount that the county agency will receive wasn't available.

Phil Washington, chief executive of Metro, said full service would return by September.

Metro reduced its transit services by 20% during the pandemic as ridership dropped and many Angelenos stayed home. Before the health crisis, Metro was averaging about 1.2 million boardings a day throughout its transit system.

Today, there are 550,000 boardings, officials said, and

majority of whom are Latino or Black, are seeing longer waits and fuller buses, which make social distancing impossible.

Channing Martinez, director of organizing for the Bus Riders Union, a civil rights and climate justice group, said the lack of regular services had led to packed buses and concerns about the spread of the virus.

"The service cuts are a death sentence to Black and Latino bus riders," Martinez said. "I'm glad that they are returning service."

Officials said that sales tax — a big source of income for the transit agency — didn't come in lower than expected, but revenue from fares, tolls and other sources came in worse than projected. As of January, the agency was facing a deficit of \$74 million, officials said.

Separately, the Metro will also receive \$277.5 million from the federal government for two lines under construction, the Purple Line down Wilshire Boulevard and the Regional Connector, which will tie together several rail

USC graduates of '20, '21 to walk the stage