Singer Paula Abdul sues ‘American Idol’ producer over sexual assault

Date: 2023-12-31

Source: https://guardian.ng/news/world/us/singer-paula-abdul-sues-american-idol-producer-over-sexual-assault/

(FILES) TV personalities Paula Abdul (L) and Nigel Lythgoe attend the 2013 amfAR Inspiration Gala Los Angeles at Milk Studios on December 12, 2013 in Los Angeles, California. - Grammy-award-winning artist and US television star Paula Abdul has accused Nigel Lythgoe, a producer on the singing contest show "American Idol", of sexual assault, according to a California lawsuit filed on December 29, 2023. (Photo by Mike Windle / GETTY IMAGES NORTH AMERICA / AFP)  
  
  
  
Grammy-award-winning artist and US television star Paula Abdul has accused a producer on the singing contest show “American Idol” of sexual assault, according to a California lawsuit.  
  
  
  
Abdul, whose 1988 album “Forever Your Girl” was the most successful debut in history at the time, accused Nigel Lythgoe, a producer on “Idol” and a judge on “So You Think You Can Dance,” of sexually assaulting her twice, the complaint filed Friday showed.  
  
Lythgoe, who is English, has denied the accusations, according to media reports.  
  
In the suit, the 61-year-old singer said she was harassed by Lythgoe and other executives on “American Idol,” where she was a judge from 2002-2009.  
  
It alleged she was discriminated against in terms of pay, and that “she was the target of constant taunts, bullying, humiliation, and harassment from several executives, agents, employees” of the show.  
  
The most serious accusations are against Lythgoe, 74.  
  
Early in Idol’s run, the lawsuit stated, Abdul and Lythgoe were on the road for the show’s auditions when he attacked her in a hotel elevator, groping her and “shoving his tongue down her throat.”  
  
  
  
The second assault came after Abdul agreed to appear as a judge on “So You Think You Can Dance” in 2015, and went to dinner at Lythgoe’s house, where he allegedly “attempted to kiss her while proclaiming that the two would make an excellent ‘power couple.'”  
  
“For years, Abdul has remained silent about the sexual assaults and harassment she experienced on account of Lythgoe due to fear of speaking out against one of the most well-known producers of television competition shows who could easily break her career as a television personality and of being ostracized and blackballed by an industry that had a pattern of protecting powerful men and silencing survivors of sexual assault and harassment,” the complaint stated.  
  
Her contracts also barred her from discussing anything “derogatory,” it said.  
  
Lythgoe told NPR that he was “shocked and saddened” by the accusations, which he denied.  
  
The allegations by Abdul, whose other hit songs include “Opposites Attract,” “Straight Up,” “Cold Hearted” and “Rush Rush,” are the latest in a string of high-profile lawsuits filed ahead of Sunday’s expiration of part of California’s Sexual Abuse and Cover Up Accountability Act.  
  
A similar law in New York led to several high-profile cases, including against hip-hop mogul Sean “Diddy” Combs, in November.