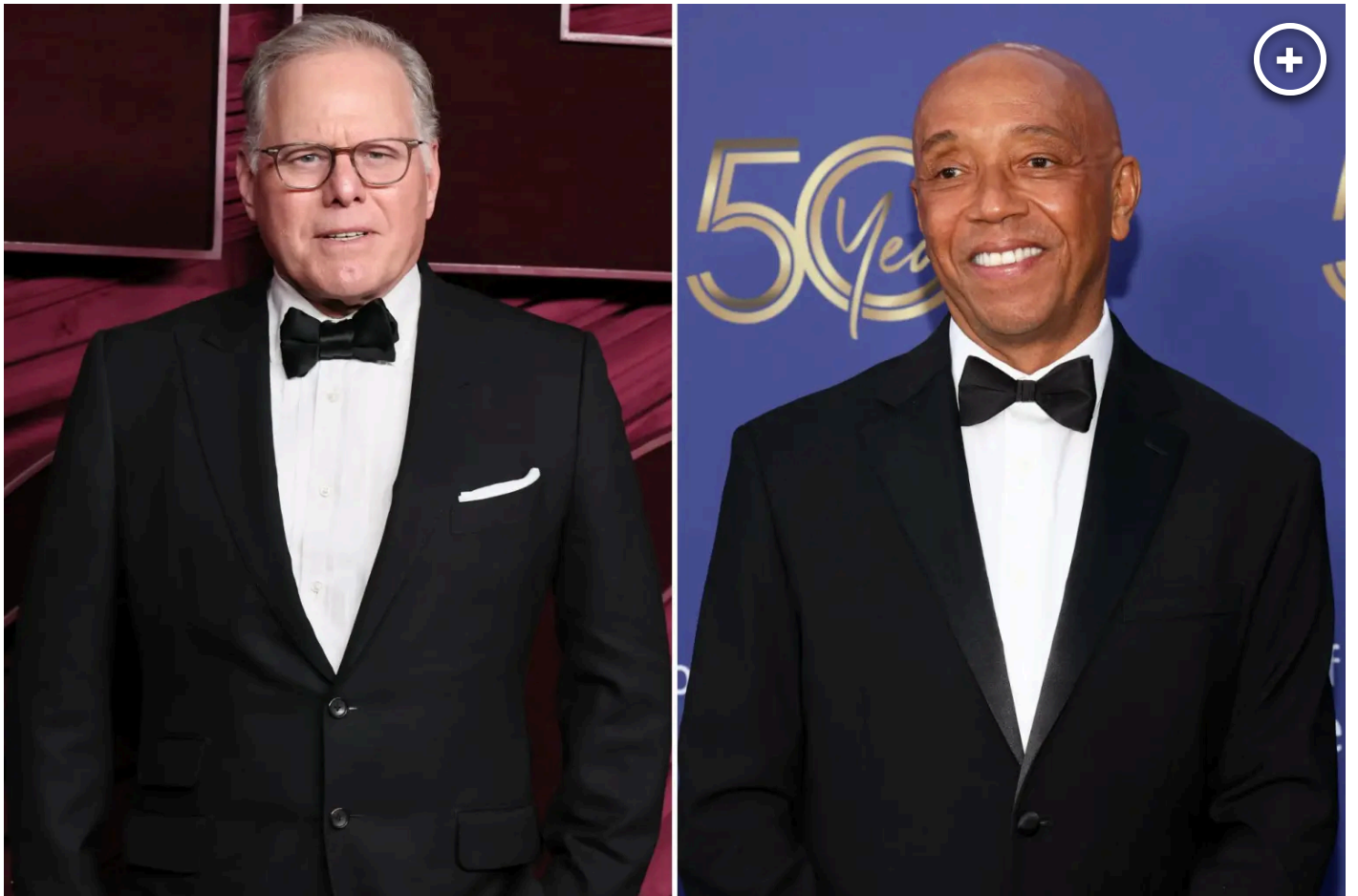


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Russell Simmons makes desperate move to end bitter legal battle with Warner Bros. Discovery

By [Tatiana Siegel](#)

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Russell Simmons and David Zaslav had an interesting -- and brief -- phone conversation.

Last week, **David Zaslav** received a call from an unknown number. Against his better judgement, he picked up.

The voice on the other end of the line was that of **Russell Simmons**, the disgraced former hip-hop mogul who has been locked in a protracted legal battle with Warner Bros. Discovery over the 2020 documentary “On the Record,” which centers on allegations of sexual abuse and harassment by Simmons. In June, Simmons sued Warner Bros. Discovery for defamation, and, according to multiple sources, he wanted to deliver a message to the Warner Bros. Discovery CEO.

“As you know, I’m suing Warner Bros,” Simmons told Zaslav during the brief call, suggesting they should be able to sort out the matter between them. “And you can fix this whole thing. Let’s do this,” he said. Zaslav’s response was curt and to the point: “I can’t get involved in this.” He then hung up.



Zaslav hung up on the disgraced hip-hop mogul.

WireImage

A spokesperson for Zaslav declined comment. Simmons did not respond to a request for comment.

The call came amid a series of behind-the-scenes moves and public legal maneuvers by Simmons' attorneys **Imran Ansari** and **Carla DiMare** regarding the film, which continues to be a roadblock for any hope the once high-flying hip-hop impresario has of making a comeback. "On the Record," which was directed by **Kirby Dick** and **Amy Ziering** and streamed on HBO Max, featured several women who claimed that they had been sexually assaulted by the Def Jam founder.

Simmons filed an amended complaint on March 18, accusing the studio of turning "a blind eye to credible evidence." None of that evidence "was included in 'OTR,' nor did it appear to give the Defendants any pause in their quest to profit from their salacious, one-sided and defamatory film." Since that amended complaint hit, multiple sources have told Page Six Hollywood that Simmons has been working the phones trying to convince various figures — including Zaslav it turns out — to denounce the film.

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At the center of the film is former music executive **Drew Dixon**, who wrestles with going on the record with The New York Times about her account of an alleged rape perpetrated by Simmons in the 1990s. (Simmons has denied all accusations of non-consensual sex.)

Oddly enough, another name emerged in the drama surrounding Simmons' efforts to clear his name: **RJ Cipriani**. Regular readers of P6H know Cipriani as the high-stakes gambler who is currently suing and being sued by Paramount Skydance president **Jeff Shell** in a legal drama that has rocked Hollywood. (Cipriani is suing Shell, Paramount Skydance, **David** and **Larry Ellison** in a \$150 million lawsuit.) Sources say Cipriani called **Oprah Winfrey** on April 2 in a bid to get the talk show host to discredit the film. When Cipriani managed to get Winfrey on the line he asked her, "Can you help Russell?" Sources familiar with the conversation say that Winfrey quickly pivoted and said, "**David Geffen** is on the other line. Call me back." Winfrey did not respond to a request for comment.



Simmons is suing Warner Bros. over a 2020 documentary.

Variety via Getty Images

Winfrey was originally an executive producer on "On the Record," but ahead of the film's premiere at the 2020 Sundance Film Festival, she abruptly yanked her support and removed her name, citing "inconsistencies" in the accounts of the accusers — mostly women of color — sparking backlash from women's groups.

Still, “On the Record” has proved vexing for Simmons. In a review, Variety hailed it as “the fourth major documentary of the #MeToo era to offer an incendiary indictment of men who have used their power within the entertainment industry to commit and cover up patterns of abusive behavior.”

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It is unclear why Cipriani was applying pressure on Simmons’ behalf (Although it is worth noting that one connection we noticed is attorney **Patty Glaser** who has represented Simmons in the past and has a tangled relationship with Cipriani, which I have previously documented). On Tuesday, P6H reached out to Cipriani for comment and asked why he had involved himself in the Simmons-Warner Bros. Discovery drama. He told us, “This is what I try to do — help people that I think deserve being helped.”

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