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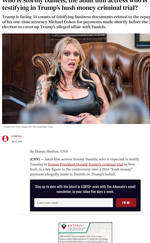
Who is Stormy Daniels, the adult film actress who is testifying in Trump's hush money criminal trial?

Trump is facing 34 counts of falsifying business documents related to the repayment of his one time attorney Michael Cohen for payments made shortly before the 2016 election to cover up Trump's alleged affair with Daniels.



Stormy Daniels arrives for a court hearing in New York, Tuesday, April 16, 2024.

By Bill Rice
May 07, 2024

By Sharon Shahaf, CNN

(CNN) — Adult film actress Stormy Daniels, who's expected to testify Tuesday in former President Donald Trump's criminal trial in New York, is in hot water in the controversy over a New York money/ payment illegally made to Daniels by Trump's lawyer.

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Trump is facing 34 counts of falsifying business documents related to the repayment of his one time attorney Michael Cohen for payments made shortly before the 2016 election to cover up Trump's alleged affair with Daniels. Trump has pleaded not guilty and denied the affair.

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Daniels, whose real name is Stephanie Clifford, claims she had a one-night stand with Trump in 2006.

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The controversy surfaced in January 2018, when the Wall Street Journal reported on the $130,000 payment.

In "Stormy," a documentary that was released on Peacock in March, Daniels said she had "sex" with Trump while he was married to his wife Melania and her husband and daughter and so "that form would be a proper trial and money trail linking me to Donald Trump so that he could not have me killed."

"I was completely sure that I was gonna die," Daniels said in the documentary.

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Prosecutors in New York have alleged that Trump sought to undermine the integrity of the 2016 election by suppressing negative information that would hurt his campaign. According to charging documents, Trump allegedly "caused the publication of false and/or business records to conceal criminal conduct that told damaging information from the voting public during the 2016 presidential election."

A bid by Trump's attorneys to prevent Daniels and Cohen from taking the stand was denied by Judge Juan Merchan in March, and Daniels has said last year she was "absolutely" willing to do so.

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Target of repeated threats

Daniels has been vocal about threats she's received since her alleged affair with Trump came to light. She told Piers Morgan in an interview last year that she received threats "to my children, threatens are now "way more specific and graphic," and much more serious than they were in the past.

"They're a lot more personal — I guess that's a good word. Embarrassing with their threats. And they're not hiding. And they're saying, 'We know what you are doing something right. That they are the patrons," Daniels said.

Daniels released a book, "Full Disclosure," in 2018, detailing her alleged meeting with Trump at Lake Tahoe in 2006 in graphic detail and sharing narratives about her childhood and life.

She says she wrote the book because an earlier "60 Minutes" interview with Anderson Cooper was "edited to hell" and "the decisions and the real, personal cuts to me, ... for all I'm here, I deserve the chance to defend myself and state all the facts."

During Daniels' interview with Cooper, she declined to discuss whether she had evidence of the affair and said that she was threatened to stay silent about it.

"He knows I'm telling the truth," she said.

In her book, Daniels said Cohen threatened to sue shortly after an interview she did with the parent company of Life & Style and Us Weekly, saying it was "in breach of contract." Cohen also threatened to Los Angeles after attempting to sell her story of the alleged affair.

"I was in a parking lot, going to a fitness class with my college daughter," Daniels said. "And a guy walked up to me and said to me, 'Hey, we know you're going to sell your story. We know you've talked and looked at my daughter and said, 'That's a little little girl. Bad for a shame if something happened to her mom,' and then he was gone," she said.

The thing dismissed a composite sketch of the man who allegedly threatened her, calling it "a total cut job" in a CBS report. Daniels then filed a defamation lawsuit against Trump, alleging that he attempted to tarnish her reputation and credibility by dismissing her story as a "hoax" and "extortion" perpetrated by a "porn star." Trump's statement being protected under the First Amendment, and Daniels has been ordered to pay hundreds of thousands of dollars in court-ordered payments to Trump attorneys in the past where.

"Great, now I can go after Horowitz and her 3rd rate lawyer,..," Trump wrote on Truth Social.

Daniels' attorney at the time, Michael Avenatti — who was to have representing Daniels in the wake of the hush money controversy — said at the time that the details she provides in the book paint the story about having sex with Trump is true.

Avenatti and Daniels' relationship took a turn, however, after it was revealed that Avenatti owed nearly $300,000 in back taxes. Prosecutors in California later charged Avenatti with tax crimes and sentenced to four years in prison.

Prosecutors said Avenatti, who helped negotiate the $800,000 advance for Daniels' book, used money from the advance by fabricating a letter purportedly from Daniels with forging payments from the book advance to a non-existent "escrow" account.

Longtime adult film actress

Daniels started out as a dancer in Louisiana before moving to Los Angeles to make porn films. She has experimented with acting, as well as writing and directing films.

The actress has appeared in mainstream box-office hits, including "The 40-Year-Old Virgin" and "Knocked Up," and was inducted into the Adult Video News Hall of Fame in 2013.

After a performance in 2018 at the NASCAR-fueled gentlemen's club in Nevada, Daniels said she was "shocked" to be "overwhelmed standing on the stoolcart when slammed in her corset tear at an old time high and sang it to her advantage.

"I'm getting more dance bookings. I usually only dance once a month, and now I'm dancing three or four times a month. So that's been really great," she told CNN at the time.

The 50-year-old porn actress and erotic dancer has hosted a tour of strip clubs across the United States around the country and starts with several of her fans.

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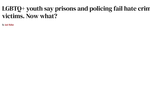
Beloved San Francisco trans elder Dannielle Spillman killed in hit and run after dispute

By Sabrina Vasquez



Dannielle Spillman. Instagram - Jonah Jackson

Following a dispute, a driver hit and killed 74-year-old San Francisco resident Dannielle Spillman, a fixture in the transgender community who had lived in the city for two decades, according to KTVU. The driver, 30-year-old Valentino Cash Jack, has since been charged with murder and fleeing the scene of an accident, according to custody. Keep Reading >

Cold case detectives one step closer to solving murder of Florida trans woman

By Sam Gill

Ms. Rose. - Sun-Sentinel

It's been almost six years since a 27-year-old Black transgender woman screamed for her life as a man chased her around her Pompano Beach, Florida, apartment complex, then shot her to death. Cold case detectives have been working to bring justice to the victim, Ms. Rose, who was found a man they believe is connected to the murder of Rose Black on July 5, 2018. Keep Reading >

Appeals court clears path to move trans women into men's prisons despite sexual assault risk

By Sam Gill

Gabriela Lopez Bassol, left, is flanked by her attorneys Gabriela Lopez Bassol, left, is flanked by her attorneys Amy Whelan, center, and Jennifer Levesque. - Tommy Gilligan / Sun Sentinel / Tribune Content Agency

The Bureau of Prisons could soon relocate transgender women inmates to men's prisons. Keep Reading >

LGBTQ+ youth say prisons and policing fail hate crime victims. Now what?

By Ed Mills

Mohamed Abdi Ali. The Children's Law Center plaintiff, Ali's family and his attorneys. - Jacqueline Martinez and Jessica Spiegel, Center for Constitutional Rights and Disability Rights Oregon

A new youth-led publication is challenging how communities responded to anti-LGBTQ+ violence, urging a more strong from policing and incarceration and toward community-based solutions. Keep Reading >

Texas suspect charged in firebombing of OpenAI CEO Sam Altman's San Francisco home

By Sam Gill

Sam Altman. - Photo by Jason Redmond/AFP via Getty Images

The Justice Department says a 20-year-old man tried to firebomb the San Francisco home of OpenAI CEO Sam Altman, one of the most prominent sci-fi officials in Silicon Valley. Keep Reading >

Calpernia Addams 'shocked' by Drag Race's mention of boyfriend's 1999 murder

By Sam Gill

Calpernia Addams. Alice J. Hirschl - Sub-Saharan Image Gen via Sagar Gandhi Photo

On Friday night's episode of RuPaul's Drag Race season 18, the competing queens were assigned the show's famous "makeover challenge," in which they're tasked with putting a random individual into drag to create a family resemblance. This season, the participants to be dragified were some very most presenting gay overboys. Keep Reading >