

Federal jury rejects most serious charges against rapper and music industry mogul Sean Combs

Kevin Reed
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The federal criminal trial of Sean “Diddy” Combs, the American rap artist and music industry executive, ended July 2, in US District Court in Lower Manhattan, New York City.

After three days of jury deliberations, Combs was found not guilty of the most serious charges—racketeering conspiracy and sex trafficking by force, fraud or coercion—but convicted on two lesser counts of transportation to engage in prostitution.

The outcome of the two-month trial is widely seen as a humiliating disaster for federal prosecutors who invested significant resources and attracted public attention for what they billed as a landmark case against “celebrity abuse and exploitation.”

Moreover, it is a slap in the face of the media, with its months of hysteria about lotions, bodily fluids and “freak offs,” as well as the #MeToo witch-hunt. The jury seems to have been able to distinguish the facts from the sensationalism, consensual behavior and irresponsibility from systematic criminality.

It is no defense of Combs to point out the hypocrisy of the entire business. Murder tens of thousands of women and children, and the US establishment will roll out the red carpet. Hire two prostitutes for a sex party, and there are six months of screaming headlines and a full-blown federal prosecution. The trial was grotesquely ugly, and a deliberate distraction.

Noteworthy as well is the fact that the facts about a truly criminal enterprise, the late Jeffrey Epstein and his intimate connections to leading politicians from both parties and a wide swath of ruling class America, were being suppressed even as Combs faced public pillorying as Satan himself.

The New York jury rejected the prosecutions allegations that Combs was guilty of orchestrating a criminal enterprise for years that exploited by force women and men for sexual purposes. Although transportation to engage in prostitution is a serious federal offense, the guilty verdict on this charge alone shows that the jury considered the bulk of the

prosecution’s case against him as unproven.

Instead of Combs serving the sentence sought by US Attorneys Maurene Comey and Damian Williams of 15 years to life, some legal experts are suggesting that Combs could be sentenced to “time served” and released. If not, his attorneys are expected to argue for a sentence much lighter than the maximum of ten years per charge, given his lack of prior convictions and the nonviolent nature of the offenses. Combs’ sentencing hearing has been set for October 3, 2025.

Weeks of testimony was taken during the trial that included lurid details of Combs’ sex parties—the alleged “freak offs”—where escorts, drugs and emotional coercion were allegedly intermingled.

The indictment against Combs was unsealed in September 2024 when he was charged with five felonies. The case was built on a series of accusations and testimony from former associates, ex-girlfriends and employees, including high-profile figures such as Cassie Ventura, Combs’ former partner, and another woman who testified simply as “Jane.”

Prosecutors alleged that Combs was the ringleader of an “enterprise” that abused and threatened women into prolonged, drug-fueled orgies with male prostitutes and that he used threats and violence to silence victims and witnesses.

Combs, 55, pleaded not guilty to all charges. He was denied bail by a magistrate and a judge in two pretrial appearances when the courts determined Combs posed a danger to victims and witnesses, and there was a risk he could obstruct justice or intimidate witnesses.

Prosecutors argued that Combs had the resources—his estimated personal wealth is \$300 million—and influence to potentially tamper with witnesses, even through coded messages or associates, and that no bail conditions could adequately ensure the safety of the community or prevent interference with the legal process.

Combs’ defense team, led by attorneys Marc Agnifilo and

Teny Geragos, argued that the government's case was built on unreliable witnesses, consensual adult relationships and a fundamental misunderstanding of Combs' "swinger lifestyle."

They contended that while Combs' relationships may have involved domestic violence or unconventional arrangements, none of the conduct rose to the level of criminal sex trafficking or racketeering.

Geragos told reporters outside the courthouse after the verdict:

I have consistently stated since the outset of this case that Sean Combs has not engaged in any sexual assault. I've reiterated this for several months. We have maintained this position with every lawsuit that emerged, and it has been validated. The media misrepresented Sean Combs every single day for almost two years. He has not sexually assaulted anyone, and he certainly has not participated in sex trafficking, as the jury confirmed today.

The jury began deliberations on June 30, 2025. After twelve hours, they announced verdicts on four of the five charges but initially could not reach a consensus on the racketeering conspiracy count. On July 2, after further deliberations, the jury found Combs guilty of transportation for the purposes of prostitution involving Ventura and "Jane."

Combs' lawyers immediately requested his release from custody, arguing that this was his first conviction and that he should be allowed to return to his Miami home pending sentencing. Prosecutors, however, strongly opposed the request, citing Combs' "propensity for violence" and arguing that he posed a flight risk.

Judge Arun Subramanian ultimately denied bail, ordering Combs to remain in custody until his sentencing. The judge noted that Combs had already served nearly 10 months in jail, which would be credited toward his sentence.

Legal analysts have pointed to several factors that likely contributed to the acquittals on the more serious charges. The prosecution's reliance on the testimony of former associates and ex-partners—many of whom had previously settled civil claims or had credibility issues—may well have undermined the case. The defense's strategy of framing Combs' behavior as part of a consensual—if "unusual" or even debauched—lifestyle obviously resonated with jurors.

The trial's conclusion has evoked commentary from the remnants of the discredited #MeToo campaign. A report by the NBC News on July 4 said the verdict was a devastating

"step back" for "sexual assault survivors and advocates."

The NBC News report described #MeToo as "a broader cultural reckoning against sexual harassment and assault" and went on:

"It is heartbreaking," Kaja Sokola, a former model from Poland who was one of three women who testified in [Harvey] Weinstein's May retrial.

"A few years ago, we were more aware. Maybe because it was the first wave, people were paying attention to it," she said. Now, it's "suddenly started to shift to 'Don't believe all women,' or 'Women are liars.'"

In fact, the verdict demonstrated that the jury firmly *believed* in the democratic principle of "innocent until proven guilty" enshrined in the due process clauses of the Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments, which #MeToo has sought to undermine.

Sean Combs was born November 4, 1969, in Harlem, New York City, and raised in Mount Vernon after his father, Melvin Combs, was murdered when Sean was a toddler. His mother, Janice, worked as a model and teacher's assistant, raising Sean and his sister, Keisha, in an environment marked by poverty and adversity. Combs attended Catholic schools, served as an altar boy, and played football, graduating from Mount Saint Michael Academy in 1987.

Combs attended Howard University as a business major but left after his sophomore year to pursue a career in music, starting as an intern at Uptown Records. He quickly rose through the ranks to become a talent director, helping launch the careers of major artists. In 1993, he founded Bad Boy Entertainment, which became a powerhouse in hip-hop and R&B, working with stars like The Notorious B.I.G., Mary J. Blige and Faith Evans. Combs expanded his brand into fashion, beverages and media, becoming an extremely wealthy and influential figure.

While many troubling aspects about Combs and his lifestyle emerged in the courtroom, the jury found insufficient evidence to convict him of the widespread criminal conspiracy painted by the prosecution.



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