

Paramount launches witch-hunt against actor Mark Ruffalo for opposing Gaza genocide

Kevin Reed
24 August 2026

On Friday, the media conglomerate Paramount Skydance launched a political witch-hunting campaign charging the actor Mark Ruffalo with antisemitism for criticizing Oracle CEO Larry Ellison and his family's ties to Israel and the ongoing genocide in Gaza.

A spokesperson for the corporation, which is run by Larry's son David Ellison, said the company is "troubled when antisemitic tropes are invoked in purported service of a business dispute."

Paramount's statement was in response to a video clip Ruffalo had reposted to his Instagram account from the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement featuring the statements of Oracle Executive Vice Chair Safra Catz. In the video, Catz spoke of technological assistance Oracle had supplied Israel after October 7, 2023, including what she called "really profoundly scary technology," as well as other support she said could not be publicly discussed.

Ruffalo connected this admission to the proposed \$111 billion acquisition of Warner Bros. Discovery by Paramount Skydance, headed by David Ellison and financed with the backing of his father. Ruffalo wrote that Oracle was the company Larry Ellison was "using to fund his son David's Warner Bros acquisition," and warned that Oracle's technologies could be incorporated into "one of the largest media conglomerates in the world" and ultimately deployed "on you."

The actor also denounced the Gaza slaughter as genocide, describing it as the outcome of an "apartheid system of oppression powered by Oracle." His statement was direct in charging that the technology corporations that provide data, cloud and military-linked capabilities to the Israeli state bear political responsibility for the purposes to which their systems are put.

Ruffalo urged opposition to the merger because its consequences would be catastrophic for entertainment workers and the public: fewer competing studios, intensified layoffs, more centralized control over distribution and journalism, and vastly greater corporate power over what can be produced and seen.

Warner Bros. Discovery shareholders approved the combination in April, while the Trump Justice Department subsequently approved the \$111 billion deal despite challenges and concerns over its impact on competition from an array of forces including entertainment workers, actors, media experts and critics.

Paramount could not reply to the factual content of Ruffalo's warnings. Instead, the company spokesperson used the methods of witch-hunt, accusing the actor of antisemitism without

substantiation.

The spokesperson declared that terms such as "genocide" and "apartheid," used in relation to the Paramount-WBD deal, were "a bridge too far" and supposedly "cheapen[ed] the very real suffering those words are meant to describe." This is an obvious evasion. Ruffalo did not describe a corporate transaction as genocide, he referred to Israel's assault on Gaza and to the role of a major technology company whose executive publicly boasted about providing "scary technology" to the Israeli military.

Paramount's statement against Ruffalo uses the now-familiar conflation of opposition to Zionism, criticism of the IDF, and denunciation of companies doing business with Israel's military with prejudice against Jews. The purpose of the slander is to render discussion impossible and to blackguard any political opposition to the US-backed destruction of Gaza.

On Saturday, Ruffalo answered Paramount's smear in a statement that deserves to be reproduced at length:

The accusation that I am antisemitic is appalling and fundamentally dishonest. Criticizing the actions of the Israeli prime minister, a military technology contract, or the executives who supply it is not the same as criticizing Jewish people. This critical and necessary dialogue is then dishonestly framed as being anti-Israel.

He continued:

To be clear, my views come from my own political convictions and should never be interpreted as hostility toward Jewish people, for whom I have deep love and respect. Everything I know about acting, activism, and humanism has been profoundly shaped by the Jewish friends, colleagues, and loved ones who have been integral and family throughout every point of my life.

Turning to the merger, Ruffalo added:

This merger has real consequences for real people, and

for the entire country. Scrutinizing the Ellisons, including Oracle's business built on data, surveillance technology and government contracts, and the serious threat to editorial freedom and the loss of a livelihood for thousands of families, is fair and necessary.

He further warned:

The \$111 billion deal would hand one family control over CNN, HBO and Warner Bros., backed in part by foreign money whose influence on editorial decisions has never been fully explained to the public. Lawmakers on both sides of the aisle have called for serious national security review, and regulators still haven't given the public a real answer. Until they do, the merger shouldn't move forward. Now is the time to dive boldly into all these issues, not step back or concede.

These are legitimate and urgent questions of democratic rights, employment, censorship and the transformation of media into a direct instrument of an increasingly fascist-oriented ruling oligarchy.

Larry Ellison co-founded Oracle, served as its chief executive from 1977 to 2014, and remains its chairman and chief technology officer. He retains an enormous stake in Oracle and has used the company's wealth to build a broader political and media empire through his son's Skydance operation.

David Ellison founded Skydance and is now chairman and chief executive of Paramount Skydance. The Ellison family already exercises decisive influence over Paramount assets, including CBS, MTV and Nickelodeon; the WBD takeover would add CNN, HBO, Warner Bros. and a major cable and streaming portfolio.

Larry Ellison is not merely a businessman with private views. He is a longtime ally of Donald Trump, hosted a high-dollar Trump fundraiser in 2020, and participated after the 2020 election in discussions among Trump supporters on how to overturn the result. His relationship with Trump was a major factor in the reelection of the would-be dictator and has helped create favorable conditions for Oracle's technology interests and the Ellison family's media ambitions.

The family's Israel connections are just as substantial. Ellison has been reported to have contributed millions to Friends of the Israel Defense Forces, supported the settlement project and maintained a close relationship with Benjamin Netanyahu. Vice Chair Catz has previously declared Oracle's commitment to the Israeli state "second to none."

The Trump administration named Ellison and Catz to the President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology in 2026, giving the two leading Oracle figures direct access to the administration while Oracle pursues major technology and media interests. This is part of the quid pro quo that the White House has with the financial oligarchy.

Mark Ruffalo has been a prominent public defender of

Palestinian rights for years. He has criticized Israel's system of oppression, opposed the Gaza war and joined broader efforts within the film industry to resist the merger and defend the livelihoods of creative workers. In April, he joined an anti-merger initiative that gathered more than 5,000 signatures and warned that the transaction threatened "the sustainability of the entire creative community."

Ruffalo's enemies seized on this record precisely because it is visible and influential. The effort to stigmatize him as an antisemite is intended to establish that a celebrity who speaks plainly about Israel's crimes, US corporate complicity and media monopoly risks professional punishment.

Ruffalo's case is part of a wider campaign in Hollywood, universities, newsrooms and cultural institutions. Public figures who oppose Israel's devastation of Gaza have repeatedly faced accusations of antisemitism, professional blacklisting, cancellation campaigns and demands that employers discipline or dismiss them. Social media companies have also been suppressing or limiting pro-Palestinian speech.

The Trump administration has a close relationship with the Ellisons and approved the Paramount-WBD deal. The White House has used "antisemitism" allegations as a political weapon to silence opposition while consolidating enormous wealth, media ownership and surveillance capacity in the hands of politically connected billionaires.

This is inseparable from the administration's ongoing assault on artists, comedians and actors who criticize Trump or ridicule him. A government and corporate establishment that treats political satire and antiwar speech as intolerable is seeking to make what is left of cultural life part of the drive to authoritarianism. The defense of Ruffalo is therefore a defense of the democratic right to oppose war, genocide, monopoly power and a president whose supporters seek to silence and destroy the careers of those who refuse to subordinate themselves to it.



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact