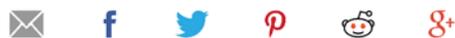




# Taylor Swift, ex-radio host head to court over groping claim

P. SOLOMON BANDA, ASSOCIATED PRESS | August 4, 2017 | Updated: August 4, 2017 9:18pm



Entertainment litigation attorney Tre Lovell and Billboard magazine music editor Jason Lipshutz discuss Taylor Swift's upcoming court case, in which the pop star alleges she was groped by a Denver radio host. (Aug. 4)

Media: Associated Press

DENVER (AP) — Taylor Swift and her support team didn't call police after she said she had been groped by a Denver radio host during a photo session before a concert.

Instead, they called his boss, and David Mueller lost his job. The disc jockey later sued the singer-songwriter, saying he had been falsely accused and wanted \$3 million in damages.

Swift countersued, claiming sexual assault, setting up a civil trial set to begin Monday in federal court in Denver that will largely turn on who the eight-member jury believes.

Swift is scheduled to testify. Both sides say no settlement is in the works.

The lawsuits provide differing accounts of backstage events before Swift performed at a 2013 concert at the Pepsi Center in Denver.

Swift tried to keep the situation "discreet and quiet and confidential" and was upset by Mueller's claim that "for some reason she might have some incentive to actually fabricate this story," her attorney, Douglas Baldrige, has argued in court.

Swift is seeking a verdict that awards her \$1, while holding Mueller responsible and "serving as an example to other women who may resist publicly reliving similar outrageous and humiliating acts," her lawsuit states.

Some entertainment attorneys say celebrities often want to address such situations outside court.

"Once celebrities decide to take legal action, it's going to hit the press, they're going to be called as a witness and they have to spend time with that," said Tre Lovell, a California-based attorney who

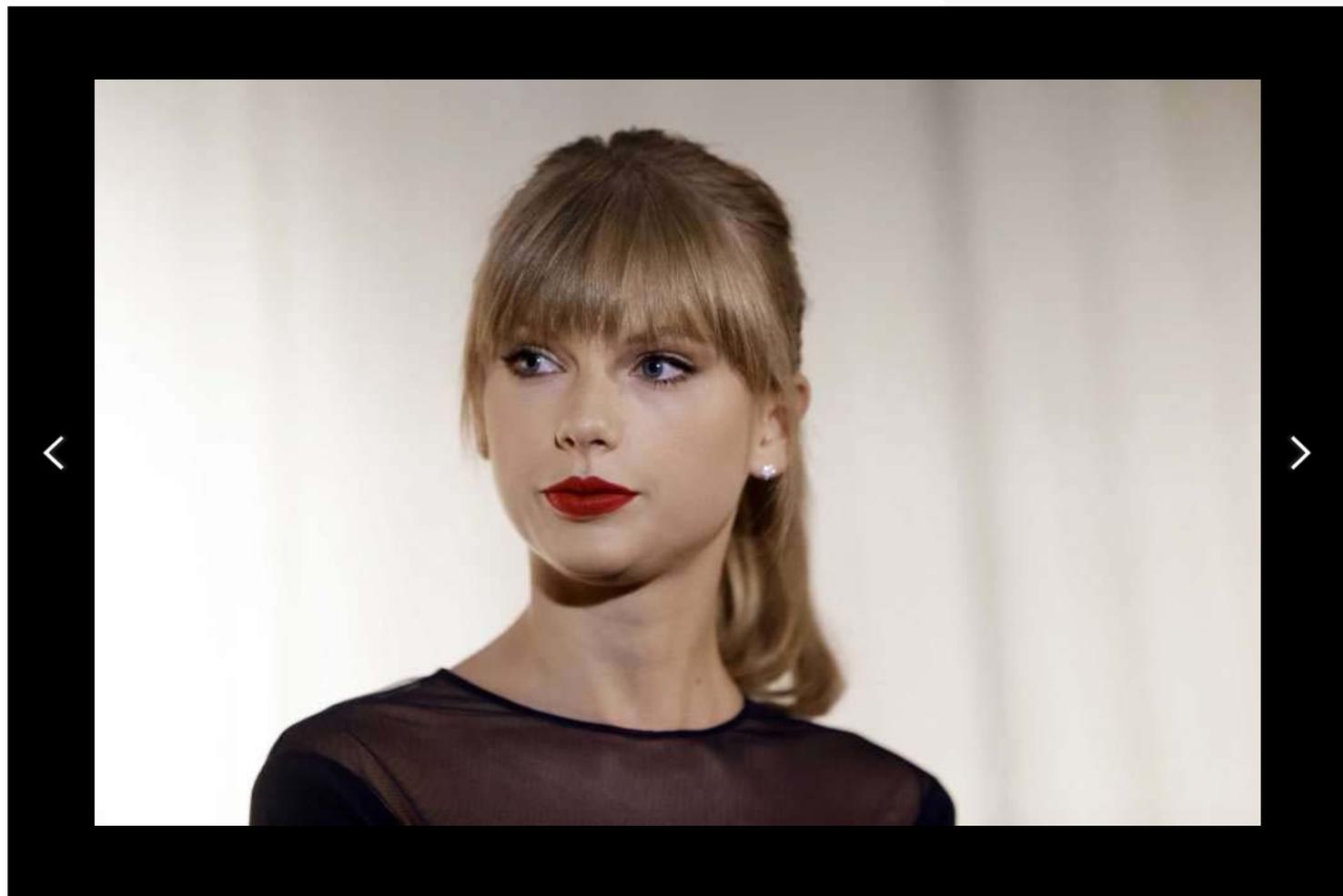


Photo: Mark Humphrey, AP



IMAGE 1 OF 2

FILE - In this Oct. 12, 2103 file photo, Taylor Swift appears at the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum in Nashville, Tenn. David Mueller, a former radio host, claims in a lawsuit that he lost his job ... [more](#)

represents production and entertainment management companies.

"They don't necessarily want that. They want to focus on their career, their brands, their sponsorships. They have a whole revenue stream that's at stake," Lovell said.

With a lot at stake, Michael Niborski, an attorney whose firm represents Bruno Mars and Kanye West, said Swift "is particularly well-suited to

represent women's rights, female empowerment and not taking this kind of behavior."

Mueller, then 51, was a morning host at a Denver country-music station when he was assigned to attend Swift's June 2, 2013, concert.

Swift, then 23, was touring in support of her "Red" album, with hits such as "I Knew You Were Trouble" and "We Are Never Ever Getting Back Together."

Mueller and his girlfriend lined up backstage with other fans for a meet-and-greet with Swift and entered a curtained enclosure where they spoke briefly with the singer-songwriter.

A security guard and at least two other Swift team members were present when it came time for a photo. Mueller said he jumped into the picture at the last second.

Mueller said Swift was cordial as he and his girlfriend left. He went to his car to drop off an autographed photo then returned to the arena, where he was confronted by Swift's security guard.

In court documents, Swift said, "He took his hand and put it up my dress and grabbed onto my ass cheek, and no matter how much I scooted over, it was still there."

She said she met and greeted other fans, then reported the incident to the guard and a photographer.

Mueller denied inappropriately touching Swift and said he told the guard: "Please call the police. I didn't do anything."

Under local law, such an act would merit a misdemeanor charge of unlawful sexual conduct, which carries a maximum possible sentence of two years in jail. No criminal charges are pending.

After escorting Mueller out of the arena, a member of Swift's team called Mueller's boss and asked that appropriate action be taken.

The radio station interviewed Mueller and fired him, citing a morality clause in his contract that allows his employer to fire him for conduct that could reflect unfavorably on the station or its sponsors, court documents say.

The documents also say a representative of the station said Mueller had changed his story from not having touched Swift to possibly touching her incidentally or accidentally.

Mueller's attorney, Gabriel McFarland, argues that Mueller may have been misidentified after someone else touched Swift.

He also says the security guard did not react to anything during the backstage meeting and that as many as 20 other people took photographs with Swift after Mueller left.

The trial is being held in U.S. District Court because the Mueller and Swift live in separate states and the matter involves a claim for damages higher than \$75,000.

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This story has been corrected to show that attorney Michael Niborski's last name was misspelled.

