

## People &amp; Places

## People

## 'Restore Cosby's conviction'

## Smollett 'a real victim' of attack, says lawyer

CHICAGO, Nov. 30, (AP) — Testimony is set to begin Tuesday in the trial of ex-'Empire' actor **Jussie Smollett**, who prosecutors say staged a homophobic and racist attack in Chicago but whose defense attorney says is "a real victim" of a "real crime."

Special prosecutor Dan Webb told jurors during opening statements late Monday that Smollett recruited two brothers — who worked with him on the TV show — to help him carry out a fake attack in January 2019 because he believed the television studio didn't take hate mail he had received seriously.

Smollett then reported the alleged attack to Chicago police, who classified it as a hate crime and spent 3,000 staff hours on the investigation, Webb said. The actor told police he was attacked by supporters of then-President Donald Trump — igniting political divisions around the country.

"When he reported the fake hate crime that was a real crime," Webb said.

Defense attorney Nene Uche said the two brothers attacked Smollett because they didn't like him and that a \$3,500 check the actor paid the men was for training so he could prepare for an upcoming music video. Uche also suggested a third attacker was involved and told jurors there is not a "shred" of physical and forensic evidence linking Smollett to the crime prosecutors allege.

"Jussie Smollett is a real victim," Uche said. Smollett is charged with felony disorderly conduct. The class 4 felony carries a prison sentence of up to three years, but experts have said it's likely that if Smollett is convicted he would be placed on probation and perhaps ordered to perform community service.

Webb told jurors Smollett was unhappy about how the studio handled a letter he received that included a drawing of a stick figure hanging from a tree and "MAGA," a reference to Trump's Make America Great Again campaign slogan. Webb said police have not determined who wrote that letter.



Smollett

## Crime

However, Uche countered that Smollett had turned down extra security when the studio offered it.

Webb said Smollett then "devised this fake crime," holding a "dress rehearsal" with the two brothers, Abimbola and Olabinjo Osundairo, including telling them to shout racial and homophobic slurs and "MAGA." Smollett also told the brothers to buy ski masks, red hats and "a rope to make it look like a hate crime," Webb told jurors. The brothers used a \$100 bill that Smollett gave them to buy the supplies, Webb said.

He said Smollett wanted the attack captured on surveillance video, but the camera he thought would record the hoax was pointed in the wrong direction. He also said the original plan called for the men to throw gasoline on Smollett but that they opted for bleach instead because it would be safer.

Whether Smollett, who is Black and gay, will testify remains an open question. But the siblings will take the witness stand.

Uche portrayed the brothers as unreliable, saying their story has changed while Smollett's has not, and that when police searched their home they found heroin and guns.

"They are going to lie to your face," Uche told the jury.

Uche also said evidence "will show a tremendous rush to judgment by various police officials," and he said prosecutors' claim about paying for a fake attack by check doesn't make sense.

"At the end of the day they want you to believe Jussie was stupid enough to pay for a hoax with a check but was smart enough to pay (for supplies) with a \$100 bill," he said.

As for Uche's suggestion that another attacker may have been involved, buried in nearly 500 pages of Chicago Police Department reports is a statement from an area resident who says she saw a white man with "reddish brown hair" who appeared to be waiting for someone that night. She told a detective that when the man turned away from her, she "could see hanging out from underneath his jacket what appeared to be a rope."

Her comments could back up Smollett's contention that his attackers draped a makeshift noose around his neck. Further, if she testified that the man was white, it would support Smollett's statements — widely ridiculed because the brothers, who come from Nigeria, are Black — that he saw pale or white skin around the eyes of one of his masked attackers.

Twelve jurors plus two alternates were sworn in late Monday for a trial that Judge James Linn said he expects to take about one week. Cameras are not allowed inside the courtroom and the proceedings are not being livestreamed, unlike in other recent high-profile trials.

## Also:

**PHILADELPHIA:** Prosecutors urged the US Supreme Court to reinstate **Bill Cosby's** sexual assault conviction, complaining in a petition released Monday the verdict was thrown out over a questionable agreement that the comic claimed gave him lifetime immunity.

They said the Pennsylvania Supreme Court decision in June to overturn Cosby's conviction created a dangerous precedent by giving a press release the legal weight of an immunity agreement.

Montgomery County District Attorney **Kevin Steele** called the court's decision "an indefensible rule," predicting an onslaught of criminal appeals if it remains law.

"This decision as it stands will have far-reaching negative consequences beyond Montgomery County and Pennsylvania. The US Supreme Court can right what we believe is a grievous wrong," Steele wrote in the filing, which seeks review under the due process clause of the US Constitution.

Cosby's lawyers have long argued that he relied on a promise that he would never be charged when he gave damaging testimony in an accuser's civil suit in 2006. The admissions were later used against him in two criminal trials.

The only written evidence of such a promise is a 2005 press release from then-prosecutor **Bruce Castor**, who said he did not have enough evidence to arrest Cosby.

The release included an ambiguous "caution" that Castor "will reconsider this decision should the need arise." The parties have since spent years debating what that meant.

Steele's bid to revive the case is a long shot. The US Supreme Court accepts fewer than 1% of the petitions it receives. At least four justices on the nine-member court would have to agree to hear the case. A decision on the petition, filed Wednesday but only made public Monday, is not expected for several months.



Australian Indigenous actor David Gulpilil, (second right), film director Baz Luhrmann, (second left), walks with actors Brandon Walters (left), and Nicole Kidman (right), following a press conference for their latest movie, *Australia*, in Sydney, Tuesday, Nov. 18, 2008. Gulpilil has died of lung cancer, a government leader said on Monday, Nov. 29. He was 68 years old. (AP)

## Obituary

## An iconic, once-in-a-generation artist

## Australian Indigenous actor Gulpilil dies

CANBERRA, Australia, Nov. 30, (AP) — Australia's most acclaimed Indigenous actor and dancer, David Gulpilil, has died of lung cancer, a government leader said on Monday. He was 68 years old.

Gulpilil found his widest audiences with his roles in the 1986 hit film "Crocodile Dundee" and in director Baz Luhrmann's 2008 epic "Australia" in a career that spanned five decades. He was often described as a bridge between Indigenous Australia and the outside world who never fit comfortably in either place.

"It is with deep sadness that I share with the people of South Australia the passing of an iconic, once-in-a-generation artist who shaped the history of Australian film and Aboriginal representation on screen," South Australia state Premier Steven Marshall said in a statement.

An accomplished didgeridoo player, Gulpilil mixed with Jimi Hendrix and Bob Marley. He was feted in New York and Paris. He also spent periods of his life as an itinerant drinking and sleeping in parks in the northern Australian city of Darwin and stints in prison for alcohol-fueled offenses.

Gulpilil was born on tribal land in the sparsely populated wilds of the Australian northern frontier in the early 1950s, his friend and caregiver Mary Hood said. His date of birth was recorded as July 1, 1953, a guesswork date set by local missionaries.

First contacts between Indigenous Australians and the outside world were becoming rare but continued in the remote Outback for another 30 years from the time of Gulpilil's birth. Family groups followed in nomadic traditions unaware their land had been colonized by Britain two centuries earlier.

Gulpilil said he never saw a European Australian until he was 8 years old and considered English his sixth language, his biographer Derek Rielly wrote. The other 13 were Indigenous dialects. Gulpilil's Christian name was foisted upon him at school.

Gulpilil was a 16-year-old ceremo-

nial dancer performing in the Indigenous mission of Maningrida in 1969 when he met British director Nicolas Roeg, who was scouting for filming locations. Gulpilil starred in Roeg's acclaimed 1971 movie "Walkabout" as a lone youth wandering the Outback as part of a tribal rite of passage, who comes across and rescues two lost British children. The British siblings were played by a teenage Jenny Agutter, who later found fame in Hollywood, and the director's 7-year-old son, Lucien.

Roles followed in popular movies "Storm Boy" in 1976 and "The Last Wave" in 1977.

His final role was the remake of "Storm Boy" in 2019, in which he played the father of the central character in the original, Fingerbone Bill. Gulpilil recalled learning to binge on alcohol and drugs from counter-culture icon Dennis Hopper, who played the starring role in the 1976 movie about a nineteenth-century Australian outlaw, "Mad Dog Morgan." The 22-year-old Indigenous actor had third billing on the film after Hopper and Jack Thompson, a stalwart in Australian cinema.

## Awards

Gulpilil won multiple best-actor awards for the 2002 Rolf de Heer-directed movie "The Tracker," in which he played one of the many Indigenous men that Australian police routinely used as trackers of fugitives in the Outback.

Weeks before the movie was released, journalists visited him in the small Indigenous community of Ramingining on his crocodile-infested tropical tribal land. He was living in a hut with his then-partner, Indigenous painter Robyn Djunginy, without power or running water.

They cooked kangaroo meat and fish over an open fire beneath a scrap iron roof. Hunting spears were slung from a rafter and Gulpilil kept a wooden Indigenous fighting club known as a nulla nulla for self-protection.

"I was brought up in a tin shed. I

wandered all over the world — Paris, New York — now I'm back in a tin shed," Gulpilil said.

He presented himself as a victim of his own celebrity and his own people's misunderstanding of his position in the wider world.

"People say to me: You're a big name. You have money. Why don't you buy yourself a house; get out of Ramingining?" he said.

"This is my country. I belong here, and I'm broke," he added.

Exactly why he was broke was not clear. He was vague about how much he earned over the years, and wealth in Australian Indigenous society is communal, tending to permeate through relatives and friends.

Back then, Gulpilil liked to drink beer, smoke marijuana and take kava. But because all three were banned in Ramingining, he avoided some of the temptations of city life excesses.

Gulpilil's friend and caregiver, Hood, first met him in 2006 at the Darwin premiere of "Ten Canoes," the first feature-length movie in an Australian Indigenous language.

Gulpilil narrated the movie and his son, Jamie Gulpilil, was part of the cast that was mostly drawn from Ramingining.

"When I first met him, I saw a real kindness," Hood said. She acknowledged there was also a "dark" side.

A Darwin judge sentenced Gulpilil in 2011 to a year in prison for breaking the arm of his then-partner, indigenous artist Miriam Ashley, during a drunken argument in a Darwin home. He used his time in prison to turn his life away from alcohol and cannabis.

Hood regularly visited Gulpilil in prison. He was released to live with her and, for a time, Ashley at Hood's Darwin home while on parole. He eventually followed Hood to Murray Bridge in South Australia state, 3,500 kilometers (2,200 miles) from Ramingining and his traditional country.

Hood became his caregiver after he was diagnosed with inoperable lung cancer in 2017.



Kristen Stewart poses with the performer tribute award in the winners room at the Gotham Awards at Cipriani Wall Street on Monday, Nov. 29, in New York. (AP)



Dahl



Spears

## Variety

**LOS ANGELES:** Arlene Dahl, the actor whose charm and striking red hair shone in such Technicolor movies of the 1950s as "Journey to the Center of the Earth" and "Three Little Words," has died at age 96.

Dahl's son, actor **Lorenzo Lamas**, said in posts on Facebook and Instagram that she died Monday morning in New York. No cause of death was given.

"I will remember her laughter, her joy, her dignity as she navigated the challenges that she faced," Lamas said. "She truly was a force of nature."

In 1959's "Journey to the Center of the Earth," an adaptation of **Jules Verne's** sci-fi classic, Dahl plays the widow of a scientist who joins co-stars **James Mason** and **Pat Boone** on a harrowing race to the earth's core.

She sang and danced in 1950's "Three Little Words," a musical biopic of songwriters **Bert Kalmar** and **Harry Ruby**, playing Ruby's wife **Eileen Percy** opposite frequent co-star **Red Skelton**.

She co-starred with **Bob Hope** in 1953's "Here Come the Girls," provided the love interest for Skelton in 1950's "Watch the Birdie" and played the hero's sweetheart in such adventures as 1952's "Caribbean" with **John Payne**, 1953's "Jamaica Run" with **Ray Milland** and 1954's "Bengal Brigade" with **Rock Hudson**.

Dahl became famous for her six marriages as for her acting career. Her husbands included screen performers **Fernando Lamas** and **Lex Barker**, Fleischman's yeast heir **Christopher Holmes**, wine importer **Alexis Lichine** and investor **Rounseville Schaum**. She was wed to businessman **Marc Rosen** for the last 37 years of her life.

When her movie career ended, Dahl remained prominent in television, including a three-year stint in the soap opera "One Life to Live" in the mid 1980s.

She made frequent appearances on "The Love Boat" in the 1980s, and guest-starred on her son Lamas' series "Renegade" and "Air America" in the late 1990s. (AP)

**MARION, Ohio:** A radio station serving US President **Warren G. Harding's** Ohio hometown says a reward offered by one of its listeners is providing new hope of finding a long lost dog collar stolen from his historic home.

**Scott Spears**, host of a morning radio show on WWHG-FM in Marion, near the 29th president's birthplace, said the donor of the \$1,000 reward asked to remain anonymous. Spears told listeners of the of-

fer on "Now With Scott Spears" last week. He said the station has deposited the money in a local bank and will act as an intermediary on any tips offered to solve the mystery.



Kwang Dong-hyuk, (left), Lee Jung-jae, Jung Ho-yeon and Kim Ji-yeon pose with the breakthrough series — long format award at the Gotham Awards at Cipriani Wall Street on Monday, Nov. 29, in New York. (AP)

The antique collar belonged to Harding's Airedale terrier. It was the only thing stolen from his home on a Tuesday in 2012. A groundskeeper found a ladder propped against a second-story window. That prompted speculation that the thief had visited the home before and knew where to look for the collar.

Made in 1923, the collar has the dog's name, "Laddie Boy," engraved on it in raised letters surrounded by hearts. (AP)

**TAMPA, Fla:** A Florida family is in trouble with their homeowners association for putting up their Christmas lights too early. The Moffa family hired a company to decorate the yard of their Tampa home WFLA reported.

Days later, they received a letter notifying them that they now face a fine for violating their HOA agreement. If they don't remove the lights, they could face fines of \$100 a day, up to \$1,000, the letter said. Moffa said he has no plans to remove the lights.

"That was their only availability, and I can't climb up on the roof myself," he told the TV station, adding he didn't know it was against the rules to put up Christmas lights before Thanksgiving.

"The holidays and the pandemic, I think the kids are wanting something that's more bright to look at," Moffa said. (AP)