

Lawyers Weigh in on the Legal Fails and Wins of Johnny Depp VS. Amber Heard So Far - Exclusive



BY NICOLE CORD-CRUZ/MAY 6, 2022 10:49 AM EDT

The following article includes allegations of domestic abuse and sexual assault.

All eyes remain on [Amber Heard](#) and [Johnny Depp](#) as they battle it out in court while Depp's [defamation trial](#) against his ex-wife continues. Both stars have taken the witness stand in an attempt to prove that they endured domestic abuse from their former spouse.

The convoluted civil case began when Heard penned an op-ed piece in The Washington Post, in which she implied she had been a victim of assault from Depp. The "Pirates of the Caribbean" actor, who claims it's he who was at the mercy of Heard's abuse during their relationship, is trying to clear his name and take back his career by suing Heard for defamation. The star testified that he had never "struck any woman in my life," much less someone he used to love, per The New York Times.

Meanwhile, in her tear-filled testimony, Heard recounted alleged abused by Depp, bringing up a time in 2015 when she claimed to fear for her life. "I could just hear him saying he was going to kill me," she testified, per Deadline. With both parties sharing opposing testimonies, it's difficult to discern who is telling the truth. Legal experts have exclusively told Nicki Swift where both parties have seen wins in the case, as well as where Depp and Heard have fallen short defending themselves.

Amber Depp's legal team has only blamed Johnny Depp



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[Celebrity lawyer](#) Chris Melcher of [top family law firm](#) Walzer Melcher LLP in California observed that Amber Heard's legal team is trying to gain the upper hand on the defamation allegations by putting the blame of abuse on Johnny Depp. One of Heard's team's strategies was to have forensic psychologist Dawn Hughes testify for the "Aquaman" star. According to Melcher's analysis, this was ultimately improper because Dr. Hughes "went beyond the scope of her expertise and should have confined her testimony to describing the cycle of violence in intimate relationships." Instead of offering an expert analysis, Melcher says her testimony "merely parroted" Heard's allegations so as to confuse the jury with an expert's confirmation of abuse.

Depp's team did the opposite, says [top family law attorney](#) Christopher C. Melcher, with forensic psychologist Shannon Curry making an effort "not to render an opinion on whether either party abused the other." Instead, Dr. Curry revealed Heard's borderline personality disorder and discussed the traits associated with the diagnosis. Melcher pointed out that it would have benefited Heard's team to have the star "take responsibility for her angry outbursts against" Depp. "Had Amber acknowledged her role in the breakdown of the relationship it would have shown awareness of her own faults," Melcher assessed.

Meanwhile, Depp's admitting to relying on drugs and alcohol and "unpolished" testimony, Melcher says, may help build his credibility. However, there may be no clear winner between Depp and Heard at this juncture, according to another legal expert's analysis.

Jurors don't know if Amber Heard and Johnny Depp are acting

Amber Heard and Johnny Depp are actors first and foremost, and entertainment lawyer and founder of Romano Law Domenic Romano argues that may confuse the jurors. Romano exclusively told Nicki Swift that with the intimate details about their relationship being out in the open, it's "hard to see a clear path to either of them looking better at the end of this trial than they did going in."

"Both sides have painted a portrait of a very combustible relationship," Romano described of the two camps' tactics. "Amber Heard is trying to establish a pattern of physical, verbal and even sexual abuse, at the hands of Johnny Depp. She is also providing testimony about his drug and alcohol use and aiming to paint a picture of a man out of control ... Depp, for his part, has pled himself the victim of abuse, both in his childhood and again, in his marriage and relationship with Amber."

Ultimately, though, jurors will have a tough time discerning whether the two are telling the truth given their professions. Romano described Depp's team as drawing focus to the actor's "charisma and genius," while Heard's legal defense has hinged on her "emotional and tearful testimony" about their relationship. "The jurors will probably harbor a certain amount of skepticism, because the litigants are both actors," Romano said. "The issue for jurors is decide who, if anyone, is telling the truth ... and who is 'acting.'"

If you or anyone you know has been a victim of sexual assault, help is available. Visit the Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network website or contact RAINN's National Helpline at 1-800-656-HOPE (4673). If you or someone you know is dealing with domestic abuse, you can call the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-7233. You can also find more information, resources, and support at their website.