

# Ryan Reynolds claims Justin Baldoni can't sue him for 'hurt feelings.' What a legal expert says of latest filing.

In Tuesday's motion to be dismissed from Baldoni's lawsuit, Reynolds didn't deny mocking the director with "Deadpool & Wolverine" character "Nicepool."

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Updated Thu, March 20, 2025 at 3:13 AM GMT+8



Ryan Reynolds attends the *Deadpool & Wolverine* UK Fan Event at the Eventim Apollo on July 11, 2024 in London, England. ID [356877764](#) © [Fred Duval](#) | [Dreamstime.com](#)

Justin Baldoni's attorney slammed Ryan Reynolds's attempt to get dismissed from the \$400 million lawsuit filed against the *Deadpool* star and his wife, Blake Lively.

On Tuesday, Reynolds asked a court to drop Baldoni's legal claims against him, and while he didn't deny the *Deadpool & Wolverine* character "Nicepool" mocked Baldoni, he claimed the director can't sue over "hurt feelings." Reynolds also said it's not defamatory that he allegedly called Baldoni a sexual predator if he believes it to be true. But one legal expert told *Yahoo Entertainment* it's not likely Reynolds will be dismissed from the case right now.

In Reynolds's filing, his lawyers asked what he has to do with Lively's allegations of sexual harassment and retaliation against Baldoni, Wayfarer Studios (which Baldoni founded with billionaire Steve Sarowitz) and others.

"So what does Ryan Reynolds have to do with that, legally speaking, other than being a supportive spouse who has witnessed firsthand the emotional, reputational and financial devastation Ms. Lively has suffered? Nothing," the complaint read.

Baldoni's attorney, Bryan Freedman, disagreed.

"Mr. Reynolds's exploitation of his enormous power in Hollywood continues, this time arrogantly asking to be dismissed from the case despite his publicly documented involvement extending far beyond just being a 'supportive spouse.' Mr. Reynolds was a key player in the scheme, defaming Justin around Hollywood, strong-arming WME into dropping Justin as a client, and trying to destroy Justin's career however possible," Freedman told TMZ.

Baldoni claimed he was dropped from his talent agency WME, which also reps Reynolds and Lively, after pressure from the superstars. Baldoni alleged Reynolds privately called him a sexual predator twice.

"[Ryan's] fingerprints have been all over this smear campaign against Justin and the Wayfarer team since day one," Freedman said. "Mr. Reynolds now attempts to reduce plainly cognizable claims to 'hurt feelings,' sending a clear message that bullying is acceptable."

Freedman continued, "After lighting a match, Mr. Reynolds now seeks to run from the flames. It won't work. The Wayfarer Parties' claims against him are real, and they are serious. Mr. Reynolds can appear on as many sketch shows as he wants and feebly try to make light of his current situation, but we will not stop until he is held accountable for his actions."

In a statement, Reynolds's lawyers essentially laid out what is at the heart of their 38-page filing.

"The entirety of Mr. Baldoni's case appears to be based on Mr. Reynolds allegedly privately calling Mr. Baldoni a 'predator,' but here is the problem, that is not defamation unless they can show that Mr. Reynolds did not believe that statement to be true," Mike Gottlieb and Esra Hudson told *Yahoo*.

"The complaint doesn't allege that, and just the opposite, the allegations in the complaint suggest that Mr. Reynolds genuinely believes Mr. Baldoni is a predator. Mr. Reynolds's wife has accused Mr. Baldoni — privately and in multiple complaints — of sexual harassment and retaliation, and as pointed out by Mr. Reynolds's motion, Mr. Baldoni has also openly spoken about his past of mistreating women and pushing the boundaries of consent," they wrote. "Mr. Reynolds has a First Amendment right to express his opinion of Mr. Baldoni, which should be

comforting to a group of people who have repeatedly called Ms. Lively and Mr. Reynolds 'bullies' and other names over the past year."

Celebrity lawyer Chris Melcher, of [Walzer Melcher & Yoda](#), told Yahoo Entertainment it's "unlikely" Reynolds will be dismissed at this stage — but Baldoni may have to amend his complaint.

Reynolds stated in the complaint there are no "plausible facts that suggest Mr. Reynolds did not believe this ['predator'] comment to be true," but rather "allegations suggest that Mr. Reynolds genuinely, perhaps passionately, believes that Mr. Baldoni's behavior is reflective of a 'predator.'" Reynolds also argued "the law establishes that calling someone a 'predator' amounts to constitutionally protected opinion."

Melcher said Reynolds "cannot escape liability by saying that he believes the statement to be true."

"He can be held liable for defamation if he acted with reckless disregard for the truth in making the statement," Melcher explained.

"The test for a motion to dismiss is whether the accusations that Justin has made against Ryan, if proven to be true at trial, are sufficient for a legal claim to be made. This is not a determination of whether Justin's claims are meritorious," he continued. "The only issue is whether the accusations are specific enough to put Ryan on notice of why he's being sued, and to determine whether Justin has alleged enough facts to bring Ryan to court."

Melcher believes "the judge may require Justin to amend his complaint to be more specific" about some of his legal claims, but it's "unlikely that Ryan would be dismissed from the lawsuit at this stage."

Reynolds's rep released the following statement after the actor's motion to dismiss:

*The claims filed against Mr. Reynolds are simply a list of grievances attempting to shame Mr. Reynolds for being the man Mr. Baldoni has built his brand pretending to be, a man who is "confident enough to listen" to the woman in his life. We look forward to this lawsuit being dismissed, and to collecting on Steve Sarowitz's \$100 million pledge by recovering Mr. Reynolds's costs and attorneys' fees incurred to toss this frivolous case."*