

AUG 13 2025

David W. Slayton, Executive Officer/Clerk of Court
By: M. Carino, Deputy

**SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA
FOR THE COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES**

JANE DOE,

Plaintiff,

vs.

A LA CARTE PRODUCTIONS, LLC, a
California limited liability company, RLJ
ENTERTAINMENT, INC., a Nevada
corporation, AMC NETWORK
ENTERTAINMENT, LLC, a New York
limited liability company, and AMC
NETWORKS INC., a Delaware corporation,
and DOES 1 to 100, inclusive,

Defendants.

CASE NO.: 24STCV27316

ORDER RE: PLAINTIFF'S MOTION TO
PROCEED UNDER DOE PSEUDONYM

Dept. 73
8:30 a.m.
July 11, 2025

I. INTRODUCTION

On October 18, 2024, Plaintiff Jane Doe ("Plaintiff") filed a complaint against Defendants A La Carte Productions, LLC ("ALC"), RLJ Entertainment, Inc. ("RLJ"), AMC Network Entertainment, LLC and AMC Networks, Inc. ("AMC Defendants") (collectively, "Defendants"), alleging causes of action for (1) Sexual Harassment in Violation of Gov't Code § 12940(j); (2) Gender Discrimination, In Violation Of Gov't Code § 12940(A); (3) Feha Retaliation, In Violation Of Gov't Code § 12940(K); (4) Failure To Prevent Discrimination Or

1 Harassment, In Violation Of Gov't Code § 12940(H); (5) Whistleblower Retaliation, In
2 Violation Of Labor Code § 1102.5(B); (6) Promissory Fraud, In Violation Of Civil Code §§
3 1572, 1709, 1710; (7) Breach Of Contract; and (8) Constructive Discharge In Violation Of
4 Public Policy.

5 The complaint alleges the following. On October 1, 2021, Plaintiff received an invitation
6 to audition for a role in Dijon Talton's directorial debut, entitled A La Carte. According to the
7 audition notes, A La Carte was to be a "a scripted, dramedy series about the Black millennial
8 dating experience and one girl's... 'liberal' approach to sex and dating." The series was to air on
9 ALLBLK, a subscription entertainment service operated by AMC Networks and dedicated to
10 streaming content featuring Black talent. (Compl., ¶ 14.) On October 29, 2021, Defendants
11 extended an offer to Plaintiff for a lead role in the show. (*Id.* ¶ 17.)

13 Plaintiff's talent agents negotiated on her behalf that she was to be dressed in either non-
14 see-through lingerie or non-see-through bra and underwear when shooting simulated sex scenes,
15 and that she would not be filmed in any way that would show full frontal or rear nudity. (*Id.* ¶
16 19.)

17 On November 3, 2021, ALC Productions' attorney emailed Plaintiff's representatives
18 "the agreement for [Plaintiff's] employment in the series A La Carte." In the months to follow,
19 this document, the "Talent Agreement," would undergo various edits and revisions. However,
20 the key provisions regarding nudity, simulated sex scenes, and compensation remained virtually
21 untouched from the November 3 original version. (*Id.* ¶ 21.)

23 On the second day of filming, Plaintiff's partner for the simulated sex scenes had been
24 replaced overnight with an actor whom she had never met and Plaintiff met the on-set intimacy
25 coordinator for the first time, who supervises and choreographs simulated sex scenes, ensures

1 closed sets, remains on hand to robe actors after filming, and serves as the set medic. (*Id.* ¶¶ 24-
2 25.) Immediately after meeting the intimacy coordinator, Plaintiff filmed her first simulated sex
3 scene for A La Carte. She was scripted to “have sex” on a bar with her new scene partner. The
4 intimacy coordinator did not run through any choreography prior to the filming of this scene, nor
5 did she ensure that Plaintiff’s new scene partner had undergone a physical examination to
6 prevent against the transmission of venereal disease. She also did not ensure the set was closed.
7 (*Id.* ¶ 27.)

8
9 Later in the day on November 10, 2021 – after Plaintiff’s complaint had been
10 communicated to the intimacy coordinator – Plaintiff filmed two more simulated sex scenes. The
11 first scene’s script directed Plaintiff to “lie naked, soaked and sated” in a bed. Per the oral and
12 written agreements, Plaintiff requested underwear to cover her body during filming. The crew
13 handed her a thong, which exposed her buttocks to the camera, and which violated both
14 Plaintiff’s oral and written agreements regarding nudity. (*Id.* ¶ 29.) Then, Plaintiff was directed
15 to act out a “shower sex” scene. Plaintiff’s scene partner was completely nude except for a
16 prosthetic covering his genitals. Plaintiff was once again given a lace thong, and this time she
17 was given “pasties,” which covered only a minimal portion of her breasts to conceal her nipples.
18 (*Id.* ¶ 30.) The intimacy coordinator did not close the set, and Plaintiff could see several people
19 whom she had never witnessed standing around the monitor, watching her simulate sex in a
20 shower. (*Ibid.*)

21
22 Plaintiff’s sixth and final simulated sex scene was filmed later that night, on November
23 24, 2024. Again, the intimacy coordinator was not present. Again, the set was not closed. (*Id.* ¶
24 36.) As the camera began to roll, Plaintiff endured increasing discomfort as she performed this
25

1 simulated sex scene in a highly exposed setting, once again clad in a revealing thong and pasties.
2 (*Id.* ¶ 37.)

3 On May 15, 2025, Plaintiff filed the instant motion to proceed under Doe Pseudonym.

4 On June 25, 2025, ALC filed an opposition.

5 Also on June 25, 2025, AMC Defendants and RLJ filed an opposition.

6 On July 1, 2025, Plaintiff filed a reply.

7 **II. LEGAL STANDARD**

8 A request to proceed under a pseudonym is subject to the same analysis as a motion to
9 seal court records. (*Department of Fair Employment and Housing v. Superior Court of Santa*
10 *Clara County* (2022) 82 Cal.App.5th 105, 111.) The sealing of court records is governed by
11 California Rules of Court rules 2.550 and 2.551. (*Mercury Interactive Corp. v. Klein* (2007) 158
12 Cal.App.4th 60, 68.) The presumption of open access to court records does not apply to “records
13 that are required to be kept confidential by law.” (Cal. Rules of Court, rule 2.550(a)(3).) A party
14 seeking to seal a court record or seeking to file a record under seal must do so by motion or
15 application supported by a declaration showing facts justifying the record’s sealing. (*Id.*, rule
16 2.551(b)(1).) California Rules of Court rule 2.550(d) states: “The court may order that a record
17 be filed under seal only if it expressly finds facts that establish:
18

19 (1) There exists an overriding interest that overcomes the right of public access to the
20 record;

21 (2) The overriding interest supports sealing the record;

22 (3) A substantial probability exists that the overriding interest will be prejudiced if the
23 record is not sealed;

24 (4) The proposed sealing is narrowly tailored; and
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1 (5) No less restrictive means exist to achieve the overriding interest.”

2 (*Id.* rule 2.550(d).)

3 Once sealed, a record can only be unsealed by order of court. (*Id.*, rule 2.551(h)(1).) So
4 long as it remains under seal, all parties must refrain from filing anything not under seal that
5 would disclose the sealed matter. (*Id.*, rule 2.551(c).) If a party files a new document referring to
6 sealed matter, it must submit an unredacted version of the document under seal and a redacted
7 one for the public record. (*Id.*, rule 2.551(b)(5); *H.B. Fuller Co. v. Doe* (2007) 151 Cal.App.4th
8 879, 889.)

9 **III. DISCUSSION**

10 Plaintiff seeks to proceed under a Doe pseudonym.

11
12 “[A] party may preserve his or her anonymity in judicial proceedings in special
13 circumstances when the party’s need for anonymity outweighs prejudice to the opposing party
14 and the public’s interest in knowing the party’s identity.” (*Doe v. Lincoln Unified School Dist.*
15 (2010) 188 Cal.App.4th 758, 767, quoting *Does I thru XXIII v. Advanced Textile Corp.* (9th Cir.
16 2000) 214 F.3d 1058, 1068. A court may permit plaintiffs to use pseudonyms in three situations:
17 “(1) when identification creates a risk of retaliatory physical or mental harm [Citation]; (2) when
18 anonymity is necessary ‘to preserve privacy in a matter of sensitive and highly personal nature’
19 [Citation]; and (3) when the anonymous party is ‘compelled to admit [his or her] intention to
20 engage in illegal conduct, thereby risking criminal prosecution.’ “ (*Does I thru XXIII v.*
21 *Advanced Textile Corp.* (9th Cir. 2000) 214 F.3d 1058, 1068. Where the request for anonymity is
22 based on the purported need “to preserve privacy in a matter of sensitive and highly personal
23 nature,” the proper test is whether “the party’s need for anonymity outweighs prejudice to the
24 opposing party and the public’s interest in knowing the party’s identity.” (*Ibid.*; *Doe v. Lincoln*

1 *Unified School District, supra*, (2010) 188 Cal.App.4th 758, 767.) “Outside of cases where
2 anonymity is expressly permitted by statute, litigating by pseudonym should occur ‘only in the
3 rarest of circumstances.’”(*Department of Fair Employment and Housing v. Superior Court of*
4 *Santa Clara County* (2022) 82 Cal.App.5th 105, 111-112 (“DFEH”))

5 Plaintiff contends that she has an overriding interest that overcomes the right of public
6 access to the record and supports sealing the record because, as alleged, Plaintiff Jane Doe is a
7 practicing actor, and thus, Plaintiffs’ career prospects and reputation will be harmed by public
8 disclosure of the harms they have allegedly suffered. Plaintiff further argues that proceeding
9 anonymously will not deprive Defendant of due process. When a defendant knows the plaintiff’s
10 true identity, even if that identity is not publicly disclosed, it allows the defendant to pursue
11 discovery and cross-examine the plaintiff. (*Alvarado v. Superior Ct.* (2000) 23 Cal.4th 1121,
12 1144.)

13
14 However, Plaintiff has not provided any direct admissible evidence in support of her
15 contentions. (See *DFEH, supra*, 82 Cal.App.5th 105 at p. 113 [“The trial court’s task is to
16 consider the evidence produced on that point and assign it the appropriate weight.”].) Plaintiff
17 does not provide any declaration or any competent evidence that demonstrates any “retaliatory
18 physical or mental harm” that Plaintiff specifically would suffer if her identity became known.
19 (*Advanced Textile Corp.* (9th Cir. 2000) 214 F.3d 1058, 1068.) Speculative claims of harm to
20 Plaintiff’s career, unsubstantiated by any evidence, does not suffice. (See *Nat’l Commodity &*
21 *Barter Ass’n, Nat’l Commodity Exch. v. Gibbs* (10th Cir. 1989) 886 F.2d 1240, 1245 [explaining
22 that anonymity ‘has not been permitted when only the plaintiffs economic or professional
23 concerns are involved’]; *Doe v. Bergstrom* (9th Cir. 2009) 315 Fed. App’x 656, 656-657
24 [difficulties finding employment” insufficient to compel leave to proceed anonymous]; *Doe v.*

1 *Georgia-Pacific, LLC* (C.D. Cal. Sept. 26, 2012) No. CV125607PSGJCFX, 2012 WL 13223668,
2 at *2 [“fear of loss of employment does not constitute a severe harm warranting anonymity”];
3 *Exotic Dancers v. Spearmint Rhino, No. CV 08–4038 ABC (SSx)*, 2009 WL 250054, at *2 (C.D.
4 Cal. Jan. 29, 2009) [holding that “threats of termination and blacklisting” against plaintiffs filing
5 under their true names are not unusual circumstances meriting pseudonymity].)

6 Thus, Plaintiff’s claim of potentially “being blacklisted in the entertainment industry for
7 suing her former production company and its powerful parent television network” falls short.
8 (Motion, p. 6.) “[T]he Court does not doubt that [Plaintiff’s] fears of economic retaliation are
9 objectively reasonable and that [she is] vulnerable to such retaliation.” (*4 Exotic Dancers v.*
10 *Spearmint Rhino*, No. CV 08-4038ABCSSX, 2009 WL 250054, at *2 (C.D. Cal. Jan. 29, 2009).)
11 “But that does not alter the conclusion that pseudonymity is not necessary given that the feared
12 injury is not extraordinary.” (*Ibid.* [“This type of economic retaliation is not sufficiently severe to
13 warrant pseudonymity.”].)

15 However, the Court does agree that the Complaint alleges repeated sexual misconduct,
16 which contains highly sensitive details about Plaintiff’s experiences on the set of the show.
17 (Compl., ¶¶ 14-39; *DFEH, supra*, 82 Cal.App.5th 105 at p. 110 [“Because of the inherently
18 sensitive nature of some proceedings, statutes specifically allow for keeping certain parties’
19 identities confidential.”].) But, again, there is no evidentiary support for any allegation that might
20 take this case out of the general rule favoring open courts. Indeed, much of what makes the show
21 of a sensitive nature is inherent in the sexual nature of the show, and that the show remains
22 publicly available for viewing, Plaintiff’s true name is attached to her performance in the show,
23 and her performance is still currently listed in her filmography on the popular film and television
24 industry website IMDB.com. (Morris Decl., ¶¶ 2-3; *H.B. Fuller Co. v. Doe* (2007) 151

1 Cal.App.4th 879, 898 [“[T]here is no justification for sealing records that contain only facts
2 already known or available to the public.”].)

3 It should also be noted that allowing Plaintiff to proceed by pseudonym will substantially
4 complicate Defendant’s ability to mount an effective defense. It will make it much more difficult
5 to conduct discovery and to manage witnesses at trial if the identity of Plaintiff must be held in
6 confidence. Likewise, Plaintiff’s allegations, if proven, give rise to substantial public interest
7 questions; prioritizing protecting her identity over all other interests runs a real risk of avoiding
8 full public understanding of and accountability for any wrongdoing.

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10 Finally, in making this order, the Court gives great weight to the fifth and final factor of
11 the Rule of Court: whether less restrictive means are available to protect the legitimate interests
12 of the party seeking to proceed pseudonymously. It may be the case that, in the course of this
13 proceeding, facts come to light where the Court might make a different determination as to that
14 particular matter. In that event, the Court will not hesitate to protect Plaintiff’s privacy concerns
15 as to any such matter by use of appropriate protective orders.

16 To reiterate, “there is a general presumption that parties’ identities are public
17 information.” (*Spearmint Rhino*, No. CV 08-4038ABCSSX, 2009 WL 250054, at *3.) That is
18 because “[i]dentifying the parties to the proceeding is an important dimension of publicness. The
19 people have a right to know who is using their courts.” (*U.S. v. Stoterau*, 524 F.3d 988, 1013 (9th
20 Cir. 2008).

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2 **IV. CONCLUSION**

3 Based on the foregoing, Plaintiff's motion to proceed under Doe Pseudonym is DENIED.
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7 Dated this 13th day of August 2025
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11 Hon. Gary D. Roberts
12 Judge of the Superior Court
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08/14/2025