# Kehinde Wiley Denies Sexual Assault Allegations Made by British-Ghanaian Artist



American artist Kehinde Wiley, renowned for painting former US President Barack Obama’s official portrait, has denied recent sexual assault allegations made by British-Ghanaian artist and curator Joseph Awuah-Darko. In an Instagram post on Sunday, Awuah-Darko accused Wiley of sexual assault at a dinner in Ghana on June 9, 2021, during an event at the Noldor Artist Residency. Awuah-Darko detailed being "inappropriately groped" by Wiley and described a second incident on the same day as more intense and violent.

Wiley responded to the allegations on Instagram, describing the claims as false and asserting that their encounters were consensual. He criticized the accusations as harmful to victims of sexual abuse and suggested Awuah-Darko's statements were malicious and damaging to his reputation. Wiley's representatives provided CNN with evidence, including a cease and desist letter to Awuah-Darko and messages indicating contact between the two after the alleged incidents.

Awuah-Darko, who is seeking legal recourse, cited difficulties in reporting the assault in Ghana due to the nation's attitudes towards LGBTQ individuals. Wiley, who gained international recognition after painting Obama in 2017, continues to maintain his innocence.

Meanwhile, Queensland MP Brittany Lauga has temporarily closed her electorate office in Yeppoon due to public threats following her allegations of being drugged and sexually assaulted in late April. Lauga announced the closure to protect her staff's safety after receiving several threats and offensive comments. She reported the incident to the police and highlighted that other women might have also been drugged on the same night. Support from fellow MPs followed her public statements, emphasizing the need for a safe work environment.