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**A**s the **Central Park 5** sue **Donald Trump** over statements made during a debate, the lawsuit has gained attention. The five men, exonerated after wrongful convictions in 1989, claim Trump's false comments caused further harm. His remarks, made to a national audience, have reignited discussions about their wrongful conviction.

Here's a detailed look at why the Central Park 5 sued Trump and the surrounding context.

## **Central Park 5's lawsuit against Donald Trump explained**

The Central Park Five, now known as the Exonerated Five, have filed a defamation lawsuit against Donald Trump for making false statements during the Sept. 10, 2024, presidential debate.

Trump stated, "They admitted - they said, they pled guilty. And I said, well, if they pled guilty they badly hurt a person, killed a person ultimately." The lawsuit claims these statements are "demonstrably false," as the five men never pleaded guilty, and the victim of the 1989 attack survived. (via [NBC News](#))

In 1989, authorities wrongfully convicted Yusef Salaam, Antron McCray, Kevin Richardson, Raymond Santana, and Korey Wise of raping and assaulting a jogger in Central Park. In 2002, the courts vacated their convictions after DNA evidence

pointed at another man for the crime. The lawsuit seeks compensatory and punitive damages for the harm caused by Trump's statements during the debate.

Notably, in 1989, Trump had taken out a full-page newspaper ad calling for the reinstatement of the death penalty, which many interpreted as targeting the Central Park Five. The lawsuit filed in Pennsylvania also notes that Salaam was present at the debate when Trump made the statements. Trump's campaign spokesperson, Steven Cheung, called the lawsuit "just another frivolous, Election Interference lawsuit."

Shanin Specter, attorney for the Exonerated Five, said, "The most that we can obtain are money damages both to compensate these five men for Mr. Trump's damaging their reputations and for punishment of Mr. Trump for making these statements." Specter also mentioned that it would be "helpful" if Trump offered an apology, but also expressed his doubts that it will happen.