

Mia Farrow disputes Naomi Campbell's account of 'blood diamond affair'

An "excited" Naomi Campbell told dining companions that she had been given a gift of diamonds by warlord Charles Taylor, Mia Farrow has said, disputing the supermodel's claim under oath that she did not know the origin of the gems.

By Bruno Waterfield, in The Hague

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The American actress appeared today at the trial of Mr Taylor, Liberia's former President, who is indicted by the UN for war crimes for his role in supporting brutal rebels in neighbouring Sierra Leone's civil war between 1996 and 2002.

Wearing a dark pinstripe suit with a black waistcoat, [Mia Farrow](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocean/liberia/7933134/Mia-Farrow-to-be-accused-of-being-pawn-in-Naomi-Campbell-smear-campaign.html) (<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocean/liberia/7933134/Mia-Farrow-to-be-accused-of-being-pawn-in-Naomi-Campbell-smear-campaign.html>), 65, told the court in The Hague that the British model had told her, and three of her children, that men, representing Mr Taylor, had given her a diamonds, or diamonds, following a dinner hosted by Nelson Mandela in 1997.

"[Naomi Campbell](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/newstoppers/celebritynews/7927867/Naomi-Campbell-profile.html) (<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/newstoppers/celebritynews/7927867/Naomi-Campbell-profile.html>) joined us and before she even sat down she recounted the events of the evening. She said that in the night she had been awakened. Some men were knocking at her door. They were sent by Charles Taylor and they had given her a huge diamond," she said.

"Naomi Campbell said they came from Charles Taylor."

The award winning American actress said that she had phoned the model last year to plead with her to give evidence against Charles Taylor after the supermodel refused to testify, eventually being subpoenaed to appear under threat of imprisonment on August 5.

[Charles Taylor war crimes trial: as it happens](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocean/liberia/7934063/Charles-Taylor-war-crimes-trial-as-it-happens.html) (<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocean/liberia/7934063/Charles-Taylor-war-crimes-trial-as-it-happens.html>)

['Blood diamonds' trial: full coverage](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocean/liberia/) (<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocean/liberia/>)

[War crimes trial: Mia Farrow to be accused of being pawn](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocean/liberia/7933134/Mia-Farrow-to-be-accused-of-being-pawn-in-Naomi-Campbell-smear-campaign.html) (<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocean/liberia/7933134/Mia-Farrow-to-be-accused-of-being-pawn-in-Naomi-Campbell-smear-campaign.html>)

[Naomi Campbell diamonds handed in to police](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocean/southafrica/7930201/Naomi-Campbell-diamonds-handed-in-to-South-African-police-by-charity-head.html) (<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocean/southafrica/7930201/Naomi-Campbell-diamonds-handed-in-to-South-African-police-by-charity-head.html>)

[Naomi Campbell: Sierra Leone war](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocean/sierraleone/7928960/Naomi-Campbell-Sierra-Leone-war.html) (<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocean/sierraleone/7928960/Naomi-Campbell-Sierra-Leone-war.html>)

[Naomi Campbell: Charles Taylor profile \(http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocean/liberia/7928846/Naomi-Campbell-Charles-Taylor-profile.html\)](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocean/liberia/7928846/Naomi-Campbell-Charles-Taylor-profile.html)

“I thought I would give her a call and tell her how important it is that she took part in these proceedings,” she said.

Miss Campbell, 40, giving sworn testimony to the UN war crimes court last Thursday, had insisted that she did not know the identity of two men who gave her three **"dirty looking pebbles"** (<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocean/liberia/7927869/Naomi-Campbell-admits-she-was-given-blood-diamonds.html>) following the charity event in Pretoria.

Prosecutors and UN judges pressed Miss Farrow three times on whether the British model had said the diamonds came from the African warlord, something Miss Campbell repeatedly denied.

“Naomi Campbell entered the room where my children and I were already eating breakfast. As I recall it she was quite excited and said, in effect, 'oh my god, in the middle of night I was awakened by knocking at the door. It was men sent by Charles Taylor and he sent me', as I recall, 'a huge diamond.’”

She later added: “Her demeanour seemed excited. She seemed excited, happy.”

UN prosecutors have accused Mr Taylor, 62, of taking illegally mined diamonds from Sierra Leone insurgents in return for weapons that were used in a campaign of terror which killed 120,000 people and included child enslavement and mutilation atrocities.

Critical to their case is the allegation that My Taylor’s staff gave Miss Campbell uncut gems as a present after they met at a star studded gala attended by Miss Farrow, the Nelson Mandela, his future wife Graca Machel, Quincy Jones, Imran and Jemina Khan.

Miss Farrow attended the dinner, a charity event to raise money for Mr Mandela’s children’s charity, with two of her sons and a daughter.

Under cross examination, she said that her three children, her son Matthew Previn Farrow, aged 27 in 1997, daughter Malone, born in 1985 and another son Ronan, aged 10 13 years ago, recalled the event well.

“I also discussed it with my children, who remember exactly the same thing,” she said. “It was an unforgettable moment. I remember when she came in on the breakfast and said she received a diamond from Charles Taylor.”

“I can only tell you, and I swear on the Bible to this court and beyond, that is what Naomi Campbell said that morning at breakfast.”

Mr Taylor has denied any ownership or links to trading in diamonds as “totally untrue”.

Morris Anyah, a defence lawyer acting for Mr Taylor asked why Miss Farrow had only recounted the “blood diamond” events after being contacted by prosecutors last summer.

He wondered why she had kept silent for 12 years despite becoming a Unicef children’s rights “ambassador” for Africa in 2000.

"I did not really think it was consequential," she said. "Yes, I regret that I didn't put it together earlier, I suppose. Anyway, that's when I remembered it."

Mr Anyah accused Miss Farrow of showing bias against Mr Taylor by selectively quoting newspaper articles on her blog.

Last Thursday, the day that Miss Campbell gave evidence to the war crimes court, the American blogged highlights of a Guardian article reporting the supermodel's evidence of being given blood diamonds.

The original article said: "Prosecutors say the story, if true, would back up allegations that Taylor traded guns to neighbouring Sierra Leone rebels in exchange for uncut diamonds."

The defence lawyer said to Miss Farrow, "you took out the words 'if true'". "Why did you take out the words 'if true'? Words that give Charles Taylor a fighting chance."

The actress replied: "I could bring myself to 'if true' because it is true. It is a personal blog. In retrospect I should have left it in. The blog is simply my thoughts and feelings."

Last Thursday, Miss Campbell admitted she was given a "few dirty stones" but she did not know they were diamonds or the identity of who had sent them.

Three uncut stones given by the model to Jeremy Ractcliffe, the former chief of the Nelson Mandela Children's Fund were then handed in to the South African authorities last weekend.

Mr Taylor's defence lawyers quizzed Miss Farrow over her evidence that Miss Campbell had been given a "large diamond", rather than the three small uncut stones that were given to the model.

"I did not see the diamonds. I can only tell you what Naomi Campbell said. That's what I recall to the best of my abilities," she said.

"I didn't know it was diamonds in the rough. I guess I thought it was a man, smitten, who had given her a gift. I too pictured a diamond in a box or something. She didn't say it was in the rough."

Under cross examination, Miss Farrow admitted that her recollection of the dinner was sometimes vague, referring at one point to Iran Khan, the famous Pakistan cricketer, as a "soccer player".

She said that she could not remember certain details, such as whether Mr Taylor had stayed for dinner and how many men were said to have knocked on Campbell's door.

"Even when the prosecution contacted me I didn't remember what year it was," she admitted.

Miss Farrow was asked in cross examination why she posed, smiling, in a photograph with Mr Taylor despite, according to her account, being told by Graca Machel, Mr Mandela's future wife, that the Liberian President was not welcome.

"She said that 'you don't want to be photographed or be around this man. He should have left'," she said.

“My impression he was not invited for dinner and had overstayed. That was the impression I got.”

Miss Farrow had been due to testify after Carole White, the model's former agent but she was called out of order, enraging Courtenay Griffiths QC, Mr Taylor's defence lawyer.

“I am seriously angry about this,” he said. “They are playing fast and loose with this court.”

“We have prepared and planned our strategy based on their notification that their first witness would be Carole White.”

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