

BALESTRIERE LANZA PLLC

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FORMER KASOWITZ IP PARTNER SUES FIRM AND ITS PR AGENCY FOR PERPETRATING MASSIVE SMEAR CAMPAIGN THAT RUINED HIS CAREER

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Today attorney Jeremy Pitcock brought suit against his former law firm, Kasowitz, Benson, Torres & Friedman, LLP for the malicious and unwarranted smear campaign that the firm perpetrated against him earlier this year. As stated in the complaint, the firm shocked the legal community by taking the unprecedented step of hiring a public relations firm to destroy the reputation of an outgoing partner. Eric Wallach, an individual partner at the firm, and the public relations firm Sitrick And Company have also been named as defendants in the suit. Pitcock seeks compensatory and punitive damages from the defendants. He is represented by Balestriere Lanza PLLC.

As alleged in the complaint, Kasowitz recruited Pitcock, a rising intellectual property litigator, in order to build its IP practice. In the short time that he was a partner at the firm, Pitcock generated millions of dollars in business and built a diverse team of attorneys at all levels of experience. Once the IP team at Kasowitz was built largely through the efforts of Pitcock, the firm used minor misconduct that took place outside of the workplace as a pretext to oust Pitcock. The firm then sent Pitcock a draft severance agreement stating that the firm would tell the world Pitcock had resigned from the partnership in order to induce him to help the firm retain the IP business he had developed. Although Pitcock helped the firm with the transitioning of his IP matters as called for by the severance agreement, the firm failed to respond to Pitcock's markup of the agreement for about three weeks at which point Pitcock decided to join a new firm.

After one IP media source (notably not Pitcock or his new firm) suggested that Pitcock was "nabbed" by his new employer, the firm then hired Sitrick to wage an aggressive negative PR campaign to destroy Pitcock's reputation and good name in order to ensure that Pitcock's clients and recent hires would not follow him to his new firm. The Kasowitz firm launched its negative PR campaign by issuing a highly misleading press release which falsely suggested that Pitcock had engaged in conduct far worse than anything he had actually done by stating that Pitcock was "terminated for cause" for "extremely inappropriate personal conduct." These malicious statements directly contradicted the representations made to Pitcock by firm management and the terms of the firm's draft severance agreement. Not satisfied with the harm caused by the press release, Wallach made further false public statements about Pitcock in a widely

distributed legal publication, while the firm and Sitrick encouraged wide dissemination of these false statements throughout the legal and business community.

The actions of Kasowitz, Wallach, and Sitrick led Pitcock's new firm to vote him out of his new partnership and have prevented Pitcock from securing an appropriate new position. As alleged in the complaint, by publishing and widely disseminating these false and misleading statements, the defendants have injured and continue to harm Pitcock's good name, reputation, and business and have caused special damages in the form of lost income. He brings his lawsuit to compensate for these injuries and to restore his reputation.

"I am appalled that a large law firm would use its vast resources to hire an aggressive PR firm to destroy the good name of a young and hardworking partner who did nothing but use his best efforts to build up successfully the IP practice at that firm," said Pitcock. "Although I have at all times tried to resolve this matter with Kasowitz in a manner that is appropriate among former partners, the firm's refusal even to clarify their statements has left me with no choice but to redress these wrongs through the courts."

Balestriere Lanza PLLC is a trials and investigations law firm that represents individuals, companies, and institutions in criminal and civil matters in trial and appellate courts, regulatory proceedings, negotiations, arbitrations, and grand jury matters. The firm is unique: unlike most firms, it combines a complex and sophisticated litigation background and hard-nosed negotiation experience with the willingness and ability to push cases to trial and win. Its offices are located at 225 Broadway, Suite 2900, New York, NY 10007.

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