

Laura Prather in Texas Lawyer: ‘Netflix Faces Defamation Suit for Documentary on Alleged Guardianship Abuse’

April 5, 2022 Laura Prather

PRACTICES Social Media, Litigation, Media and Entertainment Litigation, Streaming Media

Netflix Inc. and a prominent team of documentary filmmakers are appealing a trial court decision in a defamation lawsuit that attacks their portrayal of a guardianship case as an abuse of an elderly man.

The media defendants include documentary film director and producer Alex Gibney and his company, Jigsaw Productions LLC; the affiliate firm Muddy Waters Productions LLC; Peabody award-winning filmmaker Kyoko Miyake; story producer Sarit G Work; associate producer Samantha Knowles; and researcher Kate Gill.

The plaintiff, Tonya Barina, is the appointed guardian of the estate of Charles Thrash, a retired businessman whose estate was once valued at about \$3 million. Barina alleges that after an episode of “Dirty Money” on the subject of guardianships was released, she received hundreds of death threats and threats of bodily harm from all over the world.

Oral argument is scheduled for June 28, according to an order issued Friday.

Rachel F. Strom and Katherine M. Bolger of Davis Wright Tremaine in New York and Laura Lee Prather of Haynes Boone in Austin represent Netflix and the other defendants.

The media defendants claim in the appellant brief that Barina failed to satisfy her burden under Texas law to establish by “clear and specific evidence” a prima facie case of each essential element of the defamation claim.

Excerpted from *Law.com*. Read the full article [here](#).