

BuzzFeed Hires Roy Black in Russia Dossier Lawsuit

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Attorney Roy Black. *J. Albert Diaz*

BuzzFeed is hiring a lawyer just about as well-known as its brand of clickbait: Miami's Roy Black.

Black is stepping in to defend the website against a defamation lawsuit for publishing the salacious Trump-Russia dossier.

Black and colleague Jared Lopez of Black, Srebnick, Kornspan & Stumpf took over as trial counsel Friday for the litigation filed in Miami federal court, joining New York and Washington attorneys from Davis Wright Tremaine. The Miami firm replaces Larry Kellogg and Jezabel Lima of Levine Kellogg Lehman Schneider + Grossman in Miami.

"When Buzzfeed decided to retain Roy it no longer needed a local Florida counsel, because Roy is based here," Kellogg said. "That is the reason I withdrew."

The high-profile case revolves around a document containing lurid allegations about President Donald Trump's relationship with Russia. BuzzFeed published the full dossier in January, noting "the allegations are not verified, and the report contains errors."

The ensuing lawsuit was filed by Russian technology executive Aleksey Gubarev, who is accused in the dossier of being involved in hacking Democratic Party leadership.

Black is best known as a criminal defense attorney, although his practice these days is half civil litigation and half criminal defense.

He has represented Justin Bieber, Rush Limbaugh and Kelsey Grammer, and he secured the acquittal of Dr. William Kennedy Smith in a rape trial that riveted the nation in the '90s.

He met his wife, Lea Black, because she was a juror in the Smith case, and she later became a cast member on "Real Housewives of Miami."

Black currently represents Marvel CEO Ike Perlmutter in the country's first case involving DNA theft. His firm's other civil matters have included defending the developers of the Seminole Hard Rock Casino against a lawsuit filed by Trump Entertainment Group, defending Rolls Royce against cruise line lawsuits and representing real estate power broker Edie Laquer in the Miami Worldcenter litigation.

The BuzzFeed case is in the discovery stage, with depositions set to begin soon. Trial is scheduled for March 2018.

Black is up against Boston attorneys who once poked fun at BuzzFeed by including clickbait headers and a cat photo in a court filing.