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Superior Court of California
County of Los Angeles

JUL 29 2015

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**SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA
FOR THE COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES**

JAMES WOODS, an individual,

Plaintiff,

vs.

JOHN DOE a/k/a "Abe List" and DOES 2
through 10, inclusive,

Defendants.

Case No.: **BC 5 8 9 7 4 6**

COMPLAINT FOR:

- (1) DEFAMATION
- (2) INVASION OF PRIVACY BY FALSE LIGHT

JURY TRIAL DEMANDED

Plaintiff JAMES WOODS ("Woods" or "Plaintiff") alleges as follows:

NATURE OF THE CASE

1. This action arises from the publication of a malicious and fabricated statement by a cowardly individual who hides behind the Twitter name "Abe List" ("AL") to falsely accuse and humiliate others who dare to harbor opinions different from his own. On July 15, 2015, over the line by falsely accusing actor James Woods of being a "cocaine addict" on the social media site Twitter, a message sent to *thousands* of AL's followers and *hundreds of thousands* of Mr. Woods' followers. In fact, Woods is not now, nor has he ever been, a cocaine addict, and AL had no reason to

ORIGINAL

COMPLAINT

RECEIVED # 140824886099
DATE PAID: 07/29/15 04:18 PM
PAYMENT # 35.00
RECEIVED: 310
CHECK: \$435.00
DEPOSIT: \$0.00
CASH: \$0.00
CREDIT: \$0.00

CIT/CASE: EC589746
LEADER#: 1

1 believe otherwise. Rather, AL's outrageous claim is the culmination of a malicious on-line campaign by
2 AL to discredit and damage Woods' reputation, a campaign which began as early as December 2014.
3 Although AL's rantings against Woods began with childish name calling, it has clearly escalated beyond
4 the protections of free speech, and AL must now be held to account for the millions in damages he has
5 caused.

6 2. By this lawsuit, Woods intends to unmask and reveal AL for the liar he is and to recover
7 in excess of \$10 million in damages caused by AL's outrageous conduct. For over forty-five years,
8 Woods (68) has worked tirelessly to build a career and reputation as one of the most hard-working,
9 prolific and recognizable actors of our time. He has also devoted significant time and money to
10 numerous philanthropic causes. AL's reckless and malicious behavior, through the worldwide reach of
11 the internet, has now jeopardized Woods' good name and reputation on an international scale. AL, and
12 anyone else using social media to propagate lies and do harm, should take note. They are not
13 impervious to the law.

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15 **THE PARTIES**

16 3. Plaintiff James Woods is a world-renowned, award-winning, actor that has appeared in
17 over 130 films and television series including *The Onion Field*, *Once Upon a Time in America*,
18 *Salvador*, *Casino*, *Nixon*, *Hercules*, *Shark*, and *White House Down*. He has twice been nominated for an
19 Academy Award, has won three Emmy Awards and a Golden Globe Award. In addition to his
20 professional accomplishments, Woods is involved with numerous philanthropic causes including,
21 without limitation, the America Heart Association, the Los Angeles Shelter for LGBTQ Youth and the
22 Rhode Island Foundation (where he set up a charitable fund in Honor of his late brother Michael J.
23 Woods). In 1997, he was honored with the Silver Circle Award for his charity work with the Venice
24 Family Clinic, a local organization dedicated to providing quality health care to people in need. He was
25 also the recipient of an American Heart Association Award for its Stroke Awareness Campaign.

1 4. Woods is informed and believes, and based thereon alleges, that the anonymous,
2 fictitiously named John Doe a/k/a "Abe List" defendant ("John Doe" or "AL") is an individual and
3 resident of the County of Los Angeles, State of California. In the unlikely event that AL is not a
4 resident of Los Angeles County, AL has advanced his intentionally tortious, harmful and fraudulent
5 schemes in the County of Los Angeles, State of California, where he has engaged in conduct to harm a
6 California citizen.

7 5. Woods is ignorant of the true names and capacities of Defendants sued herein as John
8 Doe and Does 2 through 10, inclusive, and therefore sues said Defendants by such fictitious names.
9 Woods will amend this Complaint to allege the true names and capacities of such fictitiously named
10 Defendants when the same have been ascertained. Woods is informed and believes, and based thereon
11 alleges, that each of the fictitiously named Defendants is responsible in some manner for the
12 occurrences, acts and omissions alleged herein, and that Woods' damages have been, and will be,
13 proximately caused by their conduct. Among other things, Does 2 through 10 may be held directly
14 liable for the defamatory posting by AL by virtue of having knowingly assisted AL in the publication of
15 the false and defamatory statement and/or having knowingly republished the false statement without
16 having any reason to believe in its accuracy. For convenience, each allegation regarding AL shall apply
17 to each of the Doe Defendants 2 through 10. AL and Doe Defendants 2 through 10 are sometimes
18 hereinafter collectively referred to as "Defendants," as the context so indicates.

19 6. Woods is informed and believes, and based thereon alleges, that Defendants, and each of
20 them, were the agents, employees, partners, joint venturers, co-conspirators, owners, principals, and/or
21 employers of the remaining Defendants, and each of them, and are, and at all times herein mentioned
22 were, acting within the course and scope of that agency, employment, partnership, conspiracy,
23 ownership or joint venture. Woods is further informed and believes, and based thereon alleges, that the
24 acts and conduct alleged herein were known to, authorized and/or ratified by the officers, directors, and
25 managing agents of Defendants, and each of them.

1 **FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION**

2 **(Defamation Against All Defendants)**

3 7. Woods repeats, re-alleges, adopts and incorporates each and every allegation contained in
4 paragraphs 1 through 6, inclusive, as though fully set forth herein.

5 8. Woods' claims arise out of and are for damages with respect to a false and defamatory
6 statement which was initially published on or about July 15, 2015 by an unidentified anonymous person
7 who created and who operates a Twitter account under the name "Abe List" (the "AL Twitter
8 Account"). The owner of the AL Twitter Account has *thousands* of followers and, since at least
9 December 2014, has undertaken to engage his followers with a campaign of childish name-calling
10 targeted against Woods. In the past, AL has referred to Woods with such derogatory terms as "prick,"
11 "joke," "ridiculous," "scum" and "clown-boy."

12 9. On July 15, 2015, and for the sole and intentional purpose of harming Woods, AL
13 concocted and posted on the AL Twitter Account the outrageous, baseless, false and defamatory
14 statement "cocaine addict James Woods still sniffing and spouting" (hereinafter, the "False Statement").
15 In doing so, AL intended to, and did, convey to thousands of AL's followers and others with access to
16 the internet the false claim that Woods is addicted to cocaine, a controlled substance.

17 10. Woods is informed and believes, and on that basis alleges, an unidentified person
18 operates and utilizes the AL Twitter Account which is displayed at or with the uniform resource locator
19 ("URL") < <https://mobile.twitter.com/abelisted?p=s>>, and which is continually maintained and is
20 included in and appears prominently in current Google.com and other search engine results. Indeed, a
21 search on Google.com for "Abe List James Woods" yields the outrageous statements from the AL
22 Twitter Account as the top two results, including one that calls Woods "a ridiculous scum clown-boy."

23 11. AL published, and/or caused to be published or authorized to be published, the False
24 Statement on the AL Twitter Account and in current (as of the date of this Complaint) Google.com
25 search engine results, causing the False Statement to be viewed *thousands of times* and possibly even
26 *hundreds of thousands* of times. AL posted the False Statement in response to a Twitter post by Woods.
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1 Thus, the False Statement has been seen not only by Defendants' thousands of followers, but possibly by
2 Woods' 238,512 followers on his Twitter account—and even more since it is accessible to anyone that
3 does a Google search. In short, the False Statement has been published for *hundreds of thousands* of
4 people to see, which includes friends, family, potential employers, business associates, colleagues, and
5 fans of Woods.

6 12. The above-pled misconduct by AL constitutes the tort of defamation.

7 13. Woods is informed and believes, and based thereon alleges, that Defendants intentionally
8 portrayed Woods in the above manner knowing that the depiction was false, without any reasonable
9 grounds for believing it to be true.

10 14. Persons who read the False Statement posted to the AL Twitter Account by Defendants
11 and with use of Woods' name as part of the False Statement, reasonably understood the references to
12 "@RealJamesWoods" and "James Woods" to be references to the actor James Woods herein.

13 15. The AL Twitter Account contains the False Statement of the Defendants and contains a
14 fabricated, false, malicious and defamatory statement of fact of and concerning Woods as alleged
15 hereinabove.

16 16. The AL Twitter Account, which is based on and comprised of the False Statement from
17 Defendants, is libelous on its face and is defamation per se, because it claims that Woods has engaged in
18 criminal conduct. As such, the False Statement clearly exposes Woods to hatred, contempt, ridicule and
19 obloquy, and/or causes Woods to be shunned or avoided, and has a tendency to injure him in his
20 personal life and occupation.

21 17. As a direct and proximate result of the aforementioned acts by Defendants, and each of
22 them, Defendants have caused harm to Woods, which includes, but is not limited to general and special
23 damages in an amount not presently known but believed to be not less than Ten Million Dollars
24 (\$10,000,000), including damage to Woods' reputation and standing in the community as a result of
25 Defendants' actions.

26 18. Woods is informed and believes and based thereon alleges that the aforementioned acts
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1 of Defendants were done intentionally or with a conscious disregard of Woods' rights, and with the
2 intent to vex, injure or annoy Woods, such as to constitute oppression, fraud, or malice thus entitling
3 Woods to exemplary and punitive damages in an amount appropriate to punish or set an example of
4 Defendants, and each of them, and to deter such conduct in the future, which amount will be proved at
5 trial.

6 **SECOND CAUSE OF ACTION**

7 **(Invasion of Privacy by False Light Against All Defendants)**

8 19. Woods repeats, re-alleges, adopts and incorporates each and every allegation contained in
9 paragraphs 1 through 18 inclusive, as though fully set forth herein.

10 20. The above-pled misconduct by Defendants, or any of them, constitutes the tort of
11 invasion of privacy by false light, in that Defendants have placed Woods before the public in a false and
12 outrageous light, which is highly offensive to Woods, and have thereby violated Woods' right of
13 privacy.

14 21. As is alleged hereinabove, Defendants, and each of them, made and caused to be
15 published the False Statement of and concerning Woods, and disseminated it to third parties around the
16 world via the Internet. Defendants either knew that the False Statement was false, or published the False
17 Statement with reckless disregard of the falsity of the False Statement and the false light that Woods
18 would be placed as a result thereof. To the extent that the trier of fact finds that this False Statement is
19 not defamatory, Woods is informed and believes and based thereon alleges that Defendants intended to
20 depict Woods in a false, fictionalized and sensationalized light in order to benefit themselves through
21 some cowardly form of revenge for having expressed his personal views and/or for the sole purpose of
22 harming Woods.

23 22. The false light in which Defendants, and each of them, have placed Woods by virtue of
24 the False Statement would be highly offensive to a reasonable person. By publishing and/or
25 disseminating the False Statement on websites, including on the AL Twitter Account, and in internet
26 search engine results published or displayed nationwide or worldwide, and by publishing the False

1 Statement in the manner and context in which it has been published, Defendants have outrageously and
2 without any basis whatsoever falsely represented and implied that Woods is, among other false things, a
3 "cocaine addict."

4 23. Woods is embarrassed and distressed that family, friends, fans, potential employers,
5 business associates and the general public, saw this False Statement in the manner and context in which
6 the False Statement was published with the false representation and inference, which is alleged herein.
7 In fact, Woods has *over 238,512 people* that follow his Twitter account, all of which had access to the
8 False Statement.

9 24. As a direct and proximate result of said wrongful conduct by Defendants, and each of
10 them, Woods suffered shame, mortification, hurt feelings, emotional distress, embarrassment,
11 humiliation, and injury to his peace of mind (although not severe, disabling emotional distress), all to
12 Woods' general damage in an amount not presently known but believed to be not less than Ten Million
13 Dollars (\$10,000,000), including damage to Woods' reputation and standing in the community as a
14 result of Defendants' actions. When Woods ascertains the exact amount of said damages, he will seek
15 leave of Court to amend this Complaint to set forth said amount.

16 25. As a further direct and proximate result of said wrongful conduct by Defendants, and
17 each of them, Woods has suffered general and special damages including, but not limited to, damage to
18 his business, profession, reputation, character and property, which will most likely result in loss of
19 employment, loss or reduction in earnings and profits in an amount which has yet to be ascertained, and
20 will result in Woods not been given certain jobs. When Woods ascertains the exact amount of said
21 damages, he will seek leave of Court to amend this Complaint to set forth said amount.

22 26. Woods is informed and believes, and based thereon alleges, that the aforementioned acts
23 of Defendants, and each of them, were done intentionally or with a conscious disregard of Woods'
24 rights, and with the intent to vex, injure or annoy Woods, such as to constitute oppression, fraud, or
25 malice, and that they had knowledge of, or acted in reckless disregard of the rights of Woods, and the
26 false light in which Woods would be placed, thus entitling Woods to exemplary and punitive damages in
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1 an amount appropriate to punish or set an example of Defendants, and each of them, and to deter such
2 conduct in the future, which amount will be proved at trial.

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4 **PRAYER FOR RELIEF**

5 WHEREFORE, Plaintiff Woods respectfully requests the following relief:

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7 **AS TO THE FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION:**

8 1. General and special damages against Defendants, and each of them, jointly and severally,
9 in an amount not less than Ten Million Dollars (\$10,000,000), or according to proof, together with
10 interest thereon at the legal rate;

11 2. Exemplary and punitive damages in an amount sufficient to punish and deter Defendants,
12 the exact sum in an amount to be determined as appropriate to the Court;

13
14 **AS TO THE SECOND CAUSE OF ACTION:**

15 3. General and special damages against Defendants, and each of them, jointly and severally,
16 in an amount not less than Ten Million Dollars (\$10,000,000), or according to proof, together with
17 interest thereon at the legal rate;

18 4. Exemplary and punitive damages in an amount sufficient to punish and deter Defendants,
19 the exact sum in an amount to be determined as appropriate to the Court;

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21 **AS TO ALL CAUSES OF ACTION:**

22 17. For costs of the suit incurred;

23 18. For attorneys' fees, if allowed by law;

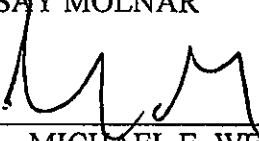
24 19. For pre-judgment interest on all such damages at the legal rate; and

25 20. For such other and further relief as the Court may deem just and proper.

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Dated: July 29, 2015

LAVELY & SINGER
PROFESSIONAL CORPORATION
MICHAEL E. WEINSTEN
EVAN N. SPIEGEL
LINDSAY MOLNAR

By: 
MICHAEL E. WEINSTEN
Attorneys for Plaintiff James Woods

REQUEST FOR A JURY TRIAL

Plaintiff hereby requests a trial by jury in the above action.

Dated: July 29, 2015

LAVELY & SINGER
PROFESSIONAL CORPORATION
MICHAEL E. WEINSTEN
EVAN N. SPIEGEL
LINDSAY MOLNAR

By: 

MICHAEL E. WEINSTEN

Attorneys for Plaintiff James Woods

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