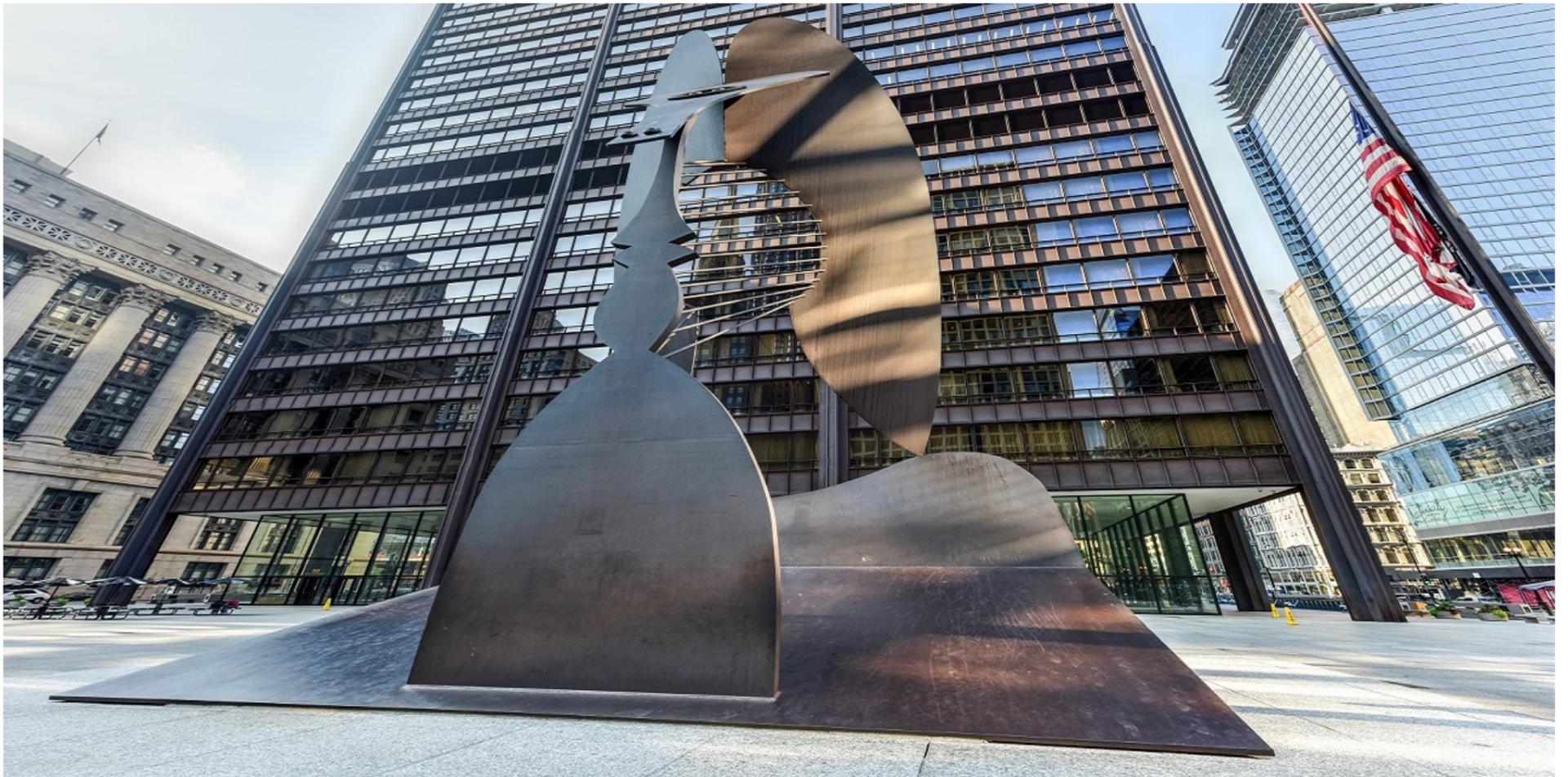


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Lawyer: Forensic accountant mixed up in contentious divorce involving wire tap charges still owes big fees

By Dan Churney | Oct 9, 2017



The Chicago lawyer who handled a Windy City accountant's contentious divorce case that involved accusations of adultery and illegal eavesdropping, has filed suit against his former client, alleging the accountant hasn't paid more than half-a-million dollars in attorney fees.

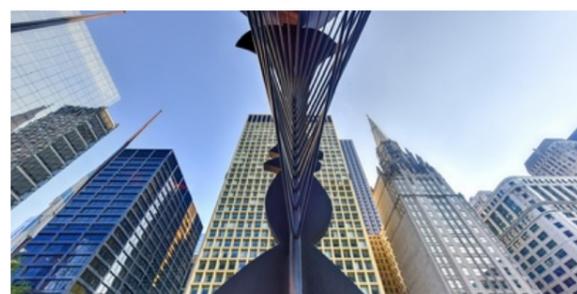
Nejla Lane, of the Chicago firm of Lane Keyfli Law, lodged a suit Sept. 27 in Cook County Circuit Court against Barry J. Epstein, alleging Epstein owes \$575,856 to the firm for its handling of his five-year long divorce case. Lane said Epstein has been given billing statements, but has not paid.

According to Epstein's website, he is an accountant with a doctorate, who is called upon as an expert in civil suits and criminal prosecutions. Epstein said he also has taught at universities, such as Northwestern University, and has penned books and articles on auditing.

Epstein's then wife of 42 years, Paula Epstein, filed for divorce in 2012. She claimed he was a serial philanderer. Epstein later charged Paula made this false accusation based on his emails to several women, which she interpreted as evidence of adultery. While the divorce was pending, Epstein went to Chicago federal court to sue Paula and her Chicago attorney, Jay A. Frank, for violating his privacy under the U.S. Wiretap Act.



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U.S. District Judge Thomas Durkin threw out Epstein's suit. However, the U.S. Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals reversed Durkin's ruling in December 2016 as it pertained to Paula, but not Frank, determining there were grounds to suspect Paula might have broached the Wiretap Act, although the appeals panel noted Congress probably didn't expect the law to be used as a "weapon in a divorce."

The Epsteins eventually settled the divorce case and the federal suit in August 2017.

Lane said she represented Epstein in the circuit court divorce proceedings, as well as in the federal action, running up the \$575,856 bill.

Lane wants a judge to permit her to keep \$40,007 in an escrow account she controls for Epstein, as well as another \$800 belonging to Epstein, which she possesses. Lane said she will subtract these funds from Epstein's bill.

Lane said she is also holding onto Epstein's case file and portable hard drives, which contain images of Epstein's computers, until Epstein forks over the \$575,856.

Lane said Epstein agreed to Lane's rates and is "financially able to pay the fees and costs due to Plaintiffs, but merely refuses to do so, and his conduct constitutes a gross imposition upon Plaintiffs."

Judge Brigid McGrath is assigned the case. A status hearing is Nov. 30.

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