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# Johnny Depp's Lawyer Battle Drags in Elon Musk, Kevin Tsujihara

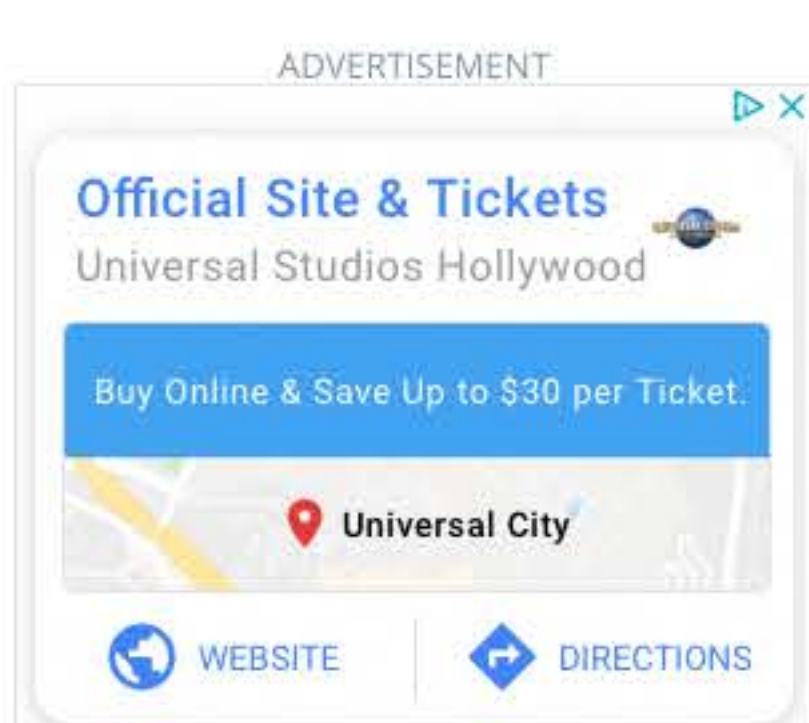


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Johnny Depp



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The war between Johnny Depp and his ex-lawyer is sending shrapnel toward a who's-who of Hollywood power players.

Several top attorneys and executives were served deposition notices on Wednesday in connection with a lawsuit filed by Depp against Jake Bloom, who represented the superstar actor for decades before the relationship soured in 2017. The group of potential witnesses in the case includes everyone from former Warner Bros. chairman Kevin Tsujihara to billionaire Elon Musk to power litigator Marty Singer to Depp's ex-wife, actress Amber Heard.

Sources familiar with the deposition requests say Tsujihara will be asked to testify under oath about whether or not he played a role in "blacklisting" Heard at Warner Bros. Depp, a star in the studio's *Fantastic Beasts* franchise (he plays Grindelwald), is alleged to have personally lobbied Tsujihara to remove the actress from *Aquaman* and block her from getting other projects. (Heard ultimately did co-star in *Aquaman*, which was released in December.)

Tsujihara and the others are being asked to provide testimony by Bloom's legal team, which is fighting a suit filed by Depp claiming, among other things, that Bloom gave the actor bad advice with regards to his split with Heard. Deposition notices also went out to lawyers including Singer and litigator Patty Glaser, as well as divorce specialist Laura Wasser and criminal attorney Blair Berk — all of whom have worked with the actor in the past — as well as Depp and Depp's former bodyguards. Also being served are Heard, her divorce lawyer Samantha Spector, Heard's former boyfriend Musk, her sister Whitney and the couple's former neighbors.

The reason why so many of Depp's long-term lawyers and advisors are being asked to give testimony in the suit is that Bloom, who is being represented by Bryan Freedman, isn't the only attorney who advised Depp to settle with Heard rather than face a protracted legal battle. But Bloom is the only one being sued by the actor, who is currently repped by Adam Waldman.

Depp filed his initial complaint against Bloom in October 2017, claiming that the attorney collected more than \$30 million in contingent fees without a signed contract. Bloom countersued two months later, asking the court for a declaration that their 20-year-old oral agreement is valid and claiming Depp breached their deal by failing to pay for legal services. But the Heard split wasn't mentioned in legal documents until an April 15 filing from Freedman that said, "Plaintiffs have begun to accuse Defendants of malpractice in connection with Depp's divorce from Amber Heard. Plaintiffs' supplemental written discovery responses should clarify whether (or how) Plaintiffs believe Defendants were responsible for the purported mismanagement of Depp's divorce (even though Depp had separate counsel in that divorce proceeding). ... Assuming that the documents and depositions can be smoothly obtained, discovery regarding Depp's divorce will likely take an additional three months."

The Bloom lawsuit is separate from a \$50 million defamation suit Depp filed against Heard in March. In response, Heard recently filed court documents that described in graphic detail how Depp allegedly beat and choked her during alcohol- and drug-fueled binges, leaving scars on her body that remain.

At the time of their split in 2016, Depp is said to have also tried to block Heard from obtaining jobs at other studios where he also holds sway. But Tsujihara is the only studio executive who was served a deposition notice.

Legal observers question why Waldman has advised Depp to bring suits against both Heard and Bloom, both of which only threaten to reignite Heard's domestic violence claims. The suits also put Warner Bros. in the awkward position of having to answer renewed questions about Depp's involvement in upcoming *Fantastic Beasts* films (three more films in the J.K. Rowling-created franchise are planned). Rowling, who was known to have a close relationship with Tsujihara, publicly backed Depp in the wake of backlash over the Heard domestic abuse claims, writing in a statement, "The filmmakers and I are not only comfortable sticking with our original casting, but genuinely happy to have Johnny playing a major character in the movies."

The deposition requests do not offer evidence that Tsujihara took action to prevent Heard from securing roles in Warners movies, and it would have been extremely difficult for any one executive — even a studio head — to oust Heard from *Aquaman*, which shot in 2017, given that she had previously played superheroine Mera in the studio's *Justice League*. Zack Snyder cast Heard for that film, which was already in production in April 2016, more than a month before Heard filed for divorce and obtained a temporary restraining order against Depp. But Heard has said repeatedly that she lost out another unnamed film role in the wake of the split. In a declaration made in an April 11 motion to dismiss filing in response to Depp's defamation lawsuit, Heard said, "Following my highly-publicized separation from Johnny, ... I lost a part for a movie in which I had already been cast." She previously wrote in a *Washington Post* op-ed that advisors warned that she might be "blacklisted."

"Questions arose as to whether I would be able to keep my role of Mera in the movies *Justice League* and *Aquaman*."

In response to this article, Waldman added, "Bloom Hergott bewilderingly claims that they have been accused of malpractice relating to Amber Heard and her already disproven abuse hoax. We are suing Amber Heard for defamation following her hoax, and also the Sun tabloid for rebroadcasting it, not Bloom Hergott. To remind Bloom Hergott, Mr. Depp is suing them for breach of fiduciary duty, unjust enrichment, swiping Mr. Depp's back end payments, taking over \$30 million without a written contract and tax and other legal malpractice. What evidence could Elon Musk and Kevin Tsujihara (the former head of Warner Bros.) possibly possess to do with that? Now Bloom Hergott will have to convince the Court that Elon Musk, Amber Heard and an ex Studio Chief have relevant information for their defense, versus merely issuing famous subpoenas in a last ditch effort to divert attention and stall their looming day of reckoning."



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