Fashion Victims

APLA sues author of dishy tome

May 1, 1997 By Walter Armstrong and Ronnilyn Pustil

AIDS Project Los Angeles (APLA) is suing fundraiser Michael Anketell for $10 million. The organization's complaint, which was filed last December, brings no fewer than 11 causes of action against Anketell, including defamation, breach of contract, fraud and misappropriation of trade secrets. APLA blames Anketell, a former board member, for allowing its 1996 Todd Oldham Friends of Fashion fundraiser, the organization's megaglitzy cash cow, to go way over budget; they're demanding a $300,000 payback. APLA also says Anketell owes money he allegedly stole from the event--a charge Anketell calls absurd.

"The idea that APLA is going to get $10 million from a guy with HIV who is so broke he had to move out of his apartment is just ridiculous," said Anketell's lawyer, Cyrus Godfrey.

APLA turned litigious only after an excerpt from Anketell's book, *Tarnished Sequins,* ran in the November issue of *POZ.* Subtitled *A Decade of AIDS Fundraising in Hollywood and the Fashion Industry,* the still-unpublished book documents in dishy detail the extravagance and excesses demanded by such fashion divas as Calvin Klein, while painting some celebs as petty, cheap and vulgar.

Anketell denies all APLA charges. "I have no desire to harm the agency," he said. "My book isn't an expose. It's about how I watched the event I created 11 years ago start out as something golden, and as it become more successful, it was co-opted by people who wanted to use it for other reasons. For example? "APLA board members granted favors to their friends, who made wheelbarrows full of money off the Todd Oldham event. It made the Calvin Klein benefit [in 1993] look like a birthday party." Godfrey added, "These people basically want to advance themselves in Hollywood."

But Kevin James, who's representing the AIDS service organization with lawyer-to-the-stars Bert Fields, begs to differ. "There's proof in *your* magazine and other publications that Anketell's allegations about APLA hurt the organization," he told *POZ.* "We can't prevent him from penning the book, but we'll do our damnedest to make sure the truth is told."

Anketell's New York agent, Laura Dail, said any attempt to scare off publishers is likely to backfire. "Given this frivolous lawsuit, we're not shopping the book around at this time," she said. "But once

we get the OK from the lawyers, I think publishers will go wild for it.”

Fans, don’t forget--you read it first in *POZ.*

© 2026 Smart + Strong All Rights Reserved.
http://beta.docker.poz.com/article/Fashion-Victims-12277-2293