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Man Who Sued *Gawker* Denies Reports of Secret Funder Behind His Lawsuit

by [Ronn Blitzer](#) | 12:30 pm, May 25th, 2016

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The *New York Times* published an article on Monday that raised questions about whether lawsuits against Gawker have been funded by a third party looking to hurt the gossip website.

The piece, written by **Andrew Ross Sorkin**, mentions that multiple lawsuits against Gawker, including the notorious case brought by **Hulk Hogan** that resulted in a \$140 million verdict for the wrestler, were being handled by the same attorney, **Charles Harder**. Sorkin wondered if having the same lawyer meant that the cases were all being bankrolled by the same person.

One of Harder's cases that Sorkin called "puzzling" was [the one brought by Shiva Ayyadurai](#). Ayyadurai claims that he invented email, and has made a living on that reputation. The Gawker-owned site Gizmodo, and Gawker itself, published articles indicating that Ayyadurai is a fraud. Ayyadurai sued, claiming that his reputation and career suffered as a result of the articles, and he didn't appreciate Sorkin's characterization of his claim.

In a blog entry posted on Wednesday, Ayyadurai said he is "totally

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unaware of any behind-the-scenes financial arrangements involving my attorneys and anyone else.” He also said that if there was such an arrangement, it wouldn’t have anything to do with the merits of his case. Ayyadurai said Gawker’s articles had “very hurtful consequences” for him, and “[n]ow there will be consequences for Nick Denton and his publications.” He concluded, “Why would that be puzzling to Andrew Ross Sorkin or anyone else?”

Reports do indicate that Hogan’s legal fees were covered by PayPal co-founder **Peter Thiel**, who was outed as gay by Gawker in a 2007 article. Thiel, who is indeed gay, had not been public about his sexuality at the time. So far there is no evidence that Thiel is connected to Ayyadurai’s case, other than it being handled by Hogan’s lawyer.

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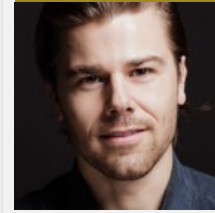
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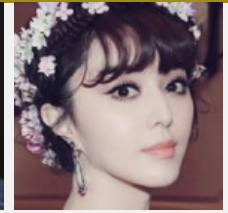
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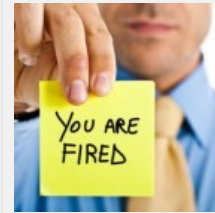
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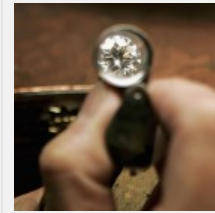
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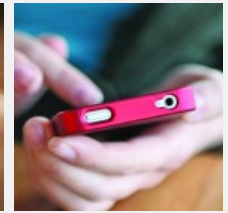
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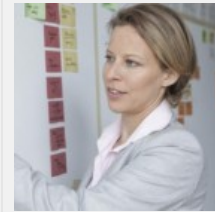
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