

From the Boston Business Journal:

<http://www.bizjournals.com/boston/news/2016/05/10/cambridge-man-who-claims-he-invented-email-sues.html>

Cambridge man who claims he invented email sues Gawker for \$35M

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A Cambridge resident and MIT graduate who says he invented email in the late 1970s is suing **Gawker** Media for \$35 million, saying the news and gossip website engaged in an orchestrated campaign to defame him.

Shiva Ayyadurai filed the lawsuit in federal court in Boston on Tuesday. According to the lawsuit, Gawker's tech site, Gizmodo, posted two "false and highly defamatory articles" about Ayyadurai on the website in 2012. The lawsuit states that the articles "falsely trace the origin of email and call Ayyadurai a liar, a 'fraud' and responsible for 'a misinformation campaign.'"

In 2014, Gizmodo allegedly published a "defamatory article" about Ayyadurai, this time on Gawker, calling Ayyadurai a "fraud," a "renowned liar," and a "big fake," among other things, according to the court filing. The articles still appear on Gawker's website.

According to the court filing:

Defendants' false and defamatory statements have caused substantial damage to Dr. Ayyadurai's personal and professional reputation and



SHIVA AYYADURAI/TWITTER

Shiva Ayyadurai

career. As a result of Defendants' defamation, Dr. Ayyadurai has been publicly humiliated, lost business contracts and received a slew of criticism relating to Defendants' false accusations and statements.

Ayyadurai, who holds four degrees from MIT and is married to actress Fran Drescher, also names Gawker staffer Sam Biddle, the site's executive editor John Cook and Gawker founder Nick Denton in the suit.

"These claims to have invented email have been repeatedly debunked by the Smithsonian Institute, Gizmodo, the Washington Post and others," a spokesman for Gawker said in a statement.

Ayyadurai claims he invented email while working as a research fellow at the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, but much of the credit for the invention has gone to Ray Tomlinson, who's credited with creating the ubiquitous communication tool at Cambridge company Bolt, Beranek, and Newman in 1971. The company was acquired by Waltham defense contractor Raytheon Co. in 2009. Tomlinson died of a heart attack earlier this year.

Ayyadurai operates his own research center, the International Center for Integrative Systems in Cambridge.

Gawker has run into legal trouble before. In March, a Florida jury awarded former wrestler Terry "Hulk Hogan" Bollea \$115 million in compensatory damages against Gawker, Denton and former editor A.J. Daulerio for publishing a secretly recorded sex tape.

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