

Lin Wood's Ex-Colleagues Say He Won't Answer Discovery

By [Rosie Manins](#)

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Law360 (May 24, 2021, 2:35 PM EDT) -- Atlanta lawyers who used to work with controversial pro-Trump attorney L. Lin Wood have asked a Georgia state court judge to sanction him over alleged discovery failures in their contract breach suit claiming he owes them money.

Nicole Wade, Jonathan Grunberg and Taylor Wilson of [Wade Grunberg & Wilson LLC](#) said in their sanctions motion on Friday that Wood and his firm L. Lin Wood PC have failed to timely respond to their second set of discovery requests. They suggested Wood was too busy disparaging them on social media to respond by a May 17 deadline and that all his pleadings should be struck from the case.

It was not the first time Wood had failed to participate in discovery in the case, in which [the trio claim](#) Wood and his firm hasn't paid them an undisclosed share of money received from common clients in a breach of their separation agreement.

"Wood, who is also himself counsel in this matter, has spent much of his time before the deadline for plaintiffs' second set of discovery discussing this case and disparaging plaintiffs with his over 850,000 social media followers and at speeches for his candidacy for Republican Party chairman of South Carolina," Wade, Grunberg and Wilson said in their sanctions motion.

According to the lawsuit, filed in August, Wade, Grunberg and Wilson parted ways from Wood and his firm in February 2020. Wood denies the allegations. He brought counterclaims against the plaintiffs of defamation and portrayal in a false light, but [dropped those claims](#) in early February to focus his attention on their allegations, plaintiffs said.

The discovery sanctions motion comes on the heels of plaintiffs' [May 14 request](#) for the court to hold Wood in contempt of an October injunctive order that prohibits him from making disparaging comments about them and their case. Wade, Grunberg and Wilson said they have received hate mail and violent threats from Wood's supporters.

Then on May 19, they filed a motion to expedite a hearing and ruling on the contempt issue, saying Wood was violating the injunctive order at such a pace that they were struggling to keep up in case filings. They said Wood has been inciting violence against them using his Telegram account, knowing his comments have resulted in threats against them.

"Wood's lies are of a shocking nature," plaintiffs said in their hearing motion. "They are malicious, attempting to make good on his repeated threats to destroy plaintiffs reputationally, financially, and professionally."

Supporting affidavits from Wade show public comments allegedly made by Wood supporters on social media, asking for the plaintiffs' home addresses, attacking their ethnicity and religion, and calling for their disbarment. A Wood supporter named Erik allegedly wrote "I'd love to see these traitors dead."

The plaintiffs' sanctions motion also followed a recusal notice by Fulton County Superior Court Judge Belinda E. Edwards, who said without explanation on May 20 that she wanted the case reassigned. As of Monday, the case docket shows that it had been given to Fulton County Superior Court Judge Henry M. Newkirk.

Wade, Grunberg and Wilson said while Wood has been ignoring their discovery requests, he has been seeking irrelevant discovery from Wade's former employer, the law firm [Bryan Cave Leighton Paisner LLP](#). Wood's third-party discovery request to the firm elicited objections from it as well as plaintiffs, who said they anticipate having to file a motion to quash it.

They said Wood is trying to embarrass Wade and doesn't appear to be worried about publicly criticizing them, the case or the court.

"It appears that defendants are simply refusing to engage in the discovery process so they can continue to harass the plaintiffs on social media in violation of this court's October 8, 2020 injunction order," Wade, Grunberg and Wilson said. "Defendants found time to violate the injunction order of this court by disparaging plaintiffs and their counsel, attacking this court as 'corrupt,' and serving extraneous, irrelevant discovery on third parties with the hopes of embarrassing plaintiffs."

Wood allegedly also failed to properly respond to plaintiffs' first set of discovery requests as well as their first amended complaint in September, instead filing identical "placeholder" responses and refusing to supplement them, plaintiffs said. This led to a motion to compel Wood to respond and a motion to determine the sufficiency of his initial responses.

Plaintiffs filed their motion to compel in April and claim they have not received a response to that either.

Wood and his firm on May 20 asked again for a hearing on their attempt to dismiss the suit. They said they first

requested in October oral argument on their motion to strike plaintiffs' first amended complaint, but the court has yet to set a time or date.

Andrew M. Beal and Milinda Brown of [Buckley Beal LLP](#), representing the plaintiffs, told Law360 they hope Judge Newkirk will first address their contempt motion due to the continued threats from Wood's supporters in response to his remarks about them.

Beal and Brown said Judge Edwards' recusal, for which she did not give parties a reason, shouldn't delay the case and that they are happy to have Judge Newkirk take over.

"We are sure he will help address the pending claims," they said Monday. "We are still trying to get basic discovery from the defendants and see the documents in their possession that reference this dispute."

Wood and his co-counsel did not immediately respond to a request for comment on Monday.

Wade, Grunberg, Wilson and their firm are represented by Andrew M. Beal and Milinda Brown of Buckley Beal LLP.

Wood and his firm are represented by himself, Larry L. Crain of [Crain Law Group PLLC](#) and Ibrahim Reyes of Reyes Lawyers PA.

The case is Wade et al. v. Wood et al., case number 2020-CV-339937, in the Superior Court of Fulton County, Georgia.

--Editing by Amy Rowe.

Update: This article has been updated with comment from plaintiffs' counsel.

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