

Lawsuit targets security firm, HOAs over Bob Lee murder footage

By James Twomey
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A lawsuit for wrongful death against the man convicted of murdering tech mogul Bob Lee has also taken aim at global security firm Securitas, as well as two homeowners' associations, accusing them of wrongly releasing to the press footage of the Cash App founder's murder on a San Francisco street.

The lawsuit claims invasion of privacy and infliction of emotional distress through disclosure of private facts against the companies.

But Karin Sweigart at Dhillon Law Group Inc., said she was unsure how the plaintiff would clear the anti-SLAPP hurdle, which allows defendants to dismiss lawsuits filed against them for exercising their First Amendment rights.

Sweigart, who is not involved in the case, noted that the attorneys for Lee's

family mentioned in the complaint "that nothing in the video was a matter of public concern. They kind of threw that in there, but I don't know if that's going to get past the anti-SLAPP hurdle because I think there is definitely an argument to be made that this was a matter of public concern.

"It's gotten a lot of media attention," Sweigart said. "It caused a stir within the city for security purposes. And then they could potentially have anti-SLAPP liability because of that and get the case kicked out on those grounds.

"They're interesting theories but I don't know if they're theories that I would want to test while potentially being on the hook for the other side's attorney's fees."

The complaint filed by Lee's family also accuses the family of Nima Momeni, the man found guilty of murdering Lee, as complicit in the wrongful death claim. Momeni was convicted of sec-

ond-degree murder in December 2024 for stabbing Lee to death near the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge. *The Estate of Robert Harold Lee, et al., v. Nima Momeni, et al*, CGC-25-623810 (S.F. Super Ct. filed March 28, 2025).

The high-profile case contributed to debate about safety in San Francisco and the complaint claims footage of the stabbing in April 2023 released to the media constituted an invasion of privacy.

Lead attorney for the Lee family, Olivier A. Tallilieu of BD&J PC., wrote in the complaint, "Bob's two children, who were both minors at the time of his death, saw the video footage on news reports, and they were horrified at what they saw in the video. The video footage they saw of their father, after he had been stabbed, traumatized them and have caused them significant emotional distress."

Tallilieu, Securitas, and Momeni's counsel during the murder trial were

all contacted for comment but did not respond in time for press.

Sweigart highlighted that another hurdle for the plaintiffs to clear is the invasion of privacy claim. As the videos released are in public areas, there is a question whether the family could have a reasonable expectation of privacy.

An attorney who handles privacy cases, Shant A. Karnikian, partner at Kabateck LLP in Los Angeles, agreed that the public setting of the footage could reduce the expectation of privacy claim. This may present a problem for the plaintiff, but the "intimately private" nature of the content could outweigh it, he commented.

"It oddly reminds me of the Kobe Bryant case," Karnikian said. "The heart of the claim is the idea that there are lines you just can't cross when releasing graphic footage." He referred to photographs taken by sheriff's deputies and firefighters after a helicopter

crash that killed the NBA star, his daughter and several other people.

Bryant's widow, Vanessa, won a \$16 million federal jury award against Los Angeles County in 2022 for invasion of privacy, though the photos did not appear in the news or on social media.

The Lee family complaint claims that the defendant security company and homeowners' associations "released private information concerning the stabbing" when they allegedly passed the footage to the media. Karnikian said this could be another challenge to prove as "something that's already in the public domain is not private and publication of it, sharing it, is protected often."

Karnikian said, "Even though the cause of action complaint is worded as invasion of privacy, if you read the allegation, it's truly a published disclosure of private facts cause of action. That's the element I think will be the biggest hurdle.

"But I think it's a challenge that can be overcome. The context of it does make it private -- someone's final moments. It ties in with the other intentional infliction of emotional distress cause of action. It's a worthwhile cause of action to pursue here."

It is unclear from the complaint how the footage was accessed by media outlets, but Karnikian posited that even if there was an individual leak or security breach, the companies could still be liable.

"There's an argument that if it wasn't even deliberately shared but it was leaked in a way or someone breached security and obtained it, depending on how robust the security was, even an inadvertent disclosure I think would qualify as publication," Karnikian said.

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