Beat: Entertainment

Lawyers for Cosby, accusers open to settling defamation claim

Lawyers for Cosby.

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USPA NEWS - Lawyers for Cosby, accusers open to settling defamation claim.
Lawyers representing Bill Cosby and seven women who have accused the comedian of sexual assault are open to settling a defamation lawsuit, they told a federal judge in Massachusetts on Wednesday.

Cosby, 78, had previously rejected an offer to settle the lawsuit. First filed by Tamara Green in 2014 and since joined by six other women, the complaint says the once-beloved entertainer defamed them by saying that they lied when they accused him of sexually assaulting them.
"Mediation might be appropriate here ... we're open to it on our side," one of Cosby's attorneys, Marshall Searcy, said during a hearing at U.S. District Court in Worcester, Massachusetts. However, he cautioned that he could not commit to mediation without checking with his client, who has repeatedly denied wrongdoing.
Cosby, who built a long career on family-friendly comedy, has been accused by more than 50 women of sexual assault, often after allegedly plying them with drugs or alcohol in a series of incidents dating back decades.
Most of the alleged assault cases are too old to be cause for criminal prosecution.
But Pennsylvania prosecutors late last year filed charges against Cosby related to an alleged 2004 sex assault, just days before the statute of limitations was about to expire. He is currently out on bail awaiting trial.

"I need to consult with my client," Searcy said. "I don't want to talk out of school about that."
Joseph Cammarata, an attorney for the women, said he would be open to settlement talks.
"Let's give it a shot," Cammarata told U.S. Magistrate Judge David Hennessy. "It sounds like there may be some response that has a dollar (amount) attached to it and then we can start the process."
Hennessy urged both sides to consider that a considerable amount of money had been spent by Cosby's insurers in his defense.
"I would ask you at least to explore it; $2 million is a lot to defend a case, no matter whose money it is," Hennessy said.
Hennessy also rejected a request by Cosby's attorneys that he sit in on scheduled April depositions of the entertainer and his wife and business manager, Camille Cosby.
"I don't sit in on depositions," Hennessy said. "Mr. Cosby is like everyone else who comes through the doors of this courthouse. Rich or poor, known or unknown, you get the same treatment."
(Reporting by Scott Malone; Editing by Dan Grebler and Tom Brown)

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