

Court of Common Pleas, Belmont County, St. Clairsville, OH

SUMMONS ON COMPLAINT

ROBERT E MURRAY, 47626 Meadowview Drive, St Clairsville, OH,43950
Murray Energy Corporation 46226 National Road St Clairsville OH 43950
Plaintiff

Judge John M Solovan II
Case No.: 13 CV 0347

Vs.

HuffingtonPost.Com Inc 770 Broadway 4th Floor New York NY 10003
HuffingtonPost.Com Inc % agent Corporation Service Co 2711 Centerville Road Suite 400 Wilmington
DE 19808
Michael Wilfred Stark III Contributor The Huffington Post 2135 Grayson Place Falls Church VA 22043
Arianna Huffington President Editor in Chief Huffington Post 300 North Carmelina Avenue Los Angeles
CA 90049
Roy Sekoff Editor The Huffington Post 9318 Kirkside Road Los Angeles CA 90035
Stuart Whatley Individual Exe Blog Editor Huffington Post 1820 North Quinn Street Apt 406 Arlington
VA 22209

Defendant

TO THE ABOVE NAMED DEFENDANT:

You are hereby summoned that a Complaint (a copy of which is hereto attached and made a part hereof) has been filed against you in this Court by the Plaintiff named herein.

You are required to serve upon the Plaintiff's attorney or upon the Plaintiff if they have no attorney of record, a copy of your Answer to the Complaint within 28 days after service of this summons upon you, exclusive of the day of service. Said Answer must be filed with this Court within 3 days after served on Plaintiff's attorney.

The name and address of the Plaintiff's Attorney is as follows:

Gary M Broadbent
46226 National Road
St Clairsville, OH 43950

If you fail to appear and defend, judgment by default will be taken against you for the relief demanded in the Complaint.

CYNTHIA K McGEE, CLERK

Dated: September 25, 2013

By: _____
Clerk

COMMON PLEAS COURT
IN THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS
BELMONT COUNTY, OHIO

ROBERT E. MURRAY,
An individual,
47626 Meadowview Drive,
St. Clairsville, Ohio 43950;

2013 SEP 24 PM 4 22

CYNTHIA K. MEE
CLERK OF COURT

Case No.: 13 W347

MURRAY ENERGY CORPORATION,
An Ohio Corporation,
46226 National Road
St. Clairsville, Ohio 43950

Judge:

Plaintiffs,

COMPLAINT

v.

(Jury Demand Endorsed Hereon)

THEHUFFINGTONPOST.COM, INC.,
A Delaware Corporation,
c/o agent Corporation Service Co.
2711 Centerville Rd., Ste. 400
Wilmington, Delaware 19808

770 Broadway, 4th Floor
New York, New York 10003-9558;

MICHAEL WILFRED STARK III,
An individual,
Contributor, The Huffington Post
2135 Grayson Place
Falls Church, Virginia 22043;

ARIANNA HUFFINGTON,
An individual,
President/Editor-in-Chief, The Huffington Post
300 North Carmelina Avenue
Los Angeles, California 90049-2702;

ROY SEKOFF,
An individual,
Editor, The Huffington Post
9318 Kirkside Road
Los Angeles, California 90035-4127;

STUART WHATLEY,
An individual,
Executive Blog Editor, The Huffington Post

1820 North Quinn Street, Apt. 406
Arlington, Virginia 22209-1316

Defendants.

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Now come Plaintiffs, Robert E. Murray and Murray Energy Corporation (together, “the Murray Plaintiffs”) and for their Complaint against Defendants, TheHuffingtonPost.com, Inc., Arianna Huffington, Roy Sekoff, Stuart Whatley, and Michael Wilfred Stark III (together, “Defendants”), state and allege as follows:

NATURE OF THE CASE

1. This is an action for defamation and false light invasion of privacy. Defendants published numerous false and defamatory statements against the Plaintiffs Robert E. Murray and Murray Energy Corporation in a September 20, 2013 Internet article titled “*Meet the Extremist Coal Baron Bankrolling Ken Cuccinelli’s Campaign*” (the “Article”). The Article appeared on the Internet website known as The Huffington Post (www.huffingtonpost.com), which is owned and operated by Defendant TheHuffingtonPost.com, Inc., and is marketed and made freely available to a worldwide audience, including on the organization’s Internet website. Defendants were fully aware that their statements would be available to and of interest to people in Belmont County as that is where Plaintiffs reside or have their principal places of business. These false and defamatory statements, described below, were published by Defendants without any legal privilege, and with knowledge or reckless disregard of their falsity. These false and defamatory statements have severely harmed the reputation of the Murray Plaintiffs, caused great mental anguish and emotional distress for Plaintiff Robert E. Murray and his family members, and have cast the Murray Plaintiffs in a false light before the public.

PARTIES

Plaintiffs

2. Plaintiff Robert E. Murray ("Murray") is an individual residing at 47626 Meadowview Drive, St. Clairsville, Belmont County, Ohio, 43950, and is the President, Chief Executive Officer, and Chairman of Murray Energy Corporation.

3. Plaintiff Murray Energy Corporation ("Murray Energy") is a corporation incorporated under the laws of the State of Ohio, with its principal office located at 46226 National Road, St. Clairsville, Belmont County, Ohio, 43950.

Defendants

4. Defendant TheHuffingtonPost.com, Inc. is a corporation incorporated under the laws of the State of Delaware, with its principal office located at 770 Broadway, 4th Floor, New York, New York, 10003-9558. TheHuffingtonPost.com, Inc. is a media company that owns and operates a website called The Huffington Post (www.huffingtonpost.com). On information and belief, TheHuffingtonPost.com, Inc. exercises corporate control over, and provides basic business policy, editorial services, quality control, production and other services to The Huffington Post.

5. Defendant Michael Wilfred Stark III ("Stark") is an individual residing at 2135 Grayson Place, Falls Church, Virginia, 22043. Upon information and belief, Stark is a frequent contributor of Internet articles to The Huffington Post and is an independent contractor of Defendant TheHuffingtonPost.com, Inc.

6. Defendant Arianna Huffington ("Huffington") is an individual residing at 300 North Carmelina Avenue, Los Angeles, California, 90049-2702. Upon information and belief,

Huffington is the President and Editor-in-Chief of The Huffington Post, and is an employee of Defendant TheHuffingtonPost.com, Inc.

7. Defendant Roy Sekoff ("Sekoff") is an individual residing at 9318 Kirkside Road, Los Angeles, California, 90035-4127. Upon information and belief, Sekoff is the Editor of The Huffington Post, and is an employee of Defendant TheHuffingtonPost.com, Inc.

8. Defendant Stuart Whatley ("Whatley") is an individual residing at 1820 North Quinn Street, Apartment 406, Arlington, Virginia, 22209-1316. Upon information and belief, Whatley is the Executive Blog Editor of The Huffington Post, and is an employee of Defendant TheHuffingtonPost.com, Inc.

VENUE

9. Venue lies in the Court of Common Pleas, Belmont County, Ohio, pursuant to Civ. R. 3(B)(3), (6), (7), (12), and 3(E) because the Defendants conducted activity in Belmont County giving rise to the claim for relief; because all or part of the claim for relief arose in Belmont County; because Murray and Murray Energy reside in Belmont County; and because Belmont County is the proper venue as to any one party other than a nominal party, or as to any one claim for relief.

PERSONAL JURISDICTION

10. Defendants are subject to personal jurisdiction and service of process pursuant to Civ. R. 4.3(A)(3) and (9) and R.C. 2307.382(A)(3) and (6) because the Murray Plaintiffs' claims for relief arose from the Defendants' causing tortious injury by an act or omission in this state; and/or from the Defendants' causing tortious injury in this state to a person by an act outside this state committed with the purpose of injuring persons when Defendants might reasonably have expected that some person would be injured by the act in this state; and because this Court's

exercise of jurisdiction over Defendants would not deprive Defendants of their right to due process of law under the Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution.

GENERAL ALLEGATIONS COMMON TO ALL COUNTS

11. On or about September 20, 2013, Defendants published an Internet article on The Huffington Post website titled "*Meet the Extremist Coal Baron Bankrolling Ken Cuccinelli's Campaign.*" The Article, which is located and may be viewed at http://www.huffingtonpost.com/mike-stark/meet-the-extremist-coal-baron_b_3948453.html, was published under the byline of Defendant Stark and contained numerous false and defamatory statements concerning the Murray Plaintiffs. A copy of the Article is attached as **Exhibit A**.

12. The false and defamatory statements contained in the Article, some of which were republished from other sources, include, but are not limited to, assertions that: (i) Murray "announced he was firing more than 150 of his miners" following and in response to President Obama's reelection in 2012; (ii) Murray's firing of 150 of his miners was the "fulfillment of a promise" – i.e. a promise to fire his miners if Obama won reelection; (iii) Murray is an "extremist"; (iv) Murray "fires his workforce wholesale in fits of spite when electoral results disappoint him"; and (v) other statements contained in the Article (collectively, "the Defamatory Statements").

13. None of the Defendants, or their representatives, contacted any representative of the Murray Plaintiffs before publication of the Defamatory Statements to check the accuracy of those statements or other assertions made.

14. The Defamatory Statements were published by Defendants, quite literally, to the entire world through The Huffington Post website. Indeed, Bloomberg recently reported that The Huffington Post website had almost 72 million unique visitors and 595 million page views in the month of July 2013 alone. A copy of this Bloomberg article is attached as **Exhibit B**.

15. The Defamatory Statements intended to convey, and did convey, to the average reader of The Huffington Post the false and harmful impressions that Murray is an “extremist” and that Murray cares so little for his employees that he would fire them *en masse* just to make a political statement. These are false and defamatory assertions that have had, and will continue to have, extremely adverse effects on Murray’s reputation, his family, and his business interests.

16. In reality, Murray has a reputation for integrity and honesty and has been a leader in the coal industry and business community, adhering to an “open door policy” with his employees and working tirelessly to create jobs and preserve the livelihoods of thousands of coal miners in southeastern Ohio. Today, Murray Energy’s independently operated subsidiary companies employ about 3,400 people; mine coal in Ohio, Utah, Kentucky, and Illinois, operate river/truck/rail terminals on the Ohio River; rebuild long-walls and other underground mining equipment; and own additional coal properties in Pennsylvania and West Virginia.

17. Murray, in part because he has worked in the coal industry since age 17, is a supporter of the coal industry and the benefits that states and localities, including southeastern Ohio, receive from having a healthy coal industry. Murray has worked tirelessly on behalf of his employees to ensure that they can continue to work in high-paying jobs under safe conditions, consistent with applicable regulations and so that they can continue to be productive members of society. The reputations of the Murray Plaintiffs and Murray’s other business interests in the local and business community are of paramount importance to their continuing operations.

18. The ability of the Murray Plaintiffs to borrow money from lenders on the private market, to secure performance bonds as required by federal and state law, and to enter into long-term agreements with utility companies is, for the most part, based on Murray’s reputation for honesty, as well as the strength of Murray’s character and the fiscal soundness of Murray’s

companies. The reputation of Murray is also an extremely important part of his relationship with his employees, a relationship that has allowed Murray's business operations to expand and succeed in a harsh business climate.

19. The Defamatory Statements are nothing more than a series of false and very damaging statements regarding the Murray Plaintiffs.

20. Murray is neither a public figure nor a limited public figure in that he has neither voluntarily sought public or media attention, nor has he achieved such status by reason of the notoriety of his achievements.

21. The Defamatory Statements were understood and interpreted by readers of The Huffington Post to be assertions of fact, not opinion.

22. The common usage and meaning of the Defamatory Statements are likely to give rise to clear, unambiguous factual implications.

23. The Defamatory Statements are objectively capable of proof or disproof, and the context in which the Defamatory Statements were made would lead the reasonable reader of The Huffington Post to believe that the Defamatory Statements are assertions of fact, not expressions of opinion.

COUNT I
DEFAMATION

24. The Murray Plaintiffs restate and reallege Paragraphs 1-23 as if fully set forth herein.

25. Defendants published the Defamatory Statements to a wide and varied audience, including, but not limited to, all readers and viewers of The Huffington Post website.

26. The Defamatory Statements contain numerous false statements of fact concerning the Murray Plaintiffs, including, but not limited to, assertions that: (i) Murray "announced he

was firing more than 150 of his miners” following and in response to President Obama’s reelection in 2012; (ii) Murray’s firing of 150 of his miners was the “fulfillment of a promise” – i.e. a promise to fire his miners if Obama won reelection; (iii) Murray is an “extremist”; (iv) Murray “fires his workforce wholesale in fits of spite when electoral results disappoint him”; and (v) other statements contained in the Article.

27. Upon information and belief, Defendants caused the Defamatory Statements to be published with knowledge of the falsity of the statements contained therein or with reckless or negligent disregard as to the truth or falsity of said statements.

28. Upon information and belief, Defendants, acting on their own and/or through their agents, continue to broadcast or publish the Defamatory Statements, and have made the Defamatory Statements available to additional readers throughout the world, including residents of Belmont County, on Internet websites.

29. The Defamatory Statements are defamatory *per se* in that, on their face, they reflect upon the Murray Plaintiffs’ reputation and character in a manner that: (1) injures Murray’s reputation and subjects Murray to public hatred, ridicule, shame, or disgrace; and (2) adversely affects Murray’s trades and/or businesses. In the alternative, the Defamatory Statements are defamatory *per quod* in that they are capable of being interpreted as reflecting upon Murray’s reputation and/or character in a manner that: (1) injures Murray’s reputation and/or exposes him to public hatred, ridicule, shame, or disgrace; and (2) adversely affects his trades and/or businesses.

30. The Defamatory Statements were published with malice, and without any lawful privilege or basis.

31. Publication of the Defamatory Statements has caused and will continue to cause Murray and members of Murray's family to suffer great mental anguish and emotional distress.

32. Publication of the Defamatory Statements has caused Murray to suffer severe personal and professional humiliation and injury to his reputation in the community – a reputation that Murray has built over a long career as a leader in America's coal mining industry.

33. Murray has been damaged by the Defendants' publication of the Defamatory Statements because they impute dishonesty and immorality regarding his personal and professional character and suggest that he holds unpopular ["extremist"] views.

34. Murray Energy has been damaged by the Defendants' publication of the Defamatory Statements because they falsely suggest that Murray Energy engages in illegal, unethical, or immoral business practices.

35. Murray Energy's standing in the business community as a respected corporate citizen has been damaged by publication of the Defamatory Statements.

36. Publication of the Defamatory Statements will cause the Murray Plaintiffs to encounter more difficulty in securing performance surety bonds from lenders to support Murray's businesses and may cause the Murray Plaintiffs to have to collateralize these bonds at higher levels.

37. Publication of the Defamatory Statements will cause lenders to be less willing to engage in financing transactions with the Murray Plaintiffs, thereby preventing them from gaining access to capital needed to operate their businesses or making it more difficult and expensive for them to obtain such capital.

38. Publication of the Defamatory Statements will cause the Murray Plaintiffs to encounter difficulty in participating in discussions with public officials, including regulatory agencies, regarding matters of concern to the Murray Plaintiffs' businesses.

39. Publication of the Defamatory Statements will cause the Murray Plaintiffs to suffer a loss of business opportunities and loss of potential and/or existing customers for their businesses.

COUNT II
FALSE LIGHT INVASION OF PRIVACY

40. The Murray Plaintiffs restate and reallege Paragraphs 1-39 as if fully set forth herein.

41. The Defamatory Statements constitute false light invasion of privacy in that the Defamatory Statements have subjected the Murray Plaintiffs to unreasonable and highly objectionable publicity by attributing to them characteristics, conduct or beliefs that are false, thereby placing them in a false light before the public.

42. The false light in which the Murray Plaintiffs have been placed due to publication of the Defamatory Statements would be highly offensive to a reasonable person.

43. Defendants had knowledge of the falsity of the Defamatory Statements or acted in reckless disregard as to the falsity of the Defamatory Statements and the false light in which the Murray Plaintiffs would be placed.

44. Publication of the Defamatory Statements has caused and will continue to cause Murray and members of Murray's family to suffer great mental anguish and emotional distress.

45. Publication of the Defamatory Statements has caused Murray to suffer severe personal and professional humiliation and injury to his reputation in the community – a

reputation that Murray has built over a long career as a leader in America's coal mining industry.

46. Murray has been damaged by the Defendants' publication of the Defamatory Statements because they impute dishonesty and immorality regarding his personal and professional character and suggest that he holds unpopular ["extremist"] views.

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48. Murray Energy's standing in the business community as a respected corporate citizen has been damaged by publication of the Defamatory Statements.

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50. Publication of the Defamatory Statements will cause lenders to be less willing to engage in financing transactions with the Murray Plaintiffs, thereby preventing them from gaining access to capital needed to operate their businesses or making it more difficult and expensive for them to obtain such capital.

51. Publication of the Defamatory Statements will cause the Murray Plaintiffs to encounter difficulty in participating in discussions with public officials, including regulatory agencies, regarding matters of concern to the Murray Plaintiffs' businesses.

52. Publication of the Defamatory Statements will cause the Murray Plaintiffs to suffer a loss of business opportunities and loss of potential and/or existing customers for their businesses.

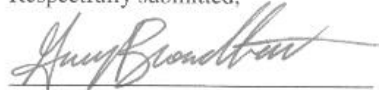
WHEREFORE, Plaintiffs respectfully request, as to Counts I and II:

1. Judgment for general damages in favor of the Murray Plaintiffs and against the Defendants in an amount to be determined at trial, but in excess of \$25,000.00.
2. Judgment for special damages in favor of the Murray Plaintiffs and against Defendants in an amount to be determined at trial, but in excess of \$25,000.00.
3. Judgment for punitive damages in favor of the Murray Plaintiffs and against Defendants in an amount to be determined at trial, but in excess of \$25,000.00;
4. An award to the Murray Plaintiffs of attorneys' fees and costs of suit; and
5. Such other and further relief as the Court deems just and proper.

PLAINTIFFS DEMAND A TRIAL BY JURY IN THIS ACTION.

Dated: September 24, 2013

Respectfully submitted,



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Columbus, Ohio 43215
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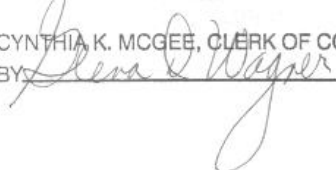
Counsel for Plaintiffs

Of counsel:

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STATE OF OHIO
BELMONT COUNTY
CYNTHIA K. MCGEE, CLERK OF COURTS, DO
HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THE ABOVE IS A TRUE
AND CORRECT COPY OF THE ORIGINAL ON FILE
IN THIS OFFICE.

CYNTHIA K. MCGEE, CLERK OF COURTS

BY:  _____ DEPUTY

THE
HUFFINGTON
POST

Meet the Extremist Coal Baron Bankrolling Ken Cuccinelli's Campaign

Mike Stark, Journalist

Posted: 09/20/2013 1:12 pm

Ken Cuccinelli, the Tea Party/GOP candidate for governor in Virginia, is struggling to save his campaign from a pair of slow-moving -- but unrelenting -- scandals that cast doubt upon his character and integrity.

To be clear, neither of these scandals are Whitewater-esque: There really is a "there" there. Cuccinelli really did accept thousands of dollars in gifts from the CEO of Star Scientific. He bought and sold stock in the company, and failed to report the transactions as required by law. He did all of this while holding office as Virginia's Attorney General. And he did all of this at a time he was legally obligated to defend against a lawsuit Star Scientific filed against the Commonwealth of Virginia.

(As an aside, imagine learning your divorce lawyer concealed that she had accepted thousands of dollars from your ex-spouse while the case was pending. That's very similar to what we have here.)

While Cuccinelli was literally in sleeping in Star Scientific's bed, he was also using the power of his office to benefit a Pennsylvania coal and gas company, Consol Energy. Beginning in 2010, Cuccinelli (and other lawyers in his office) took steps to help Consol avoid paying coal-bed methane royalties owed to Virginia landowners. Here again, the money trail is damning. Over the first seven years of Cuccinelli's political career, Consol contributed a total of \$3,500 to Cuccinelli's various campaigns. In contrast, in the three years Cuccinelli has been using his AG office to benefit Consol, they've given his campaigns more than \$140,000.

One might think that an embattled politician struggling to overcome the headwinds of scandal would be cautious before accepting fat envelopes of cash from extreme and unsavory donors.

Not Cuccinelli.

According to Cuccinelli's most recent campaign finance filing, his most generous individual contributor (and largest donor after the Republican Governors Association), is Murray Energy Corporation. Less than a month ago, on Aug. 27, Cuccinelli took \$30,000.

Robert "Bob" Murray owns Murray Energy Corporation. He has a history.

Most recently, he was the keynote speaker at the Bluefield Coal Show. He told the audience, "Many prominent Americans are now discussing the need to impeach President Obama." He unveiled a sign that read "Save America Impeach Obama" and asked people in the room if they wanted to be part of the effort.

In September 2012, Mitt Romney gave a campaign speech in Ohio. Scores of coal miners, easily identified by their overalls, boots and safety gear, formed the backdrop as Romney derided "Obama's War on Coal". Romney nodded toward Murray and added, "I tell ya, you've got a great boss. He runs a great operation here."

The next day the world learned that the miners standing behind Romney went without pay that day because Murray closed his mine -- and "communicated to [the miners] that the attendance at the Romney event was mandatory."

Just weeks later Barack Obama was reelected in a landslide.

Bob Murray responded with a prayer:

"Dear Lord:

The American people have made their choice. They have decided that America must change its course, away from the principals of our Founders. And, away from the idea of individual freedom and individual responsibility. Away from capitalism, economic responsibility, and personal acceptance.

THE
HUFFINGTON
POST

We are a Country in favor of redistribution, national weakness and reduced standard of living and lower and lower levels of personal freedom.

My regret, Lord, is that our young people, including those in my own family, never will know what America was like or might have been. They will pay the price in their reduced standard of living and, most especially, reduced freedom.

The takers outvoted the producers. In response to this, I have turned to my Bible and in II Peter, Chapter 1, verses 4-9 it says, 'To faith we are to add goodness; to goodness, knowledge; to knowledge, self control; to self control, perseverance; to perseverance, godliness; to godliness, kindness; to brotherly kindness, love.'

Lord, please forgive me and anyone with me in Murray Energy Corp. for the decisions that we are now forced to make to preserve the very existence of any of the enterprises that you have helped us build. We ask for your guidance in this drastic time with the drastic decisions that will be made to have any hope of our survival as an American business enterprise.

Amen."

With that, Murray announced he was firing more than 150 of his miners.

Firing so many employees may well have been the fulfillment of a promise.

"... a review of letters and memos to Murray employees, suggest that coercion may also explain Murray staffers' financial support [...] Murray, it turns out, has for years pressured salaried employees to give to the Murray Energy political action committee (PAC) and to Republican candidates chosen by the company. Internal documents show that company officials track who is and is not giving. The sources say that those who do not give are at risk of being demoted or missing out on bonuses, claims Murray denies.

The Murray sources, who requested anonymity for fear of retribution, came forward separately. But they painted similar pictures of the fund-raising operation. 'There's a lot of coercion,' says one of them. 'I just wanted to work, but you feel this constant pressure that, if you don't contribute, your job's at stake. You're compelled to do this whether you want to or not.' Says the second: 'They will give you a call if you're not giving... It's expected you give Mr. Murray what he asks for.'

A September 2010 letter [*Exhibit B, the last page of the PDF file*] lamenting insufficient contributions to the company PAC is more pointed. **'The response to this letter of appeal has been poor,' Murray writes. 'We have only a little over a month left to go in this election fight. If we do not win it, the coal industry will be eliminated and so will your job, if you want to remain in this industry.'**

So that's Cuccinelli's largest individual donor from the last cycle. \$30,000 from an extremist billionaire that is funding an Obama impeachment effort, that allegedly extorts money from his low-wage employees, and fires his workforce wholesale in fits of spite when electoral results disappoint him.

In light of the Consol and Star Scientific scandals, Murray's status as the largest individual donor to Cuccinelli's campaign should raise questions in Virginia: What does Bob Murray expect in return for his investment? (It's worth noting that Murray Energy has no mining presence in Virginia.) What promises has Cuccinelli made to Murray Energy and Bob Murray? Does Murray Energy have any pending business before the state of Virginia? Does Bob Murray have any business before the Office of the Attorney General?

Bloomberg

Huffington Beats Washington in Post Deals

By Leonid Bershidsky - Aug 6, 2013

Jeff Bezos's acquisition of the Washington Post for \$250 million set the media world abuzz, but it's not as good a deal for the Amazon.com founder as the \$315 million purchase of the Huffington Post was for AOL in 2011. The technological revolution in media has put an 8-year-old website on a par, if not ahead of, a venerable 136-year-old institution that, among other things, toppled a U.S. president by investigating the Watergate affair.

It's easy to see why the Graham family wanted to get rid of the Washington Post Company's newspaper division. The business unit generated an operating loss of \$53.7 million in 2012, and bled another \$34.5 million in the first quarter of 2013.

On the surface, the Huffington Post might not look much better. AOL's "Brand Group," in which the Huffington Post is by far the biggest asset, posted an operating loss of \$32.8 million in 2012 and \$4.9 million in the first quarter of 2013.

The losses, though, are of different quality. The Huffington Post is losing money mainly because it is investing in experimental services. Last year, for example, it launched HuffPost Live, a social video streaming network based on content from the parent site.

At the Washington Post, pension and early retirement expenses are driving the losses. They cost a total of about \$51 million last year. In short, the paper's age and legacy costs are weighing it down.

The Huffington Post, in its eight years of operation, has built up a broader readership than the venerable Washington paper -- a testament to the power of AOL as a traffic generator. Last month, according to Quantcast, it had almost 72 million unique visitors and 595 million page views. AOL said in its 2012 annual report that since its acquisition in 2011, HuffPost saw a 48 percent increase in unique visitors.

The Washington Post's readership performance has nonetheless been respectable. The paper still had 480,000 daily print subscribers last year, and it generated an average of 323 million monthly page views from 41 million unique visitors. The visitor number was up 15 percent from 2011, an impressive pace of organic growth given the Graham family's lack of an Internet portal to drive traffic.

Bezos can do no less for the Washington Post than AOL did for Ariana Huffington's startup. Although the purchase of the newspaper is his personal project, rather than Amazon's, the huge Internet retailer gets plenty of traffic that could be directed to the Washington Post's content. And Amazon is growing, unlike AOL with its shrinking subscriber base.

After absorbing the pension and early retirement expenses, the Washington Post will be positioned for a future that may be just as bright as the Huffington Post's. Consider the New York Times, which last year saw its subscription revenue eclipse its advertising sales for the first time ever. The challenge and opportunity for Bezos and the Post is to maintain editorial quality while doing at least as good a job of monetizing web traffic as the Times has.

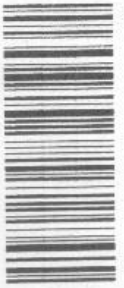
The Huffington Post won a Pulitzer Prize in 2012 -- a first for a completely Web-based publication and proof that in terms of content quality, the new media outlets can compete with the print giants that earned their reputations in the last century. The fact that the Washington Post missed last year's awards doesn't mean that quality is lacking: The capital's hometown paper still has a top-notch journalistic team. It won four Pulitzers in 2010, an achievement that will take The Huffington Post some time to equal.

The technological revolution in the media has all but wiped out the advantages of established industry players. Yet as long as they have the content, they can still compete effectively with younger rivals. Jeff Bezos, at least, is betting \$250 million on it.

(Leonid Bershidsky, an editor and novelist, is Moscow correspondent for World View. Follow him on Twitter.)

CYNTHIA K. MCGEE

Clerk of Courts - Belmont County
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101 West Main Street
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7196 9008 9111 1436 0136

13 CV 0347
7160 3901 9844 2778 186
Michael Wilfred Stark III
Contributor The Huntington Post
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Falls Church, VA 22043

Legal Document

RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED

