

## Infowars Bankruptcy Delays Upcoming Sandy Hook Trial

A trial scheduled to begin next week to establish damages against Alex Jones was postponed after some of his media businesses filed chapter 11 earlier this week

By Jonathan Randles

Lawyers representing Sandy Hook families are accusing conspiracy theorist Alex Jones of placing his Infowars website into bankruptcy as a last-ditch effort to avoid an upcoming trial to establish damages for falsely claiming the 2012 shooting was a hoax.

“This was their only avenue to stop this trial from happening,” Cordt Akers, a lawyer representing some of the families, told The Wall Street Journal on Wednesday after a state judge in Austin, Texas, postponed the trial

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The trademark and web-domain rights to Infowars and other media assets backed by Mr. Jones entered chapter 11 on Sunday, a move that immediately halts actions against the companies that filed bankruptcy. Although Mr. Jones didn’t file for personal bankruptcy, lawyers representing his media businesses that filed chapter 11 removed the defamation lawsuit to federal district court following the bankruptcy filings.

Judge Maya Guerra

Gamble in Travis County, Texas, cited the removal of the defamation litigation to federal court as a reason for the trial's postponement, according to lawyers for the Sandy Hook families. On Tuesday, a Connecticut judge also cited the bankruptcy filings in postponing a hearing that had been scheduled for this week related to a defamation suit brought by the families in that state.

Mr. Jones's lawyer, Norm Pattis, said Wednesday that they have tried to settle the case "on reasonable terms" and that Sandy Hook families "persist in trying to destroy Alex and his companies."

"We're turning to the bankruptcy courts to compel the plaintiffs to estimate the value of their claims in open court by discernible evidentiary standards," Mr. Pattis said. "The plaintiffs have turned this litigation into a macabre morality play and have refused to negotiate in good faith. We hope they will show respect to the federal courts."

Avi Moshenberg, a lawyer for the Texas plaintiffs, said they would challenge the removal of the Texas case, which he said was improper. The families will seek to bring the case back to Texas state court so the trial can proceed as soon as possible, Mr. Moshenberg said.

"This bankruptcy didn't happen because Alex Jones ran out of money. This is all an orchestrated plan to avoid paying Sandy Hook families," Mr. Moshenberg

said. "It's not that he is suddenly broke."

The families of the children murdered in the Sandy Hook massacre sued Mr. Jones in 2018 for repeatedly saying the school shooting, which killed 20 first-graders and six adults in Newtown, Conn., was a hoax and falsely claiming the families were actors and faked the deaths of their loved ones.

Mr. Jones was found liable by default in September and November by the courts in Texas and Connecticut, respectively, as penalties for failing to comply with court-ordered discovery for documents and information. ■