

THE RAW STORY

By Eric W. Dolan

Monday, March 12, 2012 17:07 EDT



Topics: **District Judge John G. Koeltl** ♦ **huffington post** ♦ **Jonathan Tasini**

A New York federal judge expressed skepticism on Friday about a \$105 million class action that unpaid Huffington Post bloggers brought against the website after it was sold to AOL, according to **Law360**.

The class action claimed the Huffington Post had been unjustly enriched by content that others produced for no pay. But U.S. District Judge John G. Koeltl, who is deciding whether to allow the case to go forward, noted that the bloggers freely produced content without any expectation of monetary gain.

“There was no question that when the plaintiffs submitted their pieces to the Huffington Post they had no expectation of compensation,” Judge Koeltl said, according to **Law360**. “They chose to give them to the Huffington Post at a time when they knew the Huffington Post was not going to pay.”

The legal action was initiated by labor activist Jonathan Tasini on behalf of an estimated 9,000 unpaid bloggers. Tasini **accused** the website of turning bloggers into “modern-day slaves on Arianna Huffington’s plantation.”

He had been a blogger for the Huffington Post since December 2005, but stopped contributing to the website shortly before it was purchased by AOL for \$315 million last year.

Tasini also **successfully sued** the *New York Times* over whether the newspaper should have to license work from freelancers for use online.

The Huffington Post has sought to have the complaint dismissed.

“The lawsuit is wholly without merit,” a spokesman said shortly after the class action was filed. “As we’ve said before, our bloggers use our platform — as well as other unpaid group blogs across the web — to connect and help their work be seen by as many people as possible. It’s the same reason people go on TV shows: to promote their views and ideas. HuffPost bloggers can

cross-post their work on other sites, including their own. Aside from our group blog, to which thousands of people from around the world contribute, we operate a journalistic enterprise with hundreds of paid staff editors, writers, and reporters.”



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Eric W. Dolan has served as an editor for Raw Story since August 2010, and is based out of San Diego, California. He grew up in the suburbs of Chicago and received a Bachelor of Science from Bradley University. Eric is also the publisher and editor of **PsyPost**. You can follow him on Twitter [@ewdolan](https://twitter.com/ewdolan).