

Top US exec exposes dealings of anti-SA campaigner in damning court papers

8h ago

Andre Pienaar

- Oracle's vice president Kenneth Glueck is suing Andre Pienaar for spreading disinformation about him and attempting to damage his reputation.
- Glueck claims Pienaar, the well-connected SA businessman who has been a key figure in the campaign against SA in the US "is a low-level private intelligence operative who has made a career trading on proximity to important people in industry and government, particularly in the national security space."
- Pienaar also has a history of association with individuals of less than stellar character, including a Russian oligarch on the US Treasury sanctions list, says Glueck.
- For more financial news, visit [News24 Business](#).

Well-connected and controversial SA businessman Andre Pienaar, who is a key figure in the campaign in the US against SA's foreign policy and stance on Israel's occupation of Gaza, is facing defamation charges from a top executive of tech multinational Oracle, who claims Pienaar maliciously spread disinformation about him.

In late August Kenneth Glueck, Executive Vice President for Government Relations at Oracle Corporation, filed the complaint in

the US District Court for the District of Columbia, requesting a jury trial to determine defamation and damages.

Pienaar has recently met with many anti-ANC delegations passing through Washington, including the DA, Solidarity, and AfriForum. Pienaar is head of London-based investment firm C5 and runs a current affairs website that frequently carries anti-SA government and ANC material. He was also head of IronNet, a cybersecurity startup that went public in 2021, reached a market valuation of \$3 billion and went bankrupt three years later.

Glueck says that although "Pienaar has crafted and curated an image as a statesman, cyber security expert, and philanthropist... in reality, he is a low-level private intelligence operative who has made a career trading on proximity to important people in industry and government, particularly in the national security space."

Among Pienaar's latest claims are that News24 is in collusion with SA state intelligence. This follows an article on the DA's overseas lobbying, in which he emerged as a key figure.

READ: [How Emma Powell rattled the DA and intelligence services](#)

Glueck's complaint amounts to a stinging exposé of Pienaar, his controversial and failed business ventures, his role in intimidating and influencing journalists, and his opaque purchase of a public relations firm, whose previous owner joined the US Department of Defence and allegedly then pushed for it to award a very large contract to Amazon, her previous client.

The filing states that Pienaar "has had a long history with individuals of less than stellar character, including a Russian oligarch on the US Treasury sanctions list."

Glueck's main claim is that Pienaar fabricated a smear campaign against him to distract attention from the scandal surrounding IronNet's collapse after the Associated Press published an investigation into the firm in October 2024.

While Glueck had nothing to do with IronNet, he says that Pienaar had it in for him after he exposed the links between Pienaar, Sally Donnelly, the previous owner of the public relations firm he bought, and Amazon. Using public records, Glueck compiled several PowerPoint presentations, which he showed to various government oversight bodies and law enforcement.

The presentations showed that while Donnelly had sold her firm, SBD Advisory, when she took a job at the Department of Defence (DOD), her divestment was not entirely clear, as the buyer was not named. The presentations documented Pienaar and Donnelly's financial and commercial ties to Amazon, and how, once employed by the DOD, she had gone on to "position herself with substantial influence" over the award of the \$10 billion, 10-year cloud computing contract. Glueck says that Donnelly had "aggressively and improperly advocated for her former client, Amazon, to receive the sole-source contract".

According to Glueck, Pienaar purchased SBD through several "opaque transactions. " When tech online publisher theCUBE asked on camera whether he had bought SBD, Pienaar replied categorically: "No."

Four years later, after investigative journalists extensively scrutinised the DOD contract, Glueck obtained public records to show that Pienaar had, in fact, bought SBD. At the time, Pienaar was a business partner of Amazon and, therefore, would have been considered a related party. This would have subjected Donnelly to far more

scrutiny in joining the DOD.

After ongoing controversy, the contract was eventually abandoned and never awarded.

Glueck claims that his efforts to expose the Donnelly-Amazon connection put Pienaar in his sights and led to Pienaar's smear campaign against him.

In October 2024, AP published an exposé on the collapse of IronNet that included a detailed account of Pienaar's background. The article had been in the pipeline for more than a year; however, Pienaar managed to forestall its publication by launching a lawsuit against the journalist in his capacity. But Pienaar dropped it when the lawsuit reached the discovery stage and documents between the parties had to be exchanged. AP then published.

Glueck claims that in the wake of the story, Pienaar and his co-defendant Juleanna Glover convened a private press conference, claiming that Glueck was behind the article on IronNet and wanted to "destroy" Pienaar out of personal animus. They accused Glueck of fabricating information to "run a clandestine campaign" against Pienaar.

Pienaar told journalists that the documents Glueck used to compile his PowerPoints were fraudulent.

Glueck claims that the whole exercise was an attempt to undermine the claims made in the AP article.

"By attempting to shift the focus to Glueck's supposed malign acts, Pienaar evidently thought he could continue to raise funds from investors to prop up what increasingly appears to be a Ponzi scheme built around C5 Capital and IronNet," Glueck alleges in the complaint.

Pienaar did not respond to a request to comment on any of the allegations raised by Glueck or whether he would oppose the lawsuit.

Newsletter

For Subscriber

Ad hoc

Carol Paton

Receive News24 Business writer-at-large Carol Paton's articles about the political economy, state-owned enterprises and energy sector.

[Sign up](#)