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Montana private eye pleads not guilty to wire fraud

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NEW YORK (Reuters) - A Montana-based private detective who allegedly tried to double deal parties involved in two high profile corporate litigation cases pleaded not guilty on Thursday to four counts of wire fraud.

The court document does not identify the parties concerned, but media outlets have previously reported the cases involved Canadian biotech firm Biovail Corp.'s suit against hedge fund group SAC Capital Management LLC, and American Insurance Group Inc.'s litigation with former chief Maurice R. Greenberg.

According to the filing, Michael Lair promoted himself as an executive of consumerdefense.com Inc., which claimed to do research and investigations pertaining to consumer complaints.

He allegedly went to lawyers representing one party and offered information relevant to the case in exchange for money.

He is then alleged to have gone to the other side and claimed to have been solicited by the first party to engage in illegal and unethical conduct, according to the filing.

Lair pleaded not guilty to the charges in a federal court in Manhattan.

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