

NYC transit union chief seeks to unmask blogger

November 12 2010, By JENNIFER PELTZ , Associated Press

(AP) -- The head of New York City's transit union wants to go after an anonymous blog that has blasted him, and he asked a court Friday to make Google tell him who's responsible.

John Samuelsen says in court papers that the blog has repeatedly attacked him with false accusations of incompetence and financial improprieties.

The allegations are "being made for no purpose other than to damage my reputation" among union members, Samuelsen said in a sworn statement.

His legal papers say he plans to pursue a defamation suit, but he hasn't been able to learn who's behind the blog, housed by Google-owned Blogspot.com.

There was no immediate answer to an e-mail sent to an address posted on the blog.

[Google](#) Inc. declined to comment. The Mountain View, Calif.-based company says it doesn't discuss individual cases to protect users' privacy.

A growing number of people are turning to courts to try to unmask their online detractors, and such lawsuits have gotten more attention since Vogue cover model Liskula Cohen successfully sued Google last year to get the name of a blogger who had denigrated her. Samuelsen's court filing points to Cohen's case.

Samuelsen also is asking a court to order Site Meter Inc., a company that tracks visitors to websites, to turn over any information it might have about the [blogger](#) or bloggers. The Los Angeles-based company didn't immediately respond to an e-mail inquiry.

Samuelsen was elected last December to lead the union, Transport Workers of America Local 100. It represents about 38,000 workers who run city buses and subways, plus some private bus lines in the metropolitan area.

His tenure followed some rocky times for the union, which was hit with stiff fines after a three-day strike in December 2005; the walkout was illegal under state law. Meanwhile, the Metropolitan Transit Administration - the agency that runs city buses and subways - has struggled with massive budget gaps in recent years, prompting service cuts and fare hikes.

The blog in Samuelsen's cross-hairs is largely devoted to the union's internal politics. It has made a spray of complaints about him, some concerning the handling of money that union members donated for relief efforts in Haiti after the devastating Jan. 12 earthquake there.

All the members' gifts, plus \$50,000 from the union as a whole, went to relief work, Samuelsen said in his sworn statement.

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