

More Trouble for Greg Mortenson

by [Mike Giglio](#)

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The author of *Three Cups of Tea* faces another lawsuit over his bestselling book. Mike Giglio reports.

Greg Mortenson is facing another lawsuit filed over his bestselling memoir, *Three Cups of Tea*.

The suit, which was filed yesterday in federal court by personal-injury lawyers in Chicago and first reported by [Courthouse News Service](#), names Mortenson, his coauthor, David Oliver Relin, and Penguin, publisher of the book. The suit claims that Mortenson “captured the hearts and minds of Plaintiff and book lovers nationwide, duping them into buying *Three Cups of Tea*.”

Mortenson, a celebrated philanthropist who had earned millions on a book about his own derring-do and good works in Pakistan, lost his status as a national humanitarian hero when author Jon Krakauer and *60 Minutes* challenged the veracity of [key anecdotes in the book](#). Mortenson has been in seclusion since, citing ailing health. As The Daily Beast reported exclusively on Tuesday, Mortenson underwent [open heart surgery last week](#).

A spokesperson for Mortenson reached by phone today declined to comment on the latest suit. Relin’s agent could not immediately be reached for comment. And a spokesperson for Penguin said the publisher had nothing to add to what the company told The Daily Beast regarding Mortenson this week: “When he’s fully recovered, we will address any changes he feels need to be made [to his memoir].”

Walter Olsen, a legal scholar and senior fellow at the Cato Institute, says a rash of like-minded suits will likely follow. “When something looks juicy, you get firms effectively competing with each other,” he says, adding that lawyers are likely elbowing for timeliness and publicity to boost their standing on the case in the event that the suits are later consolidated. “It gets to be sharp-elbowed maneuvering. And the maneuvering starts before the lawyers even meet each other.”

“There is money to be had when the right kind of book scandal comes along.”

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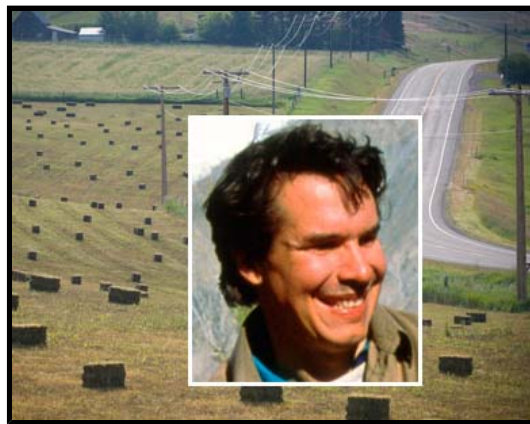
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Olsen says the class-action suit over James Frey's infamous memoir, *A Million Little Pieces*, got lawyers paying attention to high-profile nonfiction books. "The financial success confirmed that there is money to be had when the right kind of book scandal comes along."

Last month, The Daily Beast reported on a separate lawsuit against Mortenson seeking class-action status filed by a personal-injury attorney in [Montana state court](#).

Mike Giglio is a reporter at Newsweek.

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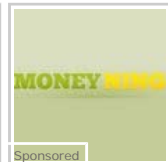
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