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Stelios: I'll see YOU in court!

Easyjet founder fights back as furious airline considers legal action

by ***Francesca Washtell***

EASYJET is considering legal action against its outspoken founder Sir Stelios Haji-Ioannou in the latest twist in the boardroom bust-up.

Chief executive Johan Lundgren said the airline would not rule any measures out after Stelios repeatedly published allegations the company insists are outright lies.

Stelios has been in a public battle with Easyjet's management for several months over a £4.5bn order for more than 100 planes with Airbus, which he believes will bankrupt the airline if it is not cancelled and is no longer necessary.

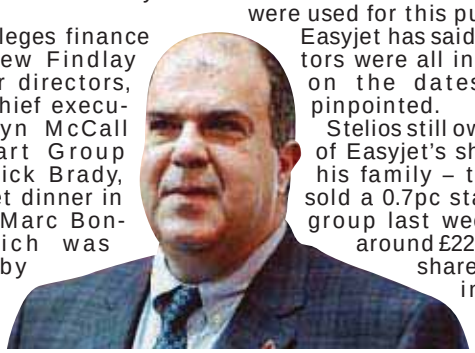
In his efforts to get the contract axed, he unsuccessfully tried to unseat four board members – including Lundgren – and has offered a £5m bounty to 'whistleblowers' who can provide him with information that could scupper the order.

Since making the extraordinary request, Stelios (*pictured*) claims he has received information showing board members met a Swiss lawyer linked to the Panama Papers scandal – which the company denies. Lundgren said: 'We have been very clear the allegations are all completely false and we think it's very disruptive and very disturbing as we manage our way through this pandemic.

'We need to consider what our options are – there are lots of actions we could pursue.'

In response, Stelios said: 'The short answer to any of the scoundrels if they are threatening to sue me is "see you in court".'

Stelios alleges finance boss Andrew Findlay and former directors, now-ITV chief executive Carolyn McCall and Stobart Group boss Warwick Brady, had a secret dinner in 2016 with Marc Bonnant, which was arranged by Airbus.



According to the Panama Papers, financial and legal documents leaked in 2016, Bonnant was a director of at least 176 of the off-shore shell corporations registered through Panamanian law firm Mossack Fonseca. It was suspected some of the shell corporations registered were used for illegal activities such as fraud – although there is no suggestion those linked to Bonnant were used for this purpose.

Easyjet has said the directors were all in meetings on the dates he has pinpointed.

Stelios still owns a third of Easyjet's shares with his family – though he sold a 0.7pc stake in the group last week, worth around £22m. Easyjet shares fell 4.7pc in trading yesterday.

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