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Phone Co. Suit

SAN ANTONIO — Lawyers for persons who have filed a \$29 million libel and defamation suit against Southwestern Bell Telephone Co. have moved to force two of the firm's top executives to answer more than 200 questions about Bell policies.

Their motion, filed Monday, claimed the two executives refused to testify in oral depositions when asked about "political funds and contributions, political slush funds, wiretapping activities and an investigation after the suit was filed."

Those cited in the motion are C. L. Todd, Bell vice president and general manager in the San Antonio area, and Porter Mitchell, Bell general staff manager in San Antonio.

Lawyers for James H. Ashley, fired in the fall during an internal Bell investigation, and the family of T. O. Gravitt, who was Bell's top man in Texas at the time of his suicide in November, initiated the suit.

The suit contends that Ashley and Gravitt were made victims of a company investigation because they refused to go along with questionable company practices.