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Lawyers Represent Spa in 'Bet-the-Company' Case Against Donald Trump

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Miami-Dade Circuit Judge Jose Rodriguez's courtroom was packed with lawyers and reporters waiting to hear from the man on the witness stand: Celebrity developer and Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump.

"He is a very smart guy," said veteran Miami litigator Alan Kluger. "He knew the record. He knew the documents. He is the classic 'not always right, but never in doubt'."

At issue was whether Trump acted legally in trying to force Florida Pritikin Center LLC, which operates as Pritikin Longevity Center and Spa, out of 40,000 square feet of leased space at his Trump National Doral golf resort.

Kluger, a founding member of Kluger Kaplan, represented Pritikin, along with his law firm partners Philippe Lieberman and Richard Segal.

They contended that Trump National wrongfully tried to terminate Pritikin's lease and refused to acknowledge that Pritikin properly exercised its first option to extend the term of the lease. They also argued that Trump National falsely asserted claims of lease defaults and violated a group room agreement between the resort and Pritikin when the



AM HOLT

Alan Kluger, right, represented Florida Pritikin Center along with his partners Philippe Lieberman, left, and Richard Segal.

resort tried to increase daily room rates by between 226 and 583 percent.

"It was a bet-the-company case," Kluger said. "If Pritikin was found to either have not have properly extended or was in default, they would have been out of business just as the season was at its height. Hundreds of employees would have been out of work."

The team prevailed in their motion for summary judgment on two counts in the case. The

Feb. 9-12 trial focused on whether Pritikin was in default and the correct formula for determining rent over the next five years.

Trump spent about four hours testifying during direct and cross-examination.

Underlying the resort's efforts to kick out Pritikin was their contention that its operations were not up to snuff and in keeping with quality of the resort that Trump had renovated after acquiring it in 2012. Pritikin maintained its operations were excellent.

Trump's attorneys hired a hospitality expert to testify about the quality of the Pritikin guest experience. Kluger prefers the word "spy." Segal was able to get her testimony excluded.

The real issue, Kluger said, was that Trump "didn't want people with medical conditions mixing with his guests."

In the end, Kluger and his team prevailed across the board, including getting rent reduced by 15 percent for the next five years.

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