

Mike Papantonio Calls Ultra-Processed Food Litigation the “Next Tobacco” at MTMP Spring 2025 Opening Session

The legendary mass torts attorney said UPFs will be “one of those mass torts that changes the world.”

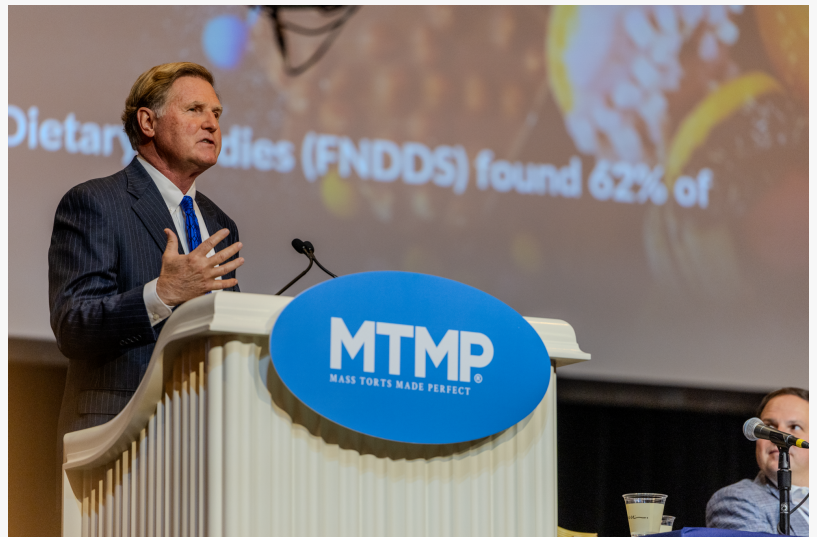
LAS VEGAS, NV, UNITED STATES, April 8, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- In an urgent opening session at the [Mass Torts Made Perfect \(MTMP\)](#) Spring 2025 conference, nationally renowned trial lawyer [Mike Papantonio](#), of the Levin Papantonio law firm, issued a clarion call to attorneys across the country: join the fight against the [ultra-processed foods](#) (UPF) industry—what he describes as “the next tobacco, the next opioid, the next PFAS.”

Papantonio, who helped launch historic legal campaigns against Big Tobacco, opioid manufacturers, and PFAS polluters, compared those battles to what’s now brewing with ultra-processed food litigation. “Ultra-processed food is not food,” Papantonio said bluntly. “It’s a lab experiment—chemicals and synthetics engineered for one thing: addiction. They’re targeting children, and they know exactly what they’re doing.”

Referencing a multi-billion-dollar industry that has ballooned from \$300 billion and continues to grow, Papantonio warned that the stakes are even higher this time, especially for children. “They’ve come up with something, a new term: hyper-palatable,” he said. “They’ve engineered this stuff so it tastes so good that you will become addicted to the food.”

A Dangerous Recipe

Papantonio outlined the formula behind hyper-palatable UPFs: “You add fats plus sugars, carbs plus salt, fats plus salt. You then add more preservatives than you can even dream of... and then you add some chemicals that, at this point, we don’t even know what the chemicals are.”



Mike Papantonio kicked off MTMP Spring 2025 with a fiery call to action: join the fight against ultra-processed foods—“the next tobacco, the next opioid, the next PFAS.”

“

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*MIKE PAPANTONIO, ATTORNEY,
LEVIN PAPANTONIO*

In a comparison to his earlier tobacco work, Papantonio emphasized that the same playbook—and the same players—are behind this crisis. “The people in charge are the same people who brought you tobacco. And now they've moved into giving a pathway to addict your child to things like hot dogs and cereals and Cocoa Puffs.”

A Legal Legacy of Taking on Giants

Recalling past battles, Papantonio reminded the audience that the now-famous tobacco settlement—initially dismissed as impossible—resulted in \$276 billion in

recoveries. Similarly, opioid litigation secured \$72 billion in settlements, and PFAS litigation has already yielded over \$17 billion. Each of these began with a few bold lawyers willing to take a risk.

“It’s not for everybody,” Papantonio said. “But when you start seeing the headlines and you're scratching your head thinking, ‘Maybe I could’ve done some of that,’ I want you to know: you can do it. There’s nothing to prevent you from doing that.”

He credited attorney Paul Pennock for bringing the UPF case to his attention, describing him as a visionary and one of America’s best trial lawyers. “When Paul Pennock shows up in my office, walking like he does when he’s about to tear something up, I listen.

“And I’m telling you now: this is one of those moments. One of those mass torts that changes the world.”

Deceptive Labels, Deadly Truths

Papantonio dismantled the marketing narratives used by food giants to disguise the dangers of UPFs. “They’re marketed as healthy—high protein, low fat, fat-free, no sugar added, and organic. It’s a lie. And the people who know it’s a lie are the same people who killed tons of people all over this world with tobacco.”

He also called out the use of “Madison Avenue” tactics—the same marketing firms that sold cigarettes and opioids are now selling UPFs to families under the guise of convenience and nutrition.

A Movement in the Making

Papantonio urged fellow lawyers to get involved—whether through frontline litigation, financial support, or case referrals. “We’ve launched 87 major pharmaceutical cases, 14 major environmental cases, and 20 cases where Wall Street stole from mom and pop. The only ones that still bother me are the ones I passed on and got wrong. Don’t let this be one of those.”

He concluded with a nod to long-time friend and ally Robert Kennedy, Jr.

“Bobby and I, many of y'all know, we practiced. He was my law partner for a good many years,” Papantonio said. “This is something you hear him talking about all the time. He's already gone after the industry. When it comes to red dyes and dyes and foods, he's going to be, I think, somebody who is there for us.”

MTMP: The War Room for UPF Litigation Strategy

As MTMP Spring 2025 continued, more sessions dove into the legal framework for ultra-processed food litigation, including early science, causation strategies, and marketing deception. But the opening session at MTMP made one thing abundantly clear: a new era of consumer justice may have just begun—and it started in a room full of trial lawyers in Las Vegas.

About MTMP

Mass Torts Made Perfect (MTMP) is the premier event for plaintiff attorneys and legal professionals working in mass tort and class action litigation. Held bi-annually in Las Vegas, the 3-day conference attracts over 2,100 participants from more than 700 law firms, making it the largest gathering of its kind. MTMP offers attendees a chance to expand their knowledge and network with peers through sessions covering a wide array of topics, including prescription drugs, defective products, securities litigation, and consumer fraud.

Sara Stephens

Levin Papantonio

+1 281-744-6560

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