

DEC 28 2020

CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

BY: RS DEPUTY

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UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

FOR THE CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

ANGELO RENO,

Plaintiff,

v.

SCOTT HUBBELL; GREGORY BONAN;
MICHAEL BERK; DOUGLAS
SCHWARTZ; DAVID HASSELHOFF;
BAYWATCH PRODUCTION
COMPANY, INC; HENRY
HOLMES; DOES 1-100 Inclusive,

Defendants

Case No: **2:20-CV-11756-VAP-MRWx**

(Unlimited Civil)

**COMPLAINT FOR VIOLATIONS OF THE
UNITED STATES COPYRIGHT ACT**

JURY TRIAL DEMAND

1 PLAINTIFF ALLEGES AS FOLLOWS:

2
3
4 **INTRODUCTION**

5 1. This is a civil action for damages and injunctive relief in which it is alleged
6 Defendants have committed, and continue to commit, copyright infringement in connection with
7 their unauthorized exploitation of a television series entitled "Baywatch" (hereinafter "SHOW"), an
8 episode or special entitled "Forbidden Paradise" (hereinafter "EPISODE"), and/or a motion picture
9 entitled "Baywatch" (hereinafter "MOVIE") which is derived from Plaintiff's copyrighted
10 screenplays and book of the same name.

11 **THE PARTIES**

12 2. Plaintiff Angelo Reno is an individual residing in the County of Los Angeles, State of
13 California. He is the present owner of the copyrighted written works which are the subject of this
14 action.

15 3. Defendant SCOTT HUBBELL ("HUBBELL") is an individual is residing in County
16 of Los Angeles, State of California.

17 4. Defendant GREGORY BONAN ("BONAN") is an individual residing in the County
18 of Los Angeles, State of California.

19 5. Defendant MICHAEL BERK ("BERK") is an individual residing in the County of Los
20 Angeles, State of California.

21 6. Defendant DOUGLAS SCHWARTZ ("SCHWARTZ") is an individual in the residing
22 County of Los Angeles, State of California.

23 7. Defendant DAVID HASSELHOFF ("HASSELHOFF") is an individual residing in the
24 County of Los Angeles, State of California.

25 8. Defendant HENRY HOLMES ("HOLMES") is an individual residing in the County of
26 Los Angeles, State of California.
27
28

9. Defendant BAYWATCH PRODUCTION COMPANY, INC. ("BAYWATCH") is a CA limited liability company with its principal place of business located in the County of Los Angeles, State of California. Plaintiff alleges that BAYWATCH distributes, disseminates and/or produces television shows, and motion pictures released on VHS cassettes, DVDs, laser discs and/or Blu-ray discs.

10. The true names and capacities, whether individual, corporate, or otherwise, of Defendants sued as Does 1 through 10 are unknown to Plaintiff, who, therefore, sue them by such fictitious names. When their true names and capacities have been ascertained, Plaintiff will seek leave of the Court to amend this Complaint accordingly. In information and belief, Plaintiff alleges that each of Does 1 through 10 are liable to Plaintiff in connection with one or more claims sued upon here and are responsible in some manner for the wrongful acts and conduct alleged here.

11. At all times mentioned in this Complaint each Defendant was the agent, servant, and employee of each other Defendant, acting within the course and scope of his, her or its agency, partnership and/or employment with the other, and with full knowledge, consent, and ratification of each other Defendant.

12. HUBBELL, BONAN, BERK, SCHWARTZ, HASSELHOFF, HOLMES, and BAYWATCH are sometimes collectively referred to as "CO-EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS."

GENERAL ALLEGATIONS

Plaintiff's Copyrighted Works Include: "ISLAND HIGH"; "ISLAND SIDE";

and "NORTH SHORE" (hereinafter collectively "WORK")

13. At all times herein, mentioned Plaintiff was and is now in the business of creating and developing ideas for television programming and writing original teleplays for exhibition on television. Plaintiff is also a world champion surfer, former Hollywood stuntman, and accomplished television and film writer.

14. In 1978, Plaintiff developed the concept for a television series then entitled "Island High," and thereafter wrote an original series treatment ("treatment") then entitled "North Shore,"

1 which treatment was registered in 1994 with the Writer's Guild of America, and which treatment was
2 copyrighted and registered with the United States Copyright Office as Registration No. Paul 1930645
3 (i.e., a PRIOR CREATION).

4 15. Plaintiff owns all rights, titles, and interests in and to WORK.

5 16. In 1979, National Broadcasting Company ("NBC") granted Plaintiff a four-month
6 option to have Factor Newland Productions produce "Island High" as a television series as a lifeguard
7 surf and rescue drama.
8

9 17. During the four-month option period and production period of the "Island High" pilot
10 program, Plaintiff hired two local Los Angeles County lifeguards, namely HUBELL and BONAN, to
11 be extras in the background of scenes in "Island High" (aka "North Shore").

12 18. Eventually, NBC neglected to extend the four-month option to produce "Island
13 High" (aka "North Shore") as either a film or television program series.

14 19. Subsequently to creation of a pilot episode of "Island High," Plaintiff was diagnosed with
15 fast spreading melanoma skin cancer, which prevented him from surfing and socializing at Malibu
16 Surf Rider Beach where Plaintiff was well known, and where HUBELL and BONAN worked as a
17 lifeguard.
18

19 20. During his ongoing chemotherapy treatments for his cancer and absence from Malibu
20 Surf Rider Beach, in or about 1982, Plaintiff personally handed to HUBELL materials related to the
21 WORK, including but not limited to a written script with character breakdowns under the working
22 title called "North Shore," descriptions of rescue equipment to be used in production of the treatment,
23 cast member profiles, story lines, photos of ocean rescues, photos of the ocean, photos of girls, etc.,
24 because HUBELL seemed very interested in Plaintiff's television proposal and the treatment (i.e.
25 HUBELL had ACCESS to Plaintiff's PRIOR CREATION).

26 21. Based upon HUBELL's interest in Plaintiff's WORK, HUBELL approached Plaintiff to
27 work on Plaintiff's show as a background extra.

28 22. Unbeknownst to Plaintiff, HUBELL's interest in Plaintiff's work involved HUBELL's

1 procurement of copyrighted materials from Plaintiffs writing partner, Peter Dixon, who unwittingly
2 provided such materials to HUBELL.

3 23. Plaintiff alleges on information and belief that, prior to his hand delivery of Work-
4 related materials to HUBELL, that HUBELL had very little experience in television production, film
5 production, and that HUBELL was not working on any script or screenplay, especially one related to
6 Plaintiffs WORK.

7 24. Subsequent to Plaintiff's delivery of his WORK materials to HUBELL, Plaintiff was
8 hospitalized to aggressively treat his cancer. When HUBELL and BONAN eventually learned that
9 NBC had not renewed the four-month option to produce "Island High" (aka "North Shore"), combined
10 with knowledge that Plaintiff had been hospitalized for cancer treatment, Plaintiff alleges on
11 information and belief that HUBELL, BONAN and SCHWARTZ re-approached NBC with
12 Plaintiff's WORK, which resulted in a new deal with NBC based upon Plaintiff's original WORK, but
13 Plaintiff was not included in the new deal struck with NBC to produce the SHOW, EPISODE and/or
14 the MOVIE (the latter of which was licensed to Paramount Pictures without Plaintiff's consent or
15 participation).
16

17 25. When Plaintiff was released from the hospital in or about 1988, Plaintiff discovered
18 that HUBELL had secured a deal with NBC to produce a television show based upon Plaintiff's
19 WORK materials involving a lifeguard surf and rescue drama, which HUBELL captioned as
20 "Baywatch."

21 26. Plaintiff never validly assigned production rights of his WORK to CO-EXECUTIVE
22 PRODUCERS.

23 **Infringement of Plaintiff's Copyrighted Works**

24 27. Beginning in or about 1988 and continuing to this date, Plaintiff alleges that CO-
25 EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS reproduce, market, distribute, license, sell, produce laser discs, DVDs,
26 VHS cassettes, television shows in English and foreign languages in the United States and other
27 countries including Canada.
28

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