	Case 2:13-cv-00126-TOR Document 1 Filed 03/27/13
1 2 3	Maureen C. VanderMay, WSBA No. 16742 The VanderMay Law Firm 2085 Commercial Street NE Salem, OR 97301 (503) 588-8053
4 5 6	
7	UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
8	EASTERN DISTRICT OF WASHINGTON
9	THE THOMPSONS FILM, LLC,) Case No.: CV-13-126-LRS
10	THE THOMPSONS FILM, LLC,) Case No.: CV-13-126-LRS
11	v. COMPLAINT
12) COPYRIGHT INFRINGEMENT; DOES 1 – 35,) EXHIBIT 1
13 14	Defendants.
14	Plaintiff The Thompsons Film, LLC, a limited liability company ("The
16	Thompsons" / "Plaintiff"), complains and alleges as follows:
17	INTRODUCTION
18	1. Plaintiff comprises a venture of independent film producers who have
19	worked on notable films featured at events such as the Sundance Film Festival.
20	2. In 2011, Plaintiff produced the original feature length film, <i>The Thompsons</i> ,
21	as a sequel to the 2006 multi-award winning independent film The Hamiltons.
22	3. Shortly after the release of <i>The Thompsons</i> , the film began to be illegally
23	copied and distributed through various means, costing Plaintiff sales and
24	distributions.
25	4. Illegal file sharing or pirating is particularly harmful to smaller and
26	independent film producers such as Plaintiff in that they often lack the marketing
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28	COMPLAINT – Page 1

and distribution strength of major studios. With a small or independent producer
 any loss in market due to illegal activity has a significant impact.

5. In the production of a motion picture there are countless expenses and
labors, many of which are not evident in the final project. Such expenses and
labors include writers, staff persons, construction workers and others who are
often union based employees working for a median salary.

6. Indeed, the final product produced, which may be less than two hours long,
is often sourced from hundreds of days and tens of thousands of hours of labor,
followed by near countless hours of post-production until the final product is
ready for viewing in a theater or at home.

7. The end product that many consumers see is a few hours in a theater, or possibly a DVD product that once production is complete has a nominal cost on a per-viewing experience. However, this is misleading to the true costs of the motion picture as the costs to view a completed motion picture or produce a single DVD are nominal compared to what is often years of work by hundreds of people leading up to the end product.

8. Added to this is that the only people publicly seen related to the end
product, movie stars and those that are known to be affiliated with motion
pictures, such as directors and other persons of note, are all generally the highest
compensated persons involved with the production of the work leading to the
common misunderstanding that people involved in motion pictures are already
wealthy.

9. When the perception that those affiliated with a motion picture are already
wealthy, and the end product, such as a DVD only costs very little to make, a
reality disconnect often builds in the minds of much of the public, namely that
those associated with a motion picture do not need any more money.

When this reality disconnect meets with the ready availability of pirated
 copies of motion pictures and the ease at which they can be illegally copied and
 downloaded at an almost anonymous level, many people feel justified in their
 pirating or theft of motion pictures.

5 11. The result is that despite the industry's efforts to capitalize on internet
6 technology and reduce costs to end viewers through legitimate and legal means of
7 online viewing such as through NetflixTM, HuluTM, and Amazon PrimeTM, there are
8 still those that use this technology to steal motion pictures and undermine the
9 efforts of creators through their illegal copying and distribution of motion pictures.

10 12. A common means of illegally copying and distributing content on the
11 internet is through the use of a peer-to-peer network such as BitTorrent.

12 13. In this case each of the Defendants has participated in illegally copying and13 distributing Plaintiff's motion picture via BitTorrent.

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JURISDICTION AND VENUE

14. This is a suit for copyright infringement and contributory copyright
infringement under the United States Copyright Act of 1976, as amended, 17
U.S.C. §§ 101 et seq. ("The Copyright Act").

18 15. This Court has subject matter jurisdiction pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §§ 1331
19 and 1338(a).

20 16. Venue in this district is proper pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1391(b) and 28
21 U.S.C. § 1400(a).

17. More particularly, venue is proper in this district as though the true identity
of the Defendants are unknown at this time, Plaintiff has used geolocation
technology to determine that, upon information and belief, each Defendant
conducted acts of copying Plaintiff's work in this state, and more specifically in
this district.

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PARTIES

THE PLAINTIFF

3 18. Plaintiff The Thompsons, LLC is a limited liability company with principal
4 offices in Los Angeles, California, that produced the motion picture at issue in this
5 matter.

The Rights of the Plaintiff

7 19. The motion picture in this case, titled *The Thompsons*, has been registered
8 with the United States Copyright Office by the author, The Thompsons Film, LLC,
9 Registration No. PAu 3-651-594.

10 20. The motion picture contains wholly original material that is copyrightable11 subject matter under the laws of the United States.

12 21. The motion picture is currently offered for sale in commerce.

13 22. Under the Copyright Act, The Thompsons, LLC is the proprietor of all right,
14 title, and interest in the motion picture, including the right to sue for past
15 infringement.

16 23. Under the Copyright Act, The Thompsons, LLC also controls the exclusive
17 rights to reproduce the motion picture and to distribute the motion picture to the
18 public.

Plaintiff's motion picture is easily discernible as a professional work as it
 was created using professional performers, directors, cinematographers, lighting
 technicians, set designers and editors and with professional-grade cameras,
 lighting and editing equipment.

23 25. Defendants have notice of Plaintiff's rights through general publication and
24 advertising and more specifically as identified in the content of the motion picture,
25 advertising associated with the motion picture, and all packaging and copies, each
26 of which bore a proper copyright notice.

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THE DEFENDANTS

In General

3 26. The Defendants are a group of BitTorrent users or peers whose computers
4 are collectively interconnected and used for illegally copying and distributing
5 Plaintiff's motion picture.

6 27. The Defendants and each of them have illegally and without authorization
7 from Plaintiff copied, downloaded, shared and uploaded Plaintiff's motion picture
8 using the BitTorrent system.

9 28. The Defendants and each of them have been identified as infringing
0 Plaintiff's copyrights in this district.

Further Identification of The Defendants

29. The Defendants have been identified as Does in the instant case and are
indicated in the attached Exhibit 1 by a specific Internet Protocol or IP address and
a "hash" (a file identifier generated by an algorithm developed and implemented
by the National Security Agency).

30. Under the BitTorrent protocol each file has a unique "hash" tied to a
specific file. In the instant case, all hashes identified on Exhibit 1 have been
confirmed as being for an unauthorized copy of Plaintiff's motion picture.

31. Despite Plaintiff's use of the best available investigative techniques, it is
impossible for Plaintiff to identify Defendants by name at this time. Thus, the true
names and capacities, whether individual, corporate, associate or otherwise of
Defendants are unknown to Plaintiff, who therefore must sue the Defendants as
Does 1 - 35.

32. Each Defendant can be specifically and uniquely identified by Plaintiff
through the Internet Protocol or IP address assigned to that Defendant by his or
her Internet Service Provider or ISP on the date and at the time at which the

infringing activity was observed. In addition, Plaintiff has, to a reasonable degree 1 of scientific certainty, learned the ISP for each Defendant, the torrent file copied 2 and distributed by each Defendant, the BitTorrent client application utilized by 3 each Defendant, and the location of each Defendant, at least down to the state 4 level, if not the county level at the time of infringement as determined by 5 geolocation technology. All of this information is provided in Exhibit 1. 6 Plaintiff believes that with a subpoena issued to the respective ISPs, the 33. 7 ISPs will have information which will lead to the identification of each of the 8 Does' true names and permit Plaintiff to amend this Complaint to state the same. 9 Specifically, Plaintiff intends to request expedited discovery for the sole purpose 10 of issuing subpoenas to the ISPs that issued the IP addresses to Defendants in 11 order to learn the identity of the account holders for the IP addresses. 12

JOINDER

14 34. Plaintiff acknowledges that joinder in this action under F.R.C.P. 20(a)(2) is
15 permissive in that Plaintiff's claims arise out of the same occurrences or
16 transactions, or series of occurrences or transactions and that there are questions of
17 law and fact common to each of the Defendants.

35. All of the Defendants have collectively acted through BitTorrent to illegally
download and distribute Plaintiff's motion picture, each damaging Plaintiff.

20 36. As such, Plaintiff's rights to relief, as stated below, ultimately arise out of
21 the same series of transactions and occurrences.

37. This action also raises substantial questions of law and fact common to allDefendants.

38. Permissive joinder in the instant case is to permit a more efficient
management of Plaintiff's claims against the several Defendants and to reduce the
costs to Plaintiff and Defendants and to reduce the costs and burdens on the Court.

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39. Notice is provided, that on being specifically identified and on request from 1 an identified Defendant, Plaintiff agrees to sever any Defendant that claims 2 prejudice in being joined in this matter and to proceed against each such Defendant individually.

FACTS COMMON TO ALL CLAIMS **IP Addresses**

To connect to the internet, each Defendant was required to contract with an 40. Internet Service Provider, or ISP, and create an account for service. It is the ISP that grants each user access to the internet and the ability to send and receive information, whether in the form of an email, photo or motion picture.

To identify the source and destination of any piece of information, an ISP 41. assigns an Internet Protocol or IP address to each user which allows data to flow to and from each user of the internet.

42. Each IP address is unique, and for any one time an IP address can be traced back to a specific ISP account holder and user.

43. A standard term for any account for service from an ISP is that such service may not be used for illegal activity.

Internet piracy and the use of the internet to conduct illegal activity are 44. commonly known. As such both through the license granted to a user from their ISP to obtain an IP address and through common knowledge, Defendants were on notice of the need to limit the use of their IP address to legal and authorized activity.

BitTorrent

Defendants, and each of them, utilized an interactive peer-to-peer file 45. transfer technology protocol to copy Plaintiff's motion picture. 1111

46. Peer-to-peer networks, at least in their most common form, are computer
 systems that enable internet users to: 1) make files (including motion pictures)
 stored on each user's computer available for copying by other users or peers; 2)
 search for files stored on other users' computers; and 3) transfer exact copies of
 files from one computer to another via the internet.

6 47. The particular peer-to-peer protocol at issue in this suit is the BitTorrent7 protocol.

8 48. Defendants and each of them used BitTorrent in a collective and often
9 interdependent manner via the internet in the unlawful reproduction and
10 distribution of Plaintiff's copyrighted motion picture.

49. To use BitTorrent, a user intentionally downloads a small program that they
 install on their computers — the BitTorrent "client" application. The BitTorrent
 client is the user's interface during the downloading/uploading process.

4 50. A BitTorrent client application typically lacks the ability to search for
5 media or content files. To find media or content available for download (as made
6 available by other BitTorrent users), users intentionally visit a "torrent site" using
7 a standard web browser.

51. A torrent site is a website that contains an index of media or content being made available by other users (generally an extensive listing of movies and television programs, among other copyrighted content). The torrent site hosts and distributes small files known as "torrent files." Torrent files do not contain actual media or content. Torrent files are used to instruct a user's computer where to go and how to get the desired media or content. Torrent files interact with specific trackers, allowing the user to download the desired media or content.

52. The torrent file contains a unique hash identifier which is a uniqueidentifier generated by a mathematical algorithm developed by the National

Security Agency. This torrent file is tagged with the file's unique "hash," which 1 acts as a "roadmap" to the IP addresses of other users who are sharing the media or 2 content identified by the unique hash, as well as specifics about the media or 3 content file. 4

A BitTorrent tracker manages the distribution of files, connecting uploaders 5 53. (those who are distributing content) with downloaders (those who are copying the 6 7 content). A tracker directs a BitTorrent user's computer to other users who have a particular file, and then facilitates the download process from those users. When a 8 BitTorrent user seeks to download a motion picture or other content, he or she 9 merely clicks on the appropriate torrent file on a torrent site, and the torrent file 10 instructs the client software how to connect to a tracker that will identify where 11 12 the file is available and begin downloading it. In addition to a tracker, a user can manage file distribution through a Peer Exchange and/or a Distributed Hash Table. 13 54. A Peer Exchange is a communications protocol built into almost every 14 BitTorrent protocol which allows users to share files more quickly and efficiently. 15

Peer Exchange is responsible for helping users find more users that share the same 16 media or content. 17

A Distributed Hash Table is a sort of world-wide telephone book, which 18 55. uses each file's "hash" to locate sources for the requested media or content. Thus, 19 users are able to access a partial list of other users with the media or content they 20 want rather than being filtered through a central computer called a tracker. By 21 22 allowing users to rely on individual computers for information, this not only reduces the load on the central tracker, but also means that every client that is 23 sharing this media or content is also helping to hold this worldwide network together.

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24 25 26 Files downloaded in this method are downloaded in hundreds of individual
 pieces. Each piece that is downloaded is immediately thereafter made available
 for distribution to other users seeking the same file. The effect of this technology
 makes every downloader also an uploader of the content. This means that every
 user who has a copy of the infringing media or content on a torrent network is also
 a source for others to download that media or content.

57. Thus, each IP address identified by the tracker is an uploading user who is
running a BitTorrent client on his or her computer and who is offering the media
or content for download. Once selected, the downloading user's BitTorrent client
then begins downloading the media or content by communicating with the
BitTorrent client programs running on one or more uploading users' computers.

12 58. The effect of this distributed network of users all downloading and
13 uploading the same file creates what is commonly known as a "swarm" wherein
14 users operate collectively to copy and distribute media and content.

59. Members of the swarm become interconnected to download files, wherein
the download creates an exact digital copy on the downloaders' computers. As
additional infringers request the same file, each additional infringer joins the
collective swarm, and each new infringer receives pieces of the file from each
other infringer in the swarm who has already downloaded any part of the file.

20 60. This distributed nature of BitTorrent leads to a rapid viral sharing of media
21 and content throughout the collective peer users. As more peers join the collective
22 swarm, the frequency and speed of successful downloads also increases.

61. Thus, a Defendant's distribution of even a single unlawful copy of the
motion picture can result in the nearly instantaneous worldwide distribution of that
single copy to an unlimited number of people. In this case, each Defendant's
copyright infringement built upon the prior infringements, in a continuing cascade

of infringement going forward. 1

62. 2 Further, though it is clearly established that the Defendants participated in the exact same swarm, likely directly linking to each other, the nature of the 3 BitTorrent system is such that the exact same data may be in multiple swarms at 4 the same time. As such, while a single swarm more directly links Defendants, the 5 same data, Plaintiff's motion picture, is being transferred in many swarms, making 6 every identified Defendant a participant in, if not the same transaction or 7 occurrence, the same series of transactions or occurrences - the BitTorrent 8 exchange of Plaintiff's motion picture. 9

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Conduct of Defendants

Plaintiff has recorded each Defendant identified herein as actually copying 63. 11 and publishing Plaintiff's motion picture via BitTorrent, as Plaintiff's investigator 12 has downloaded the motion picture from each Defendant identified herein. 13

64. Defendants' conduct was illegal and in violation of their license and terms 14 of access to the internet through their ISP. 15

65. This case involves a single swarm in which numerous Defendants engaged 16 in mass copyright infringement of Plaintiff's motion picture. 17

18 66. Each Defendant illegally uploaded and shared Plaintiff's motion picture within the swarm. 19

67. Upon information and belief, each Defendant was a willing and knowing 20 participant in the swarm at issue and engaged in such participation for the purpose 21 of infringing Plaintiff's copyright. 22

68. By participating in a swarm, each Defendant participated in the exact same 23 or nearly identical transaction, occurrence, or series of transactions or occurrences as the other Defendants.

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24 25 26 G9. Upon information and belief, many Defendants also acted in concert with
 others, including other Defendants by participating in a Peer Exchange.

70. Upon information and belief, many Defendants also acted in concert with
other Defendants and swarm members and by linking together globally through
use of a Distributed Hash Table.

6 71. Each Defendant's conduct is effectively a collective enterprise constituting
7 substantially similar or identical facts.

Exemplar Defendant

9 72. For example, user Doe No. 3 of 35, known at this time only by the IP
address of 69.28.34.2 and believed to reside in Cheney, initiated his or her
infringing conduct by first intentionally logging into the one of many BitTorrent
client repositories known for their large index of copyrighted movies, television
shows, software and adult videos. Doe No. 3 then intentionally obtained a torrent
file identified by a "hash" or SHA1:

4C55A9C583CDC447A14CF245BBD9C1F3AAA30C23, in this specific instance
which is for Plaintiff's motion picture from the index and intentionally loaded that
torrent file into a computer program designed to read such files.

73. With the torrent file intentionally loaded by Doe No. 3, his or her BitTorrent
program used the BitTorrent protocol to initiate connections with hundreds of
other users possessing and uploading or sharing copies of the digital media
described in SHA1:

4C55A9C583CDC447A14CF245BBD9C1F3AAA30C23, namely, Plaintiff's
motion picture, including with, upon information and belief, other identified Doe
Defendants. As the motion picture was copied to Doe No. 3's computer piece by
piece, these downloaded pieces of Plaintiff's motion picture were then immediately
available to all other Defendants for those Defendants' uses from Doe No. 3's

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1 computer.

74. Each of Does 1 - 35 performed the same acts as those described for Doe No.
3, above. Each of these Defendants also immediately became an uploader,
meaning that each downloaded piece was immediately available to other users
seeking to obtain the file without degradation in sound or picture quality. It is in
this way that each Defendant copied and distributed the motion picture at the same
time. Thus, each participant in the BitTorrent swarm was an uploader or
distributor and also a downloader or copier of Plaintiff's motion picture.

FIRST CLAIM FOR RELIEF COPYRIGHT INFRINGEMENT

75. Plaintiff repeats and realleges each of the allegations above.

2 76. Exhibit 1 identifies the Doe Defendants known to Plaintiff who have,
3 without the permission or consent of Plaintiff, distributed Plaintiff's motion
4 picture through a public website and any one of various public BitTorrent trackers,
5 Peer Exchanges, and/or Distributed Hash Tables.

77. Plaintiff alleges that each Defendant, without the permission or consent of
Plaintiff, has used, and continues to use, BitTorrent software to download
Plaintiff's motion picture, to distribute the motion picture to the public, including
hundreds of other BitTorrent users, and/or to make the motion picture available for
distribution to others.

78. Defendants' actions constitute infringement of Plaintiff's exclusive rightsunder The Copyright Act.

79. Defendants' conduct has been willful, intentional, in disregard of and
indifferent to Plaintiff's rights.

80. As a direct and proximate result of Defendants' conduct, Plaintiff's
exclusive rights under 17 U.S.C. § 106 have been violated.

Plaintiff is entitled to damages pursuant to 17 U.S.C. § 504 and attorney
 fees and costs pursuant to 17 U.S.C. § 505.

82. The conduct of each Defendant is causing and, unless enjoined and
restrained by this Court, will continue to cause Plaintiff great and irreparable
injury.

83. Pursuant to 17 U.S.C. §§ 502 and 503, Plaintiff is entitled to injunctive
relief prohibiting each Defendant from further contributing to the infringement of
Plaintiff's copyrights and ordering that each Defendant destroy all copies of
Plaintiff's motion picture made in violation of Plaintiff's rights.

SECOND CLAIM FOR RELIEF CONTRIBUTORY INFRINGEMENT

12 84. Plaintiff repeats and realleges each of the allegations 1 - 74 above.

85. Exhibit 1 identifies the Doe Defendants known to Plaintiff who have,
without the permission or consent of Plaintiff, contributed to the infringement of
Plaintiff's copyrights by other Defendants and other swarm members.

86. By participating in the BitTorrent swarm with other Defendants, each
Defendant induced, caused or materially contributed to the infringement of
Plaintiff's exclusive rights under the Copyright Act by other Defendants and other
swarm members.

20 87. Defendants' conduct has been willful, intentional, in disregard of and
21 indifferent to Plaintiff's rights.

88. As a direct and proximate result of Defendants' conduct, Plaintiff's
exclusive rights under 17 U.S.C. § 106 have been violated.

24 89. Plaintiff is entitled to damages pursuant to 17 U.S.C. § 504 and attorney
25 fees and costs pursuant to 17 U.S.C. § 505.

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90. The conduct of each Defendant is causing and, unless enjoined and
 restrained by this Court, will continue to cause Plaintiff great and irreparable
 injury.

91. Pursuant to 17 U.S.C. §§ 502 and 503, Plaintiff is entitled to injunctive
relief prohibiting each Defendant from further contributing to the infringement of
Plaintiff's copyrights and ordering that each Defendant destroy all copies of
Plaintiff's motion picture made in violation of Plaintiff's rights and take such
further steps as are necessary to prevent further infringement.

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INDIRECT INFRINGEMENT OF COPYRIGHT

THIRD CLAIM FOR RELIEF

Plaintiff repeats and realleges each of the allegations 1 - 74 above. 92. 11 93. Defendants, and each of them, as identified by IP address in Exhibit 1, 12 obtained internet access through an ISP and permitted, facilitated and promoted 13 the use of the internet access identified with the specific IP address for the 14 infringing of Plaintiff's exclusive rights under The Copyright Act by others. 15 94. Defendants, and each of them, are liable as indirect or secondary infringers. 16 95. Defendants, and each of them, failed to secure, police and protect the use of 17 18 their internet service against illegal conduct, including the downloading and

19 sharing of Plaintiff's motion picture by others.

20 96. Defendants' failure was with notice as illegal conduct is in violation of the
21 law and in violation of the license for access granted to each Defendant by their
22 ISP which issued them an IP address to access the internet.

23 97. Defendants' conduct has been willful, intentional, in disregard of and
24 indifferent to Plaintiff's rights.

25 98. As a direct and proximate result of Defendants' conduct, Plaintiff's
26 exclusive rights under 17 U.S.C. § 106 have been violated.

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99. Plaintiff is entitled to damages pursuant to 17 U.S.C. § 504 and attorney 1 fees and costs pursuant to 17 U.S.C. § 505. 2 100. The conduct of each Defendant is causing and, unless enjoined and 3 restrained by this Court, will continue to cause Plaintiff great and irreparable 4 injury. 5 101. Pursuant to 17 U.S.C. §§ 502 and 503, Plaintiff is entitled to injunctive 6 relief prohibiting each Defendant from further indirect infringement of Plaintiff's 7 copyrights and ordering that each Defendant destroy all copies of Plaintiff's 8 motion picture made in violation of Plaintiff's rights and take such further steps as 9 are necessary to prevent further indirect infringement. DAMAGES 102. Plaintiff has been damaged and claims damages of \$30,000.00 from each Defendant pursuant to 17 U.S.C. § 504(c)(1). **Notice of Further Claims** 103. While the relief prayed for by Plaintiff is specific and less than may be allowed by law, Plaintiff hereby provides notice of the potential damages available under various laws, such as 17 U.S.C. § 504, which include: a. Defendants' profits; b. Plaintiff's full damages; c. Statutory damages of up to \$150,000.00 against each Defendant should there be a finding of willful conduct; d. All costs of this action; and e. Broad equitable relief, including the destruction of all infringing articles and equipment used in the infringement. 104. Plaintiff gives notice it may move to elect the full scope of relief available against each Defendant as discovery proceeds. COMPLAINT - Page 16

PRAYER FOR RELIEF

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WHEREFORE, Plaintiff prays for judgment against Defendants and each of 2 them as follows:

A. For entry of permanent injunctions enjoining each Defendant from 4 5 directly, contributorily or indirectly infringing Plaintiff's rights in Plaintiff's motion picture, including without limitation by using the internet to reproduce or 6 copy Plaintiff's motion picture, to distribute Plaintiff's motion picture, or to make 7 Plaintiff's motion picture available for distribution to the public, except pursuant 8 to a lawful license or with the express authority of Plaintiff, and further directing 9 Defendants to destroy all unauthorized copies of Plaintiff's motion picture; 10 B. For \$30,000.00 damages pursuant to 17 U.S.C. § 504; 11 C. For Plaintiff's reasonable costs and attorney fees pursuant to 17 U.S.C. § 12 505; and 13 D. For such other and further relief as the Court deems proper. 14 **DEMAND FOR JURY TRIAL** 15 Pursuant to Rule 38 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, Plaintiff 16 demands a trial by jury. 17 18 DATED: March, 27, 2013 Respectfully submitted, 19 The VanderMay Law Firm 20 <u>/s Maureen C. VanderMay</u> Maureen C. VanderMay, WSBA No. 16742 email: court@vandermaylawfirm.com 21 The VanderMay Law Firm 22 2085 Commercial Street NE Salem, OR 97301 23 (503) 588-8053 Of Attorneys for Plaintiff 24 25 26 27 28 COMPLAINT – Page 17