# UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS

RICHARD SOUTHALL,	:
Plaintiff,	:
v.	: Civil Action No.:
FORCE PARTNERS LLC,	: COMPLAINT AND JURY : DEMAND
Defendant.	: DEMAND
	:
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### COMPLAINT FOR COPYRIGHT INFRINGEMENT

Plaintiff, RICHARD SOUTHALL ("Southall" or "Plaintiff"), brings this complaint in the United States District Court for the Northern District of Illinois against FORCE PARTNERS LLC ("Force" or "Defendant"), alleging as follows:

### PARTIES

- Plaintiff is an experienced architectural and interiors photographer of over twenty-five years of experience. Plaintiff is a commercial photographer specializing in architectural and interior photography. Plaintiff resides in Birmingham, United Kingdom.
- 2. On information and belief, Defendant is a Domestic Limited Liability Company existing under the laws of the State of Illinois, with headquarters in Chicago, Illinois. Defendant specializes in lighting and control agency standards. Defendant owns, operates, and is solely responsible for the content on its commercial website, <u>www.forcechicago.com</u>.

#### JURISDICTION AND VENUE

- This is a civil action seeking damages for copyright infringement under the copyright laws of the United States (17 U.S.C. § 101 et seq.).
- 4. This Court has jurisdiction under 17 U.S.C. § 101 et seq.; 28 U.S.C. § 1331 (federal question); and 28 U.S.C. § 1338(a) (copyright).
- 5. This Court has personal jurisdiction over Defendant, and venue in this District is proper under 28 U.S.C. § 1391(b), in that the events giving rise to the claims occurred in this district, Defendant engaged in infringement in this district, Defendant resides in this district, and Defendant is subject to personal jurisdiction in this district.
- 6. This Court also has personal jurisdiction over Defendant, and venue in this District is proper under 28 U.S.C. § 1400(a).

# FACTUAL ALLEGATIONS COMMON TO ALL CLAIMS

- On July 1, 2013, Plaintiff captured the photograph, "\_DSC4315" ("Copyrighted Photograph"). [Exhibit 1].
- On July 29, 2013, Plaintiff posted Copyrighted Photograph to <u>www.emphasisphotography.blogspot.com/2013/07/aqua-bar-and-restaurant-shard-</u> <u>london.html</u> (Last visited May 1, 2020). [Exhibit 2].
- Plaintiff registered Copyrighted Photograph with the United States Copyright Office on May 27, 2019 (Registration No.: VA 2-154-695). [Exhibit 3].
- Beginning on or about November 1, 2017, Defendant copied and posted Copyrighted Photograph to the Defendant's commercial website, <u>www.forcechicago.com</u>.
- 11. Defendant posted Copyrighted Photograph to the following URL:
  - <u>www.forcechicago.com/locationcollaborate</u> (Last visited December 1, 2017). [Exhibit 4].

- 12. Defendant used Copyrighted Photograph as a full-page, full-bleed, top-of-the-page image on Defendant's "Location" page on its commercial website. [Exhibit 4].
- Defendant copied and posted Copyrighted Photograph without license or permission from Plaintiff.

## COUNT I: INFRINGEMENT OF COPYRIGHT PURSUANT TO 17 U.S.C. § 101 ET SEQ.

- 14. Plaintiff incorporates herein by this reference each and every allegation contained in each paragraph above.
- 15. Plaintiff is, and at all relevant times has been, the copyright owner or licensee of exclusive rights under United States copyright with respect to Copyrighted Photograph, which is the subject of a valid Certificate of Copyright Registration by the Register of Copyrights.
- 16. Among the exclusive rights granted to each Plaintiff under the Copyright Act are the exclusive rights to reproduce and distribute the Copyrighted Photograph to the public.
- 17. Plaintiff is informed and believes Defendant, without the permission or consent of Plaintiff, copied and used Copyrighted Photograph on Defendant's commercial website, <u>www.forcechicago.com</u>. In doing so, Defendant violated Plaintiff's exclusive rights of reproduction and distribution. Defendant's actions constitute infringement of Plaintiff's copyright and exclusive rights under copyright.
- 18. Plaintiff is informed and believes that the foregoing act of infringement was willful and intentional, in disregard of and with indifference to the rights of Plaintiff.
- 19. As a result of Defendant's infringement of Plaintiff's copyright and exclusive rights under copyright, Plaintiff is entitled to actual or statutory damages, including any profits realized by Defendant attributable to the infringement, pursuant to 17 U.S.C. § 504 for Defendant's infringement of Copyrighted Photograph.

# COUNT II: REMOVAL AND ALTERATION OF INTEGRITY OF COPYRIGHT MANAGEMENT INFORMATION PURSUANT TO 17 U.S.C. § 1202

- 20. Plaintiff is informed and believes that Defendant, without the permission or consent of Plaintiff, knowingly and with the intent to conceal infringement, intentionally removed the copyright management information from Plaintiff's Copyrighted Photograph before displaying Copyrighted Photograph on Defendant's commercial website, <u>www.forcechicago.com</u>. In doing so, Defendant violated 17 U.S.C. § 1202(a)(1) and (b)(1).
- 21. As a result of Defendant's actions, Plaintiff is entitled to actual or statutory damages pursuant to 17 U.S.C. § 1203(c). Plaintiff is further entitled to their attorney's fees and costs pursuant to 17 U.S.C. § 1203(b)(5).

# PRAYER FOR RELIEF

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff prays for judgment against Defendant as follows:

- A. Declaring that Defendant's unauthorized conduct violates Plaintiff's rights under the Federal Copyright Act;
- B. Immediately and permanently enjoining Defendant, its officers, directors, agents, servants, employees, representatives, attorneys, related companies, successors, assigns, and all others in active concert or participation with them from copying and republishing Plaintiff's Copyrighted Photograph without consent or otherwise infringing Plaintiff's copyright or other rights in any manner;
- C. Ordering Defendant to account to Plaintiff for all gains, profits, and advantages derived by Defendant by their infringement of Plaintiff's copyright or such damages as are proper;
- D. Awarding Plaintiff actual and/or statutory damages for Defendant's copyright infringement in an amount to be determined at trial;

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- E. Awarding Plaintiff his costs, reasonable attorney's fees, and disbursements in this action, pursuant to 17 U.S.C. § 505, 17 U.S.C. § 1203(b)(3), and § 1203(b)(5); and
- F. Awarding Plaintiff such other and further relief as is just and proper.

# JURY DEMAND

Plaintiff hereby demands a trial by jury on all claims for which there is a right to jury

trial.

Dated: June 1, 2020

/s/ \_David C. Deal David C. Deal (VA Bar No.: 86005) The Law Office of David C. Deal, P.L.C. P.O. Box 1042 Crozet, VA 22932 434-233-2727, Telephone david@daviddeal.com