UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT NORTHERN DISTRICT OF GEORGIA NEWNAN DIVISION

CASE NO.:

BRIAN R. DRESSLER,

Plaintiff,

v.

T&T LIGHTING GROUP LLC and HARBINGER MARKETING, L.L.C.,

Defendants.

COMPLAINT FOR COPYRIGHT INFRINGEMENT (INJUNCTIVE RELIEF DEMANDED)

Plaintiff BRIAN R. DRESSLER by and through his undersigned counsel, brings this Complaint against Defendants T&T LIGHTING GROUP LLC and HARBINGER MARKETING, L.L.C. for damages and injunctive relief, and in support thereof states as follows:

SUMMARY OF THE ACTION

- 1. Plaintiff BRIAN R. DRESSLER ("Dressler") brings this action for violations of exclusive rights under the Copyright Act, 17 U.S.C. § 106, to copy and distribute Dressler's original copyrighted Work of authorship.
- 2. Dressler received his Bachelor of Media Arts from the University of South Carolina in 1979. He is a member of the ASMP (American Society of Media

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Photographers), AIAP (Association of Independent Architectural Photographers), and IAAP (International Association of Architectural Photographers). After over 35 years in advertising, architectural, corporate, industrial and product illustration photography, Dressler is known for creative mastery, practical expertise and client satisfaction. This means much more than just a good eye for shots.

- 3. Though he's a longtime South Carolina commercial photographer,
 Dressler's work crosses the nation. Since establishing Dressler Photography in
 1979, his work has won numerous local and regional South Carolina photography
 "Addy" awards, local "In Show" awards, and a prestigious "Andy" award from the
 New York Art Directors Club. Dressler's work has been featured in prominent
 marketing campaigns and publications nationwide, including AT&T, Sears, and
 many more.
- 4. Defendant T&T LIGHTING GROUP LLC ("T&T") is a well-known lighting agency in Georgia, South Carolina and Tennessee. T&T has combined experience of over 40 years representing manufacturers in residential and commercial lighting, such as ELCO Lighting, Maxim Lighting, GMLighting, Fanimation Ceiling Fans, GlobaLux Lighting, and others. T&T leads the industry of lighting specialists for custom builders, track builders, multifamily housing, and showroom display, and specialize in indoor, outdoor, commercial and residential lighting. Upon information and belief, at all times relevant herein, T&T owned

operated the internet website located at the URL www.tandtilightinggroup.com (the "Website"

- 5. Defendant Harbinger Marketing, L.L.C. ("Harbinger") is a full-service marketing company that provides branding, graphic design, logo design, website development and design, content writing, video animation, video production, photography, search engine optimization, social media, direct mail, public relations, email marketing, marketing consulting among other services. Harbinger is the Registrant of the Website.
- 6. Defendants T&T and Harbinger are collectively referred to herein as "Defendants."
- 7. Dressler alleges that Defendants copied Dressler's copyrighted Work from the internet in order to advertise, market and promote its business activities. Defendants committed the violations alleged in connection with Defendants' business for purposes of advertising and promoting sales to the public in the course and scope of the Defendants' business.

JURISDICTION AND VENUE

- 8. This is an action arising under the Copyright Act, 17 U.S.C. § 501.
- 9. This Court has subject matter jurisdiction over these claims pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §§ 1331, 1338(a).
 - 10. Defendants are subject to personal jurisdiction in Georgia.

11. Venue is proper in this district under 28 U.S.C. § 1391(b) and (c) and 1400(a) because the events giving rise to the claims occurred in this district,

Defendants engaged in infringement in this district, Defendants reside in this district, and Defendants are subject to personal jurisdiction in this district.

DEFENDANTS

- 12. T&T Lighting Group LLC is a Georgia Limited Liability Company, with its principal place of business at 231 Sims Road, Tyrone, Georgia, 30290, and can be served by serving its Registered Agent, Mr. Howell Turner, at the same address.
- 13. Harbinger Marketing, L.L.C. is a Georgia Limited Liability Company, with its principal place of business at 215 Greencastle Road, Second Floor, Tyrone, Georgia, 30290, and can be served by serving its Registered Agent, Mr. David Harbin, at the same address.

THE COPYRIGHTED WORK AT ISSUE

14. In 2007, Dressler created the photograph entitled 060407_0218a, which is shown below and referred to herein as the "Work".



- 15. Dressler registered the Work with the Register of Copyrights on June 11, 2007 and was assigned the registration number VAu 000748044. The Certificate of Registration is attached hereto as Exhibit 1.
- 16. Dressler's Work is protected by copyright but is not otherwise confidential, proprietary, or trade secrets.
- 17. At all relevant times Dressler was the owner of the copyrighted Work at issue in this case.

INFRINGEMENT BY DEFENDANTS

18. Defendants have never been licensed to use the Work at issue in this action for any purpose.

- 19. On a date after the Work at issue in this action was created, but prior to the filing of this action, Defendants copied the Work.
- 20. On or about October 10, 2019, Dressler discovered the unauthorized use on the Website of Dressler's Work as the backdrop image for its Home page and Manufacturers page. Upon information and belief, the Work was uploaded on or about August 2013.
- 21. Defendants copied Dressler's copyrighted Work without Dressler's permission.
- 22. After Defendants copied the Work, they made further copies and distributed the Work on the internet to promote the sale of goods and services as part of their lighting and marketing businesses.
- 23. Defendants copied and distributed Dressler's copyrighted Work in connection with Defendants' business for purposes of advertising and promoting Defendants' business, and in the course and scope of advertising and selling products and services.
- 24. Dressler's Works are protected by copyright but are not otherwise confidential, proprietary, or trade secrets.
- 25. Defendants committed copyright infringement of the Work as evidenced by the documents attached hereto as Exhibit 2.

- 26. Dressler never gave Defendants permission or authority to copy, distribute or display the Work at issue in this case.
- 27. Dressler notified Defendants of the allegations set forth herein on October 25, 2019. To date, the parties have failed to resolve this matter. A copy of the Notice to Defendants is attached hereto as Exhibit 3.

COUNT I COPYRIGHT INFRINGEMENT

- 28. Dressler incorporates the allegations of paragraphs 1 through 27 of this Complaint as if fully set forth herein.
 - 29. Dressler owns a valid copyright in the Work at issue in this case.
- 30. Dressler registered the Work at issue in this case with the Register of Copyrights pursuant to 17 U.S.C. § 411(a).
- 31. Defendants copied, displayed, and distributed the Work at issue in this case and made derivatives of the Work without Dressler's authorization in violation of 17 U.S.C. § 501.
- 32. Defendants performed the acts alleged in the course and scope of its business activities.
 - 33. Defendants' acts were willful.
 - 34. Dressler has been damaged.
 - 35. The harm caused to Dressler has been irreparable.

WHEREFORE, the Plaintiff Brian R. Dressler prays for judgment against the Defendants T&T Lighting Group LLC and Harbinger Marketing, L.L.C. that:

a. Defendants and their officers, agents, servants, employees, affiliated entities, and all of those in active concert with them, be preliminarily and

permanently enjoined from committing the acts alleged herein in violation of 17

U.S.C. § 501;

b. Defendants be required to pay Plaintiff his actual damages and

Defendants' profits attributable to the infringement, or, at Plaintiff's election,

statutory damages, as provided in 17 U.S.C. § 504;

c. Plaintiff be awarded his attorneys' fees and costs of suit under the

applicable statutes sued upon;

d. Plaintiff be awarded pre and post-judgment interest; and

e. Plaintiff be awarded such other and further relief as the Court deems

just and proper.

JURY DEMAND

Plaintiff hereby demands a trial by jury of all issues so triable.

DATED: February 24, 2021 Respectfully submitted,

<u>/s/Joel B. Rothman</u>

JOEL B. ROTHMAN
Georgia Bar Number 979716
icel rothman@sriplaw.com

joel.rothman@sriplaw.com

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21301 Powerline Road Suite 100 Boca Raton, FL 33433 561.404.4350 – Telephone 561.404.4353 – Facsimile

Attorneys for Plaintiff Brian R. Dressler

Exhibit

1

Public Catalog

Copyright Catalog (1978 to present)

Search Request: Left Anchored Copyright Number = VAu000748044

Search Results: Displaying 1 of 1 entries



4/1/07--6/8/07.

Type of Work: Visual Material

Registration Number / Date: VAu000748044 / 2007-06-11

Title: 4/1/07--6/8/07.

Description: Photographs.

Copyright Claimant: Brian Dressler

Date of Creation: 2007

Rights and Permissions: Rights & permissions info. on original appl. in C.O.

Copyright Note: Cataloged from appl. only.

Names: Dressler, Brian





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Exhibit

2

T&T

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Experts in residential and commercial lighting, T&T Lighting specializes in helping end-users meet and exceed budgets and deadlines. Representing Georgia, South Carolina, and Tennessee, our lighting agency strives to exceed all others in customer satisfaction. Working with over 200 distributors, we take any lighting project from start to finish, striving to ensure the best customer care in the industry. T&T Lighting can provide all your lighting needs.

Our Manufactures







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Testimonials



Jimmy Royals Lade Danlar Light/ng - Builder Sales Manager



"Howell and Rusty, with T&T Lighting Group, have been outstanding lighting representatives for Lade-Danlar for over 10 years now. They are always willing to go the extra mile in helping with our showroom, builders, designers, and even home owners. They know their products well and also work well with engineers and architects. We are constantly growing in the residential lighting field and have great support from both Rusty and Howell. They have exceptional customer service and we highly recommend them and look forward to growing our business with them in the future."

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signed by Harbinger Marketing

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T&T Lighting represents the top names in the lighting industry including Maxim, ET2, Focus, Hylite, and Paclight. We work with over 100 distributors in Georgia, Tennessee, and South Carolina. Striving for 100% customer satisfaction, we help bring top-of-the-line lighting products right to your area.

Our Manufactures













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Exhibit

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Joel B. Rothman

Board Certified in Intellectual Property Law

Direct: 561.404.4335 joel.rothman@sriplaw.com

October 25, 2019

VIA FEDEX and EMAIL: howell.tandtlighting@gmail.com

Mr. Howell Turner T&T Lighting Group LLC 231 Sims Road Tyrone, GA 30290

Re: Dressler v. T&T Lighting

Our File No.: 00606-0001

Dear Mr. Turner,

We write on behalf of our client Brian Dressler, a photographer, for purposes of resolving a case of copyright infringement against you by our client. This demand is privileged from disclosure pursuant to FRE Rule 408.

Brian Dressler ("Dressler")

Our client is an experienced professional photographer who makes a living from photography.

Dressler retains all copyrights to his photographs. Dressler licenses his copyrighted Works, such as the one in this case, for commercial use.

In 2007, Dressler created an image entitled "060407_0218a", hereinafter referred to as the "Work."

The Work at issue is shown below. At the time the Work was created, Dressler applied Copyright Management Information to the an image.

Mr. Howell Turner T&T Lighting Group LLC October 25, 2019 Page 2



Dressler registered the Work with the Register of Copyrights on June 11, 2007 and was assigned the registration number VAu 000748044, a copy of which is enclosed.

Infringement by T&T Lighting Group LLC ("T&T")

The infringement at issue was identified on October 10, 2019. We have enclosed contemporaneous evidence of the infringement by T&T.

You have employed our client's Work in at least the manner indicated in the evidence attached. Your unauthorized use commenced on at least the date indicated above. You are fully aware that the Work you used is our client's Work. No one from your company ever sought a license from our client to use the Work for any purpose.

You have copied, displayed and distributed our client's Work without permission, license or consent. The use of a creator's photographic image without written consent or license violates the United States Code, Title 17, and The Copyright Act. The Copyright Act provides for entry of an injunction directing removal of the offending materials pending litigation. This letter shall serve as formal notice that you immediately cease and desist all unauthorized uses of our client's Work. Any such further uses shall be at your peril.

If you possess a contract, license, agreement or writing on which you will rely for authorization of your use of our client's Work, please provide us with this evidence so we may avoid further controversy or litigation. Otherwise, we will be forced to assume that your use violated the law.

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Mr. Howell Turner T&T Lighting Group LLC October 25, 2019 Page 3

Damages

Copyright law provides several different elements of compensation to Dressler when a work is infringed or altered. Section 504 permits Dressler to recover actual damages plus "any additional profits of the infringer that are attributable to the infringement and are not taken into account in computing the actual damages," or statutory damages of up to \$150,000 per work infringed if the registration predated the infringement, Dressler can present both damages theories to the jury and select the higher award any time prior to entry of judgment.

Academic studies have demonstrated that the use of good quality photographs more effectively market and advertise products and drive sales. Dressler's photographs are of the highest quality. Dressler's photographs are also scarce since he is one of the only sources of such quality photographs.

Dressler's damages are not limited to what he would have agreed to license the Work for prior to the infringement. Rather, Dressler's actual damages will be measured by the fair market value of the photograph considering T&T's use to sell and promote its business. Dressler's actual damages must be measured in light of T&T's use of Dressler's high quality and unique Work.

This is consistent with federal courts' approach to broadly construing the term "actual damages" to favor victims of infringement. See, e.g., Davis v. Gap, Inc., 246 F.3d 152, 164 (2d Cir. 2001). The fair market value approach for calculating damages is an accepted approach to valuing the defendants' uses of photographs. See *Leonard v. Stemtech Int'l*, Inc., Nos. 15-3198, 15-3247, 2016 U.S. App. LEXIS 15565 (3d Cir. Aug. 24, 2016). In addition, Dressler can offer evidence of the actual cost to take the photograph infringed on a time and materials basis.

Section 504 of the Copyright Act permits Dressler to recover actual damages plus "any additional profits of the infringer that are attributable to the infringement and are not taken into account in computing the actual damages." Therefore, Dressler will also be entitled to T&T's profits from the infringement, based upon the revenue T&T earned in connection with the use of Dressler's Work.

Alternatively, Dressler could seek statutory damages for infringement in an amount of up to \$30,000 per work infringed if the registration predated the infringement. There is also the possibility that a judge or jury could determine that T&T's infringement was willful. If T&T's infringement was shown to be willful, the statutory damage award would increase to an amount up to \$150,000 per work infringed.

Main: 561.404.4350

Fax: 561.404.4353

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Mr. Howell Turner T&T Lighting Group LLC October 25, 2019 Page 4

Demand

In order to determine how to proceed, please provide us with information and documents showing:

- 1. the full nature and extent of the use of our client's Work, in any and all formats;
- 2. representative copies in any and all tangible form and media in which our client's Work was incorporated or employed; and
- 3. the source of the Work.

Upon receipt of this information we will consider and determine an appropriate amount required to be paid to our client in compensation.

Please carefully consider this letter and the associated exhibits and provide them to your attorneys and insurance carriers. If we do not receive a response from you or a representative by November 8, 2019, we will take further steps to protect our client's rights. We look forward to your prompt response.

Sincerely,

SRIPLAW

Joel B. Rothman

JBR/bmb Enclosures

Main: 561.404.4350

Fax: 561.404.4353

Public Catalog

Copyright Catalog (1978 to present)

Search Request: Left Anchored Copyright Number = VAu000748044

Search Results: Displaying 1 of 1 entries



4/1/07--6/8/07.

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Description: Photographs.

Copyright Claimant: Brian Dressler

Date of Creation: 2007

Rights and Permissions: Rights & permissions info. on original appl. in C.O.

Copyright Note: Cataloged from appl. only.

Names: Dressler, Brian



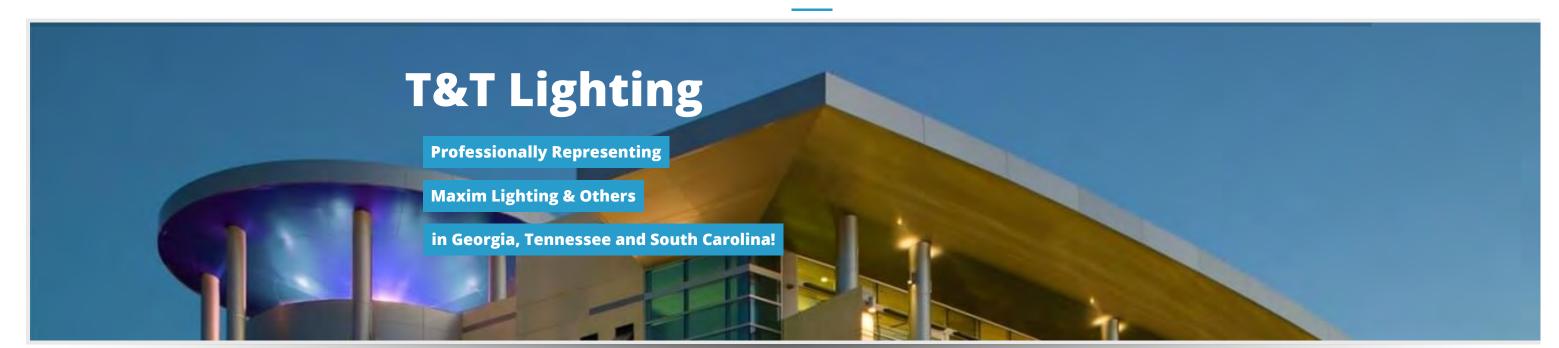
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Experts in residential and commercial lighting, T&T Lighting specializes in helping end-users meet and exceed budgets and deadlines. Representing Georgia, South Carolina, and Tennessee, our lighting agency strives to exceed all others in customer satisfaction. Working with over 200 distributors, we take any lighting project from start to finish, striving to ensure the best customer care in the industry. T&T Lighting can provide all your lighting needs.

Our Manufactures











Testimonials



"Howell and Rusty, with T&T Lighting Group, have been outstanding lighting representatives for Lade–Danlar for over 10 years now. They are always willing to go the extra mile in helping with our showroom, builders, designers, and even home owners. They know their products well and also work well with engineers and architects. We are constantly growing in the residential lighting field and have great support from both Rusty and Howell. They have exceptional customer service and we highly recommend them and look forward to growing our business with them in the future."

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JS44 (Rev. 6/2017 NDGA) Case 3:21-cv-00029-TCB_Document 1-4_Filed 02/24/21 Page 1 of 2

The JS44 civil cover sheet and the information contained herein neither replace nor supplement the filing and service of pleadings or other papers as required by law, except as provided by local rules of court. This form is required for the use of the Clerk of Court for the purpose of initiating the civil docket record. (SEE INSTRUCTIONS ATTACHED)

I. (a) PLAINTIFF(S) Brian R. Dressler		DEFENDANT(S) T&T Lighting Group LLC and Harbinger Marketing, L.L.C.	
(b) COUNTY OF RESIDENCE OF FIRST LISTED PLAINTIFF Richland, SC (EXCEPT IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CASES)		COUNTY OF RESIDENCE OF FIRST LISTED DEFENDANT (IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CASES ONLY) NOTE: IN LAND CONDEMNATION CASES, USE THE LOCATION OF THE TRACT OF LAND	
(c) ATTORNEYS (FIRM NAME, ADDRESS, TELEPHONE NUI	MBER, AND	INVOLVED ATTORNEYS (IF KNOWN)	
Joel B. Rothman SRIPLAW 21301 Powerline Road, Suite 100 Boca Raton, FL 33433 561.404.4350 - Telephone joel.rothman@sriplaw.com			
II. BASIS OF JURISDICTION (PLACE AN "X" IN ONE BOX ONLY)		ZENSHIP OF PRINCIPAL PARTIES N "X" IN ONE BOX FOR PLAINTIFF AND ONE BOX FOR DEFENDANT) (FOR DIVERSITY CASES ONLY)	
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2. Unusually large number of claims or defenses.	_	ding parallel investigations or actions by government.	
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