

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
EASTERN DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA**

-----X		
MALIBU MEDIA, LLC,	:	
	:	
Plaintiff,	:	Civil Action No. 2:12-cv-03145-SD
	:	
vs.	:	
	:	
JOHN DOES 1-38,	:	
	:	
Defendants.	:	
	:	
-----X		

**PLAINTIFF'S MEMORANDUM IN OPPOSITION TO DEFENDANT'S MOTION TO
DISMISS COMPLAINT AGAINST DEFENDANT JOHN DOE #6 AND QUASH
SUBPOENA AGAINST SAME [DKT. #11]**

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I. INTRODUCTION

Plaintiff respectfully requests the Court deny Defendant's Motion because Defendant has not provided a valid reason to quash the subpoena and joinder of the Defendants is proper. This Court has often ruled in favor of plaintiffs in copyright BitTorrent infringement actions, holding that the right to receive the defendant's information outweighs any asserted privacy interests and that joinder is proper. See Raw Films, Ltd. v. John Does 1-15, CIV.A. 11-7248, 2012 WL 1019067 (E.D. Pa. Mar. 26, 2012); Patrick Collins Inc. v. John Does 1-18, 2:11-cv-07252-MSG (E.D. Pa. May 7, 2012); Malibu Media, LLC v. John Does 1-15, CIV.A. 12-2077, 2012 WL 3089383 (E.D. Pa. July 30, 2012); Malibu Media, LLC v. John Does 1-18, 2:12-cv-02095-LDD (E.D. Pa. Aug. 6, 2012); Malibu Media, LLC v. John Does 1-22, 2:12-cv-02083-CDJ (E.D. Pa. July 30, 2012). "There is extensive caselaw supporting Plaintiff's actions in this case and precluding the Motion's requested relief. Plaintiff's copyright infringement action is contemplated by modern law and shall proceed." Id.

Other courts in the Third Circuit have reached similar conclusions. See K-Beech, Inc. v. John Does 1-39, 2:11-cv-04776-FSH-PS, (D.N.J. Jan. 6, 2012) ("Plaintiff's interest in discovering Defendants' identities outweighs Defendants' interests in remaining anonymous. Accordingly, the Court finds that Plaintiff is entitled to the information in the subpoenas provided to the ISPs so that it may effect proper service upon Defendants once their identities are discovered."); see also Patrick Collins Inc., v. John Does 1-43, 2:11-cv-04203-FSH-PS (D. N.J. Jan 6, 2012) ("Plaintiff has also sufficiently alleged a central need for the subpoenaed

information to advance the claim as it seems there is no other way for Plaintiff to obtain the information it seeks in order to go forward with its copyright infringement claim.”)

At this stage of the litigation process, Plaintiff has no other option but to file suit against the owners of these IP addresses to obtain the infringers identity. If this Court were to follow Defendant’s rationale, Plaintiff would have no recourse against the mass copyright infringement it suffers on a daily basis. Any such holding would be contrary to existing law and the express policy of Congress. In 1999 Congress intentionally amended the Copyright Act to deter individuals from infringing copyrights on the internet by increasing the statutory remedies:

Congress did contemplate that suits like this [against individuals] were within the Act. Congress last amended the Copyright Act in 1999 to increase the minimum and maximum awards available under § 504(c). See Digital Theft Deterrence and Copyright Damages Improvement Act of 1999, Pub. L. No. 106-160, 113 Stat. 1774. At the time, Congress specifically acknowledged that consumer-based, noncommercial use of copyrighted materials constituted actionable copyright infringement. Congress found that ‘copyright piracy of intellectual property flourishes, assisted in large part by today’s world of advanced technologies,’ and cautioned that ‘the potential for this problem to worsen is great.’

Sony v. Tennenbaum, 2011 WL 4133920 at *11 (1st Cir. 2011) (emphasis added).

II. JOINDER IS PROPER

Fed. R. Civ. P. 20 permits joinder when plaintiffs “assert any right to relief jointly, severally, or in the alternative with respect to or arising out of the same transaction, occurrence, or series of transactions or occurrences; and any question of law or fact common to all plaintiffs will arise in the action.” Rule 20(a) not only permits permissive joinder when there is the same transaction or occurrence, it also permits joinder when a Plaintiff has pled (a) “series of transactions or occurrences” or (b) joint or several liability. Plaintiff has done both here.

Recently this Court, consistent with the above analysis, issued an opinion stating that joinder was proper because the claims against each Defendant are logically related and clearly contain common questions of law and fact.

After considering the parties' filings in the present matter, we find that severance would be inappropriate at this time. Plaintiff's allegation that Defendants downloaded and shared the same file, were part of the same swarm, and are contributorily liable for each others' infringement is sufficient to establish, at this stage of the proceedings, that the claims against each Defendant are logically related and therefore arise out of the same transaction, occurrence, or series of transactions and occurrences. Further, Plaintiff's infringement claims against each Defendant clearly contain common questions of law and fact. While we recognize that each Defendant may later present different factual and legal defenses, that does not defeat the commonality that supports joinder at this stage. Therefore, Defendant's motion to sever will be denied without prejudice.

Patrick Collins Inc. v. John Does 1-18, 2:11-cv-07252-MSG, *3 (E.D. Pa. May 7, 2012).

A. The Infringement Occurred Through a Series of Transactions

For the word "series" to have any meaning in Rule 20(a), the rule must permit joinder to be proper when there is something other than a direct transaction. "Series" has been interpreted by Circuit Courts to mean a "logically related" fact pattern.

[A]ll 'logically related' events entitling a person to institute a legal action against another generally are regarded as comprising a transaction or occurrence. The analogous interpretation of the terms as used in Rule 20 would permit all reasonably related claims for relief by or against different parties to be tried in a single proceeding. Absolute identity of all events is unnecessary.

Mosley v. Gen. Motors Corp., 497 F.2d 1330, 1333 (8th Cir. 1974).

While the logical relationship test does not require it, should this matter go to trial, Plaintiff will prove that the Defendants' infringement was committed through the same transaction or through a series of transactions with mathematical certainty by demonstrating, *inter alia*, that the algorithm used by BitTorrent Trackers would have caused the entire series of transactions to be different but for each of the Defendants' infringements.

Judge Randon, in the Eastern District of Michigan, properly analyzed the facts in a near identical case, expanding substantial effort to understand the allegations in the complaint and the applicable law. Judge Randon summarized the plaintiff's allegation asserting that each Defendant copied the same piece of the same file as follows:

Plaintiff alleges that its investigator ("IPP") was able to download at least one piece of the copyrighted Movie from each Defendant (Dkt. No. 1 at 8–10). It is important to understand the implications of this allegation before determining whether joinder is proper. If IPP downloaded a piece of Plaintiff's copyrighted Movie from each Defendant (and, conversely, each Defendant uploaded at least one piece of the Movie to IPP) then each Defendant had at least one piece of the Movie—traceable via Hash Identifier to the same Initial Seeder—on his or her computer and allowed other peers to download pieces of the Movie.

By way of illustration: IPP's computer connected with a tracker, got the IP address of each of Defendants' computers, connected with each Defendants' computer, and downloaded at least one piece of the Movie from each Defendants' computer. During this transaction, IPP's computer verified that each Defendants' piece of the Movie had the expected Hash; otherwise, the download would not have occurred.

Patrick Collins, Inc. v. John Does 1-21, CIV.A. 11-15232, 2012 WL 1190840, at *4-5 (E.D. Mich. Apr. 5, 2012). Significantly, Judge Randon then explained through the force of clear deductive logic that each Defendant obtained the piece of plaintiff's movie in one of four ways all of which relate directly back to one individual seed.

If Plaintiffs allegations are true, each Defendant must have downloaded the piece(s) each had on his or her computer in one, or more, of the following four ways:

- 1) the Defendant connected to and transferred a piece of the Movie **from the initial seeder**; or
- 2) the Defendant connected to and transferred a piece of the Movie **from a seeder** who downloaded the completed file from the initial seeder or from other peers; or
- 3) the Defendant connected to and transferred a piece of the Movie **from other Defendants** who downloaded from the initial seeder or from other peers; or
- 4) the Defendant connected to and transferred a piece of the Movie **from other peers** who downloaded from other Defendants, other peers, other Seeders, or the Initial Seeder.

In other words, in the universe of possible transactions, at some point, each Defendant downloaded a piece of the Movie, which had been transferred through

a series of uploads and downloads from the Initial Seeder, through other users or directly, to each Defendant, and finally to IPP.

Id. Having limited the universe to four possibilities the court correctly concluded the transaction was logically related.

Therefore, each Defendant is logically related to every other Defendant because they were all part of a series of transactions linked to a unique Initial Seeder and to each other. This relatedness arises not merely because of their common use of the BitTorrent protocol, but because each Defendant affirmatively chose to download the same Torrent file that was created by the same initial seeder, intending to: 1) utilize other users' computers to download pieces of the same Movie, and 2) allow his or her own computer to be used in the infringement by other peers and Defendants in the same swarm.

Id.

i. The Supreme Court Encourages Joinder

“Under the Rules, the impulse is toward entertaining the broadest possible scope of action consistent with fairness to the parties; joinder of claims, parties and remedies is strongly encouraged.” United Mine Workers of Am. v. Gibbs, 383 U.S. 715, 724 (1966). In United States v. Mississippi, 380 U.S. 128 (1965) the Supreme Court found that the joinder of six defendants, election registrars of six different counties, was proper because the allegations were all based on the same state-wide system designed to enforce the voter registration laws in a way that would deprive African Americans of the right to vote. Although the complaint did not allege that the registrars directly interacted with each other, or even that they knew of each other's actions, or that each other's actions directly affected each other in any way, the Supreme Court interpreted Rule 20 to hold a right to relief severally because the series of transactions were related and contained a common law and fact. Id. at 142-143.

[T]he complaint charged that the registrars had acted and were continuing to act as part of a state-wide system designed to enforce the registration laws in a way that would inevitably deprive colored people of the right to vote solely because of

their color. On such an allegation the joinder of all the registrars as defendants in a single suit is authorized by Rule 20(a) of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure.

Id. at 142. Indeed, the Supreme Court held all of the defendants were joined properly because they were all acting on the basis of the same system which created a transactional relatedness.

Likewise, in the case at hand, it is not necessary for each of the defendants to have directly interacted with each other defendant, or have shared a piece of the file with each and every defendant when downloading the movie. The defendants are properly joined because their actions directly relate back to the same initial seed of the swarm, and their alleged infringement further advances the series of infringements that began with that initial seed and continued through other infringers. In doing so, the Defendants all acted under the same exact system. Just as it was not alleged in United States v. Mississippi that the registrars shared with each other their efforts to prevent African Americans from voting, it is not necessary for the defendants to have shared the pieces of the movie with each other. It is sufficient that the defendants shared pieces that originated from the same exact file, and opened their computer to allow others to connect and receive these pieces.

B. The Time Period For Infringement

The nature of the BitTorrent protocol provides for continuous seeding and distributing of the movie long after it has downloaded. Without stopping the program by physically unchecking the automatic seeding, an alleged infringer likely will seed and distribute a movie for an extended period of time. As the Eastern District of Michigan explained the technology, even after an infringer has completed a download of the movie, he or she may distribute the movie for weeks after having received the download.

[I]t is not that an infringer would wait six weeks to receive the Movie, it is that the infringer receives the Movie in a few hours and then leaves his or her computer on with the Client Program uploading the Movie to other peers for six weeks.

Because the Client Program's default setting (unless disabled) is to begin uploading a piece as soon as it is received and verified against the expected Hash, it is not difficult to believe that a Defendant who downloaded the Movie on day one, would have uploaded the Movie to another Defendant or peer six weeks later. This consideration, however, is irrelevant since concerted action is not required for joinder.

Patrick Collins, Inc. v. John Does 1-21, 2012 WL 1190840 (E.D. Mich. Apr. 5, 2012). Here, Plaintiff's investigator received a piece of the movie from the defendants when they were allegedly distributing it to others.

The Southern District of New York, recognizing that the concept of joinder is adaptable to changing technological landscapes, stated, "[w]hile the period at issue may therefore appear protracted by ordinary standards, the doctrine of joinder must be able to adapt to the technologies of our time." Malibu Media, LLC v. John Does 1-5, 12 CIV. 2954 NRB, 2012 WL 3641291 (S.D.N.Y. Aug. 24, 2012). "[T]he law of joinder does not have as a precondition that there be temporal distance or temporal overlap; it is enough that the alleged BitTorrent infringers participated in the same series of uploads and downloads in the same swarm." Patrick Collins, Inc. v. John Does 1-21, 2012 WL 1190840 (E.D. Mich. Apr. 5, 2012.)

C. Joinder is Proper Because Plaintiff Properly Pled Defendants Were Jointly and Severally Liable

Joinder is proper when a plaintiff pleads joint and several liability. See Genetic Technologies Ltd. v. Agilent Technologies, Inc., 11-CV-01389-WJM-KLM, 2012 WL 1060040 (D. Colo. Mar. 28, 2012) ("It is uncontested that Plaintiff does not assert joint or several liability here, which would be a separate basis for joinder.")

Rule 20(a) provides for "any right to relief jointly, severally, or in the alternative". In this case Plaintiff pled both joint and several liability.

Relief May be Sought “Jointly, Severally, or in the Alternative”: It is *not* necessary that each plaintiff or defendant be involved in every claim set forth in the complaint. Thus, for example, if there are several plaintiffs (e.g., driver and passenger in auto accident), each may seek *separate* relief. Likewise, if there are several defendants, relief may be sought against each of them separately, or against all of them jointly. [FRCP 20(a); *Dougherty v. Mieczkowski* (D DE 1987) 661 F.Supp. 267, 278]

Cal. Prac. Guide Fed. Civ. Pro. Before Trial Ch. 7-D. “[C]oncert of action, *i.e.*, a right to relief jointly, is not a precondition of joinder. Plaintiff asserts a right to relief jointly against Defendants *and* severally. Therefore, the first clause of Rule 20(a)(2)(A) is satisfied by the assertion of a right severally.” *Patrick Collins, Inc. v. John Does 1-21*, CIV.A. 11-15232, 2012 WL 1190840, at *8 (E.D. Mich. Apr. 5, 2012).

By requiring defendants to directly interact with each other, the Court would require the defendants to be jointly liable with each other. Because Rule 20 provides that a party may be joined if the claims against them are either jointly or severally liable, the requirement that defendants directly shared pieces of the movie with each other contradicts the language of Rule 20.

A right to relief against defendants jointly requires concerted action by two or more parties. A right to relief severally against defendants means that each right to relief is separate and distinct from defendant to defendant and no interaction among the defendants is required. An ‘alternative’ right to relief may be asserted when plaintiff knows one of the defendants is liable, but does not know which one. 4 Moore’s Federal Practice § 20.03. Plaintiff asserts a right to relief against Defendants jointly and a right to relief severally; however, a right to relief against the Defendants severally alone is sufficient to satisfy the first clause of Rule 20.

Id. (Emphasis added).

D. There Are Common Issues of Fact and Law

Rule 20(a)(2)(B) requires the plaintiffs’ claims against the putative defendants to contain a common question of law or fact. “The Plaintiff meets this requirement. In each case, the

Plaintiff will have to establish against each putative defendant the same legal claims concerning the validity of the copyrights in the movies at issue and the infringement of the exclusive rights reserved to the plaintiffs as copyright holders.” Nu Image, Inc. v. Does 1-3, 932, 2:11-CV-545-FTM-29, 2012 WL 1255189 (M.D. Fla. Apr. 12, 2012). The “factual issues related to how BitTorrent works and the methods used by plaintiffs to investigate, uncover and collect evidence about the infringing activity will be essentially identical for each putative defendant.” Call of the Wild Movie v. Does 1-1,062, 770 F. Supp. 2d 332, 344-345 (D.D.C. 2011).

E. Joinder Promotes Judicial Efficiency and Doe Defendants Cannot Demonstrate Prejudice At This Stage

Joinder of the defendants creates judicial efficiency, particularly at this stage of the litigation process and is not prejudicial to the Doe Defendants. “The Court finds that joinder, at this stage of the litigation, will not prejudice any party and will promote judicial efficiency.” Patrick Collins, Inc. v. John Does 1-33, 11-CV-02163-CMA-MJW, 2012 WL 415424 (D. Colo. Feb. 8, 2012).

The Eastern District of Pennsylvania has addressed this issue and stated, “consolidating early discovery for the purpose of determining the scope of claims and defenses will foster judicial economy. Should that process reveal disparate defenses as to each party, the Court would consider such a fact relevant on a later review of joinder’s propriety.” Raw Films, Ltd. v. John Does 1-15, CIV.A. 11-7248, 2012 WL 1019067 (E.D. Pa. Mar. 26, 2012).

III. THIS COURT SHOULD NOT QUASH THE SUBPOENA

This Court should not quash the subpoena because Plaintiff’s need for the information to pursue its copyright infringement claim outweighs any privacy interest Defendant may have. See Malibu Media, LLC v. John Does 1-15, CIV.A. 12-2077, 2012 WL 3089383, *8 (E.D. Pa. July 30, 2012) (“An internet user engaging in peer to peer file sharing has a minimum

expectation of privacy"). In Malibu, the Court went on to explain that opening one's computer to the world, particularly for the purposes of copyright infringement, does not provide a Defendant with a significant privacy interest. "One court aptly summarized this sentiment by stating that, 'it is hard to understand just what privacy expectation he or she has after essentially opening up the computer to the world.' This expectation is even lower where the alleged transmissions include copyright protected works." Id.

This Court granted Plaintiff limited discovery to serve a subpoena on Defendant's ISP because Plaintiff has no other way to identify the Defendants and proceed with its copyright infringement case against them. Plaintiff has requested only the identifying information of the Defendants from their ISPs.

The Court found good cause for ordering that discovery, *see* Fed.R.Civ.P. 26(b)(1), because the plaintiff showed that a subpoena seeking the subscriber information associated with the allegedly infringing IP addresses would be the only way for the plaintiff to identify the proper defendants in this case and proceed with its claims against them.³ *See* Declaration of Tobias Fieser ¶ 9, 23, Pl.'s Mot. Ex. The information sought is thus highly relevant to the plaintiff's claims.

Raw Films, Ltd. v. John Does 1-15, CIV.A. 11-7248, 2012 WL 1019067, at *6 (E.D. Pa. Mar. 26, 2012). This Court also noted that Fed. R. Civ. P. 26(b)(1) permits parties to obtain discovery of "the identity and location of persons who know of any discoverable matter." Id. at *14. When addressing the issue of whether the infringer is the account holder of the IP address, the Court stated "[t]hese are not grounds on which to quash a subpoena otherwise demonstrated to be proper. The moving Doe may raise these and any other nonfrivolous defenses in the course of litigating the case." Id.

As the Honorable Judge Porcelli held in the Middle District of Florida last month, "[t]he information sought by Plaintiff falls squarely within this broad scope of discovery and is

therefore warranted in this matter.” Malibu Media, LLC v. John Does 1-9, 8:12-cv-669-T-23AEP, *4 (M.D. Fla. July 6, 2012).

Plaintiff has shown that it holds a copyright and that a forensic investigation has revealed potential infringement of its rights in its copyrighted work. Furthermore, Plaintiff has specifically identified the information it seeks through the expedited discovery and shown it has no other means to obtain the information. Any arguments to the contrary are simply without merit.

Id. (Emphasis added).

Clearly the identity of the ISP customer is relevant under Rule 26, in that it is “reasonably calculated” to lead to the identity of the infringer whether it is the ISP customer or some other individual. Therefore, the Court finds that any concern about identifying a potentially innocent ISP customer, who happens to fall within the Plaintiff’s discovery requests upon the ISPs, is minimal and not an issue that would warrant the Court to exercise its inherent power to govern these discovery matters by minimizing or prohibiting the otherwise legitimate, relevant, and probative discovery.

Id. at *5.

Defendant relies on an unpublished opinion from the Northern District of Illinois to support his theory that Plaintiff’s subpoena should be quashed. See Def’s Mot. citing VPR Internationale v. Does 1-1017, 2:11-cv-02068, (C. Ill. March 8, 2011). VPR Internationale involved 1,017 defendants grouped into one case, and lacked personal jurisdiction and venue. This case does not suffer from the same procedural problems.

Defendant also relies heavily on the Eastern District of New York opinion where Judge Brown questioned the likelihood the infringer was the owner of the IP Address. See Def’s Mot. at *13. Plaintiff respectfully disagrees with Magistrate Judge Brown’s opinion and believes that recent technological advances make it more likely that a wireless account will be secured and can easily be traced to a household where the subscriber either is the infringer or knows the infringer. Further, that Defendant suggests that a subscriber of an IP address cannot identify the

infringer who was using this IP address flies in the face of reason. Recently, PC Magazine published an article regarding the scarcity of open wireless signals. "These days, you are lucky to find one in 100 Wi-Fi connections that are not protected by passwords of some sort."¹ The author continues to explain why routers are now more likely to be secured. "The reason for the change is simple: the router manufacturers decided to make users employ security with the set-up software. As people upgrade to newer, faster routers, the wide-open WiFi golden era came to an end."² This article, published on March 26, 2012, runs contrary to Judge Brown's assertions and supports the idea that most households do have closed, protected wireless that are not likely to be used by a neighbor or interloper.

Further, Plaintiff uses the same process as Federal Law Enforcement to identify cyber crimes. In a Statement of Deputy Assistant Attorney General Jason Weinstein before the Senate Judiciary on Privacy, Technology and the Law, he discusses how Federal law enforcement use IP addresses to identify an individual.

When a criminal uses a computer to commit crimes, law enforcement may be able, through lawful legal process, to identify the computer or subscriber account based on its IP address. This information is essential to identifying offenders, locating fugitives, thwarting cyber intrusions, protecting children from sexual exploitation and neutralizing terrorist threats.³

While, as Defendant suggests, this process may not be 100% accurate, it is the most accurate and likely way to identify the person responsible for the use of that IP address. Indeed, it is the only way.

¹ See Free Wi-Fi is Gone Forever www.pcmag.com/article2/0,2817,2402137,00.asp.

² Id.

³ Statement of Deputy Assistant Attorney General Jason Weinstein Before the Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on Privacy, Technology and the Law available at www.justice.gov.

This court directly addressed whether an IP address was sufficient to identify the infringer.

The Court acknowledges that Verizon's compliance with the subpoena may not directly reveal the identity of an infringer. Indeed, the subscriber information Verizon discloses will only reveal the account holder's information, and it may be that a third party used that subscriber's IP address to commit the infringement alleged in this case.

Raw Films, Ltd. v. John Does 1-15, CIV.A. 11-7248, 2012 WL 1019067 (E.D. Pa. Mar. 26, 2012). (Internal citations omitted). The Court went on to note that while the IP address did not guarantee the subscriber was the infringer, "[t]he subpoena is specific enough to give rise to a reasonable likelihood that information facilitating service upon proper defendants will be disclosed if the ISPs comply." Id.

A. Plaintiff Has A Proper Purpose

The online theft of Plaintiff's property greatly damages its business, products, and reputation. Accordingly, Plaintiff Malibu Media's motivation for bringing these suits is quite simply to hold the infringers liable for their theft and by so doing hopefully deter the future theft of its movies. Malibu Media puts forth extensive time and effort to stop infringement of its movies on the Internet. In addition to filing these suits, Malibu Media also employs staff whose sole responsibility is to issue take down notices and prevent the widespread access to infringing titles. Indeed, Malibu Media makes a substantial effort to reduce the number of torrents available by issuing take down notices to infringing torrent sites. Some sites refuse to comply, hiding off shore in unknown locations in countries that do not abide by US law. Defendant's assertions that Plaintiff Malibu Media has any purpose other than to stop infringement are both unwarranted, incorrect, and offensive. Malibu Media would like nothing more than for those

thousands of residents in this district that are infringing its movies on a monthly basis feel it necessary to legally purchase its content. Without filing suits like the one before this Court and educating the public that Malibu Media will not tolerate the infringement of its titles, Malibu Media fears it will lose its business and valuable copyrights to infringement.

During her time as Register of Copyright, Mary Beth Peters explained the rights of copyright holders in peer-to-peer infringement actions to the Senate Judiciary Committee. "The law is unambiguous. Using peer-to-peer networks to copy or distribute copyrighted works without permission is infringement and copyright owners have every right to invoke the power of the courts to combat such activity. Every court that has addressed the issue has agreed that this activity is infringement."⁴ Ms. Peters further explained the significant need for exactly the type of copyright infringement claims that are before this Court:

[F]or some users of peer-to-peer technology, even knowledge that what they are doing is illegal will not be a sufficient disincentive to engage in such conduct. But whether or not these infringers know or care that it is against the law, the knowledge that such conduct may lead to expensive and burdensome litigation and a potentially large judgment should have a healthy deterrent effect. While we would like to think that everyone obeys the law simply because it is the law and out of a sense of obligation, we also know that laws without penalties may be widely ignored. For many people, the best form of education about copyright in the internet world is the threat of litigation. In short, if you break the law, you should be prepared to accept the consequences. Copyright owners have every right to enforce their rights in court, whether they are taking action against providers of peer-to-peer services designed to profit from copyright infringement or against the persons engaging in individual acts of infringement using such services.

Id. (Emphasis added). Earlier this month, the Middle District of Florida issued a well reasoned opinion that outlines all of the concerns presented by the Defendant in this case. Ultimately, the

⁴ Pornography, Technology, and Process: Problems and Solutions on Peer-to-Peer Networks Statement of Marybeth Peters The Register of Copyrights before the Committee on the Judiciary 108th Cong. (2003) available at <http://www.copyright.gov/docs/regstat090903.html>

Court held that "the John Doe Defendants are requesting the Court create a special exception under the Copyright Act for cases such as this in which the copyrighted material contains pornography. The Court is simply not inclined to take such an inappropriate action." Malibu Media, LLC v. John Does 1-9, 8:12-cv-669-T-23AEP, *4 (M.D. Fla. July 6, 2012) (Ex. A).

B. Plaintiff's Settlements are Proper

Defendant's motion regarding improper settlement tactics is based entirely on hearsay from what he has "heard" on the internet. Based upon this information, without any factual support, Defendant then mischaracterizes Plaintiff's purpose for engaging in settlement activities, suggesting that simply the fact that a Defendant in litigation may be offered a settlement constitutes improper litigation tactics. Prior to actually proceeding against defendants, it is proper to contact them to discuss settlement options. The only difference between this case and the countless others filed every day by other plaintiffs in a broad array of civil litigation is that the Plaintiff does not have the ability to identify the defendants before the suit is filed.

[T]he John Doe Defendants' argument is misguided in that this type of case creates special circumstances that would require judicial review of any motivation to settle, and the Court is not inclined to create a special proceeding to inform any particular John Doe Defendant of a right which is obviously commonly known, i.e. his or her right to defend and litigate this lawsuit.

Id. at *7.

The Supreme Court has stated that public policy favors resolutions through settlement. "Rule 68's policy of encouraging settlements is neutral, favoring neither plaintiffs nor defendants; it expresses a clear policy of favoring settlement of all lawsuits." Marek v. Chesny 473 U.S. 1, 11 (1985). Further, Plaintiff has a First Amendment right under the petition clause to make the demand. See Sosa v. DirectTV, 437 F. 3d 923, 937 (9th Cir. 2006) (holding "the

protections of the Petition Clause extend to settlement demands as a class," including those made during and prior to a suit.)

Recently, the Eastern District of Michigan addressed this issue, noting that a Defendant had provided no specific facts to support its claim that Plaintiff's purpose was to scare up settlements. See Third Degree Films v. Does 1-36, 11-CV-15200 (E.D. Mich. May 29, 2012).

To the extent that it is independent, the Court notes that while Defendant claims that this suit was brought only to scare up settlements (Def.'s Mot. to Sever at 2, 11), Defendant has offered no case-specific facts supporting this claim. Rather, Defendant relies on the conduct of adult-film companies in other cases. This guilt-by-association argument does not justify quashing the subpoena that this Plaintiff, Third Degree Films, served on Defendant's ISP pursuant to an Order entered by Judge Murphy allowing this discovery.

Id. (Emphasis added). Just as in Third Degree, Defendant is attempting to influence this Court to make a decision based on accusations in other cases involving other counsel in other districts. Indeed, Defendant cites to cases that can only refer to vague, anecdotal accusations of improper settlement tactics. These erroneous conclusions are propagated by anti-copyright blogs as a suggested defense strategy. While Defendant goes to substantial effort to decry Plaintiff's purpose and settlement attempts, Defendant cannot provide any evidence of improperly holding a defendant to account.

IV. Plaintiff Does Not Object to a Filing Defendant's Name Under Seal

Plaintiff does not object to a Protective Order that would require Defendant's name to be filed under seal until judgment is entered against him. Plaintiff does, however, object to a protective order to the extent it prevents Plaintiff from receiving the identity of the Doe Defendant. Plaintiff believes that without obtaining the identity of the Defendant, Plaintiff cannot properly proceed with its claim for copyright infringement. If the Court were to allow Defendant to proceed anonymously, and prevent Plaintiff from receiving the identity of the Doe

Defendant, Plaintiff will not know whom it is serving. Additionally, Plaintiff will be unable to verify any of the defenses asserted by the Defendant and will be disadvantaged in the discovery process. Ultimately, Plaintiff will be severely prejudiced and face countless procedural difficulties.

V. **CONCLUSION**

For the foregoing reasons, Plaintiff respectfully requests that the Court deny the subject motion.

DATED this 4th day of September, 2012

Respectfully submitted,

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CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that on September 4, 2012, I electronically filed the foregoing document with the Clerk of the Court using CM/ECF and that service was perfected on all counsel of record and interested parties through this system.

By: */s/ Christopher P. Fiore*