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15	UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA		
16 17			
18	ASIA ECONOMIC INSTITUTE, LLC, et al.,	Case No: 2:10-cv-01360-SVW-PJW	
19 20	Plaintiffs,	DEFENDANTS' RESPONSE TO PLAINTIFFS' STATEMENT OF	
21 22 23	vs. XCENTRIC VENTURES, LLC, <i>et al</i> . Defendants.	ADDITIONAL FACTS Hearing Date: June 28, 2010 Time: 1:30 PM Courtroom: 6 (Hon. Stephen Wilson)	
24]	
25	Pursuant to Fed. R. Civ. P 56, Defendants Xcentric Ventures, LLC and Edward		
26	Magedson respectfully submit the following response to Plaintiffs Statement of		
27	Additional Facts.		
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FACT(S)	RESPONSE
1. Defendants' Web site, Ripoff Report, is a "consumer	
reporting Web site and publication, by consumers, for	Undisputed
consumers, to file and document complaints about	
companies or individuals."	
2. Only complaints are published. Positive reports will not be posted.	Disputed but irrelevant and immaterial; misstates testimony of Ms. Brast who testified that positive statements can be posted as a "comment or a reply." Brast Decl. ¶ 10.
3. To draft a complaint, users of the Defendants' Web site are guided through a five-step process.	Undisputed
4. In Step 1 the Web site requires users to input certain information about the business or individual that is the target of the report such as its name, address, and telephone number.	Undisputed
5. In Step 2, the Web site requires users to create a "title" for their report. The title is composed of four parts: (1) the name of the company or individual that is the target of the report, (2) a "creative" description of the target's alleged wrongdoing, (3) the city in which the target is located.	Undisputed
6. Later in Step 2, the user is required to categorize the complaint into one of many predetermined categories such as "Con Artists" and "Court Judges."	Undisputed that a user must choose a category and topic for his/her report; remaining "facts" misstate the testimony of Ben Smith but are otherwise irrelevant and immaterial.

actions.

and Customer Satisfaction Program." The program, as described by Mr. Magedson's email, promised to change "the negative listings on search engines into a positive along with all the Reports on Rip-off Report."
change "the negative listings on search engines into a
positive along with all the Reports on Rip-off Report."
Mobrez never threatened to sue Mr. Magedson or his
company; yet, the email warned that a lawsuit against
the Web site was a losing battle. The email boasted that
the Web site "NEVER lost a case" and that suing would
"only get [us] more publicity and additional listings on
search engines."
24. This e-mail is one of two standard e-mails sent to
targeted businesses and individuals who express interest Undisputed
in removing or remedying the reports.
25. The hyperlink included in the May 12, 2009 e-mail Undisputed that the email
from Mr. Magedson directed Mr. Mobrez to apply for from Mr. Magedson
Defendants' Corporate Advocacy Program. The contains a link to a form with certain questions;
application form requires targeted businesses or disputed that Defendants have "published" any
individuals to fill in certain information, such as the complaints because
name of the business/individual, number of offices, Defendants may not be treated as the publisher of
average sales, and the number of complaints published such information. See 47
by the Defendants. U.S.C. § 230(c)(1).
26. Once this application is completed, applicants are
sent a second generic e-mail. Among other things, the e- Undisputed that CAP
mail demonstrates that title and description meta tags of applicants are sent a second email, the contents
all reports regarding CAP members are changed. The e- of which speak for
mail states: "See how other Corporate Advocacy themselves.
Program member listing look on search engines. Then

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	M 1 7 0	
product or service. According to the Defendants' rate	Magedson In Support of Defendants' Reply Re:	
sheet, Defendants "will look at the average cost of the	Motion for Summary Judgment at ¶¶ 5–8	
product you sell (that was complained about) or the cost		
of the service you may provide and multiply that times		
an amount equal to one month of sales (in other words,		
your average monthly revenue from the product) as the		
down payment plus \$5,500 programming fee plus % per		
month for minimum 36 months thereafter."		
34. Monthly fees for the CAP must be paid by the 8th		
of each month. If not paid, "all privileges incorporated	Undisputed but irrelevant	
within the Business Remediation Program will cease		
after 30 days."		
35. Had the Plaintiffs been accepted into the CAP, they		
would be required to pay an initial fee of \$11,100	Disputed; this is a hypothetical conclusion, not a "fact" subject to judicial notice pursuant to Fed. R. Evid. 201	
(\$7,500 + \$600 times 6 reports). They would also be		
required to pay \$240 a month for 36 months. At the end		
of these 36 months, Plaintiffs would have spent		
\$19,740.		
36. For this cost, Mr. Magedson sends a generic e-mail		
to the authors of the reports, commending the CAP	Undisputed but irrelevant	
member for wanting to "make it right."		
37. In addition, Mr. Magedon [sic] adds a generic		
statement to the beginning of each report in red, bold	Irrelevant and disputed to the extent this statement is not supported by the cited source.	
lettering. This statement discredits the report and praises		
the CAP member for its dedication to customer		
satisfaction.		
38. The title meta tags of each report are then changed	Undisputed but irrelevant	

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I. ADDITIONAL POINTS

a. The Sham Affidavit Rule Applies

In various places in their Response to Defendants' Separate Statement of Facts, Plaintiffs attempt to create a factual dispute by citing to the "corrected" declaration of Raymond Mobrez dated May 20, 2010 (Doc. #38). Specifically, Plaintiffs rely on Mr. Mobrez's "corrected" declaration as the sole evidence demonstrating the existence of a factual dispute as to each of the following paragraphs in Defendants' Separate Statement of Facts: ¶¶ 26–33, 36, 37, 41–45.

For the most part, these specific facts are merely background points which are not material to Defendants' motion and would not require the motion to be denied even assuming a genuine factual dispute were to exist as to those facts. However, as previously explained in a pleading filed in this matter on May 24, 2010 entitled "Notice Re: Plaintiffs' *Corrected* Declarations" (Doc. #48), a party is not permitted to contradict his own prior testimony in an effort to create a factual dispute to avoid summary judgment; "The general rule in the Ninth Circuit is that a party cannot create an issue of fact by an affidavit contradicting his prior deposition testimony." *Nelson v. City of Davis*, 571 F.3d 924 (9th Cir. 2009) (quoting *Kennedy v. Allied Mutual Insurance Co.*, 952 F.2d 262 (9th Cir.1991)). For this reason, to the extent that any statements made in Mr. Mobrez's "*corrected*" declaration conflict with either his prior deposition testimony given on May 7, 2010 or his earlier declaration dated May 3, 2010, this sham testimony is insufficient to create a genuine factual dispute and cannot be relied upon as a basis for denying summary judgment.

Based on a close review and comparison of Mr. Mobrez's original May 3 declaration, his "corrected" May 20 declaration, and his May 7 deposition testimony, it appears for the most part that only two key areas of testimony would be affected by applying the sham affidavit rule. Specifically, in ¶ 2 of his "corrected" May 20 declaration, Mr. Mobrez states that, "There were a number of calls made by me to Ripoff Report."

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This "corrected" testimony directly conflicts with Mr. Mobrez's original declaration made in response to the court's April 19th order, in which he never identified any "incoming calls" from Ripoff Report. This testimony also directly conflicts with Mr. Mobrez's deposition testimony in which he stated that he had no memory of Mr. Magedson ever calling him on the phone:

[By Mr. Gingras]:

O: Did Mr. Magedson ever call you? So far we've talked about four prior calls, all of which you initiated. Did he ever call you?

[By Mr. Mobrez]:

- I truly don't remember exactly if he ever called back. A:
- O: Okay. And I assume we can have phone records that would determine whether or not that happened. But as you sit here, you don't remember?
- A: No.

May 7, 2010 Deposition of Raymond Mobrez at 246:5–13 (Exhibit A to Doc. #47) (emphasis added). The second area of testimony affected by the application of the sham affidavit rule is ¶ 5 of Mr. Mobrez's "corrected" declaration in which he described a conversation with "someone" in which \$5,000 was discussed. Although this testimony does not implicate Defendants in any wrongdoing, it nevertheless conflicts with the prior testimony of Mr. Mobrez insofar as no such additional conversation was ever disclosed.

For these reasons, Defendants respectfully submit that the sham affidavit rule bars Plaintiffs efforts to create factual disputes as to ¶¶ 26–33, 36, 37, 41–45 of Defendants' Separate Statement of Facts. As such, these facts should each be construed as undisputed for the purposes of summary judgment.

b. Plaintiffs' Non-Disclosure Arguments Re: The Identity Of Anonymous **Authors Are Groundless**

In various places throughout their response to Defendants' Separate Statement of Facts, Plaintiffs complain that information about the true identity of the anonymous authors who created the reports about AEI has not been disclosed by Defendants. For

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example, in ¶¶ 64–66, 68, 72, 74 & 75, Plaintiffs attempt to dispute the asserted factual matters noting, "Defendants have not yet disclosed the identity of the posters."

This objection is disingenuous and misleading because it implies that Plaintiffs have actually requested such information when, in fact, they have not. To date, Plaintiffs have never asked Defendants to produce information that would identify any author of any reports about Plaintiffs on the Ripoff Report website.

Although such information might ordinarily appear to be subject to the compulsory disclosure obligations of Rule 26, this is not the case because information concerning the true identity of an anonymous author is privileged and confidential under the First Amendment. This issue has been the subject of substantial litigation in Arizona. See Mobilisa v. Doe, 217 Ariz. 103, 114–15, 170 P.3d 712, 723–24 (Ariz.App. 2007) (finding identity of anonymous author was protected under First Amendment and could not be compelled without notice to the author and additional requirements); Best Western Int'l, Inc. v. Doe, 2006 WL 2091695, *3 (D.Ariz. 2006) (same). California courts have also determined that the First Amendment protects the right to anonymous speech. See Highfields Capital Mgmt., L.P. v. Doe, 385 F.Supp.2d 969 (N.D.Cal. 2005) (granting motion to quash subpoena seeking identity of anonymous Internet author where requesting party failed to demonstrate viable claims against the author).

These issues have been fully discussed with Plaintiffs' counsel. If Plaintiffs wish to obtain the identity of any of the authors of reports appearing on the Ripoff Report website, they are obligated to, among other things, provide notice of such a request to each author and to demonstrate compliance with the standards set forth in Mobilisa and/or Highfields Capital. To date, Plaintiffs have made no efforts of any kind to fulfill these obligations, nor have Plaintiffs asked Defendants to disclose the identity of each other. For those reasons, unless and until Plaintiffs satisfy the legal requirements for obtaining this information, they are not entitled to breach the First Amendment's veil of anonymity as to each author and their lack of diligence in pursing this information does not create a genuine factual dispute as to whether summary judgment is proper.

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c. Plaintiffs' Non-Disclosure Arguments Re: Defendants' Cell Phone **Records Are Groundless**

Finally, Plaintiffs attempt to dispute ¶¶ 47–50 of Defendants' Separate Statement of Facts which relate to the absence of any additional conversations between Mr. Mobrez and Mr. Magedson other than the six recorded calls which are described in Defendants' Motion for Summary Judgment. The primary and/or sole basis for the alleged dispute is that "Plaintiffs have not yet received Mr. Magedson's cell phone records"

As with the anonymous author issue, this position is groundless and disingenuous because Plaintiffs have never requested any cell phone records from Mr. Magedson or Plaintiffs cannot legitimately complain about the lack of disclosure of Xcentric. information which they have not requested and which, in any case, would not contain any information to support Plaintiffs' position.

As noted above, in his declaration dated May 3, 2010, Mr. Mobrez never identified any conversations with Mr. Magedson other than the ones which Mr. Mobrez initiated and which were automatically recorded by Xcentric. Moreover, in his deposition Mr. Mobrez confirmed that he had no memory of any incoming calls from Mr. Magedson, and Mr. Magedson confirmed that fact in ¶ 37 of his affidavit filed in support of Defendants' motion in which he stated that he never called Mr. Mobrez. uncontested facts show there is no genuine dispute as to the existence of any additional conversations between Mr. Mobrez and Mr. Magedson. As such, Plaintiffs cannot avoid summary judgment by complaining about the non-disclosure of phone records which they have had ample opportunity to obtain but which they have never requested.

DATED June 23, 2010.

GINGRAS LAW OFFICE, PLLC

/S/ David S. Gingras David S. Gingras Attorneys for Defendants Ed Magedson and Xcentric Ventures, LLC

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DEFENDANTS' RESPONSE TO PLAINTIFFS'
STATEMENT OF ADDITIONAL FACTS