Rupa Marya v. Warner Chappell Music Inc

Doc. 101 Att. 8

HAVING FOUND GOOD CAUSE APPEARING in Plaintiffs', Good Morning To You Productions Corp., Robert Siegel, Rupa Marya, and Majar Productions, LLC ("Plaintiffs"), Notice of Motion, Plaintiffs' and Defendants', Warner/Chappell Music, Inc. and Summy-Birchard, Inc. ("Defendants"), Local Rule 37-2 Joint Stipulation Regarding Plaintiffs' Motion for an Order: (i) Compelling Defendants to Produce Documents Identified in Privilege Log, or (ii) Extending Discovery Cutoff Deadline to Permit the Court to Conduct *In Camera* Inspection/Review of the Documents, the declarations in support thereof, all written and oral evidence, supplemental memoranda of law, the operative pleadings, and arguments of counsel presented at the hearing conducted on June 25, 2014, at 9:30 a.m. by the Honorable Michael R. Wilner in department H-9th Floor of the above-entitled court, the Courts makes the following findings:

Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law

- 1. Defendants were properly served with Plaintiffs' First Set of Requests for Production of Documents (the "Document Requests") on February 12, 2014, which contained only twelve separate requests;
- 2. Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 34(b)(2)(A) requires that a party to whom a request to produce documents, electronically stored information, or tangible things is directed, respond in writing within 30 days of being served; thus, Defendants responses were originally due on or before March 12, 2014;
- 3. Rule 34(a)(1) requires that a party produce or make available for inspection all information that is within the "party's possession, custody, or control";
- 4. After requesting, and receiving, an extension of time comply with the requirements of Rule 34, Defendants served their written Objections and Responses to Plaintiffs' Document Requests (the "Objections")

- on March 27, 2014, but did not produce any responsive documents at that time;
- 5. On April 11, 2014, approximately 60 days after the date Plaintiffs personally served their Document Requests, Defendants produced 1104 pages of responsive documents to Plaintiffs, bearing bates numbers WC000001-1103 (the "April 11 Production");
- 6. Defendants' April 11 Production failed to include any redacted documents or the required privilege log of the documents they were withholding on the basis of any claim of protection under the attorney-client privilege or the attorney work product doctrine;
- 7. Despite promising to deliver a privilege log sooner, Defendants waited until May 9, 2014, *another* 30 days, to supplement their original production of documents with approximately 800 additional pages of documents which included certain redacted documents and contemporaneously produced a redaction log and 42-page privilege log, which vaguely described 157 documents that Defendants asserted as privileged communications and thus not discoverable;
- 8. Plaintiffs did not receive Defendants' supplemental production of documents until May 13, 2014, but in the interim, began their review of the items in Defendants' redaction and privilege logs;
- 9. On May 12, 13, and 14, 2014, Plaintiffs' counsel wrote to Defendants' counsel asserting that given the unjustifiable delay between the service of Defendants' Objections on March 27, 2014, and the service of their privilege log on May 9, 2014, effectively waived any and all claims of privilege asserted by Defendants regarding the withheld documents;

- 10. Defendants' Objections to Plaintiffs' Document Requests are incomplete and, therefore, constitute a failure to respond under Rule 37(a)(4);
- 11. In addition, the Court agrees with Plaintiffs that Defendants' descriptions of the documents withheld as privileged communications are inadequate, overly vague, and provide virtually no information that is required for a party, let alone the Court, to properly assess their claims of privilege especially given that a great number of these documents appear to have been authored, addressed, or provided to a numerous third-parties.

ORDER

THEREFORE, based upon the foregoing Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law, Plaintiffs' Motion (Dkt.) is hereby GRANTED in part, and DENIED in part without prejudice, as follows:

- 1. Having failed to provide a timely and complete privilege log,
 Defendants shall produce unredacted copies of all documents
 identified on the Privilege Log within three (3) days from the date of
 the Order; or in the alternative
- 2. Defendants are ORDERED to provide this Court with all 157 withheld documents for an *in camera* inspection within two days of entry of this Order;
- 3. Discovery cutoff is hereby extended as to this limited discovery dispute until the Court completes its review of Defendants' documents and makes a further ruling on the issue; and
- 4. The Court DENIES WITHOUT PREJUDICE Plaintiffs' Motion to the extent it seeks an order declaring that Defendants' have waived any claims of privilege by their dilatory conduct in asserting same, but

reserves the right modify this decision after completion of the in camera review. IT IS SO ORDERED. Dated: HON. MICHAEL R. WILNER UNITED STATES DISTRICT **COURT** MAGISTRATE JUDGE WARNER/CHAPPELL:20878v2