Continental Appliances Inc v. John Doe

Doc. 1

Plaintiff Continental Appliances, Inc. (hereinafter "Continental") hereby alleges as follows against Defendant John Doe (hereinafter "Defendant") based upon actual knowledge with respect to Plaintiff and Plaintiff's acts, and upon information and belief as to all other matters.

PARTIES

- 1. Plaintiff Continental Appliances, Inc. is a corporation organized and existing under the laws of the State of California and has a principal place of business at 660 West Lambert Road, Brea, California 92821.
- 2. On information and belief, Defendant John Doe is an unnamed person or persons otherwise responsible for the creation and maintenance of the YouTube account with username "lowesprofitsb4safety" and at least one video hosted on YouTube and associated with that account.

JURISDICTION AND VENUE

- 1. This action arises under 15 U.S.C. § 1125(a) (Section 43(a) of the Lanham Act) and California state law.
- 2. This Court has federal question jurisdiction over Continental's claim arising under Section 43(a) of the Lanham Act pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §§ 1331 and 1338. This Court also has supplemental jurisdiction over the California statutory and common law claims pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1367(a) because the state law claims are so related to the federal claim that they form part of the same case or controversy.
- 3. This Court has personal jurisdiction over Defendant by virtue of its extensive, systematic and continuous contacts with California and further by virtue of its specific contacts with California relating to the acts alleged herein.
 - 4. Venue in this judicial district is proper under 28 U.S.C. § 1391(b).

CONTINENTAL'S PRODUCTS

5. Continental is a manufacturer of heating devices, such as space heaters. Continental is an innovator in the field, having produced high quality

heaters and hearth products for over 15 years, and having received at least ten patents on its heating technologies.

6. Continental manufactures its own line of heaters, and also provides privately labeled products for OEM customers worldwide.

DEFENDANT'S ACTIVITIES

- 7. On February 9, 2012, Defendant created an account on the website YouTube (www.youtube.com), with the username "lowesprofitsb4safety."
- 8. On information and belief, on that same day, Defendant uploaded a video to YouTube (hereinafter "the video"). The video, and the text captions associated with the video, include numerous false and disparaging remarks relating to some of Continental's products (hereinafter "the Continental products").

INJURY CAUSED TO CONTINENTAL

- 9. Defendant's false and disparaging video and remarks continue to be made publicly available on YouTube's website.
- 10. Continental has been injured, through at least injury to Continental's reputation, goodwill, and the functioning of its business, and lessening of goodwill associated with its products, as a result of Defendant's false and disparaging statements and representations about the Continental products.
- 11. Continental has been further injured in fact and has lost money as a direct result of Defendant's wrongful activities, at least through having to expend time and money to correct the misrepresentations made by Defendant about the Continental products.
- 12. Continental is informed and believes, and on that basis alleges, that Defendant's false or misleading and disparaging statements and representations about the Continental products have adversely affected market acceptance of the Continental products.

- 13. Continental is informed and believes, and on that basis alleges, that at all times herein mentioned, Defendant knew that its statements and representations were false, misleading, disparaging, and/or defamatory. Nevertheless, Defendant continued to make these statements and representations with the knowledge or intent that such conduct would damage and cause injury to Continental.
- 14. Continental is likely to be injured, through at least each of the injuries described above, as well as likely diversion of sales of the Continental products to competitors, if Defendant does not immediately stop making these false and disparaging statements and representations about the Continental products.

FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION

(False Representations/Product Disparagement, 28 U.S.C. § 1125(a))

- 15. Continental re-alleges and incorporates by reference herein paragraphs 1-14 of the Complaint.
- 16. Defendant has made false and misleading representations of fact in interstate commerce through statements and representations in its YouTube video about the nature, characteristics, and quality of the Continental products.
- 17. Each of these representations constitutes a false, misleading and disparaging representation concerning the Continental products.
- 18. Continental is informed and believes, and on that basis alleges, that Defendant had actual knowledge that its statements and representations were false and misleading. Nevertheless, Defendant continues to make these statements and representations with the intent to deceive consumers, and lure business away from Continental to competitors, with which Defendant is affiliated.
- 19. Continental is informed and believes, and on that basis alleges, that a significant portion of the intended audience has been deceived or is likely to

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be deceived by Defendant's false and misleading representations.

- 20. Continental is informed and believes, and on that basis alleges, that Defendant's false and misleading representations are material in that they are likely to influence the purchasing decisions of customers.
- 21. As a result of Defendant's false and misleading representations about the Continental products, Defendant has created a likelihood of injury to Continental's business, through at least likely diversion of sales from Continental to Defendant and lessening of goodwill associated with Continental's trademarks and its products sold in connection with these trademarks, and has otherwise competed unfairly with Continental.
- 22. Continental is informed and believes, and on that basis alleges, that Defendant's acts complained of herein have caused damage in an amount to be determined at trial and irreparable injury to Continental. These acts will result in further damage and irreparable injury if Defendant is not restrained by this Court from further violation of Continental's rights, for which Continental has no adequate remedy at law.

SECOND CAUSE OF ACTION

(Unfair Competition, Cal. Bus. & Prof. Code § 17200, et seq.)

- 23. Continental re-alleges and incorporates by reference herein paragraphs 1-22 of the Complaint.
- 24. By virtue of the previously described acts, Defendant has intentionally competed unfairly with Continental in violation of California Business and Professions Code § 17200 *et seq.* in that such acts were, and continue to be, unlawful, unfair, and fraudulent.
- 25. By virtue of the previously described acts, Defendant has also intentionally competed unfairly with Continental in violation of California Business and Professions Code § 17200 et seq. in that Defendant's false and disparaging statements and representations about the Continental products were,

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 and continue to be, unfair, deceptive, untrue and misleading.

- 26. The acts described herein are unlawful in that they violate Section 43(a) of the Lanham Act (28 U.S.C. § 1125(a)), California Business and Professions Code § 17500 et seq., and California common law relating to defamation and slander per se.
- 27. The acts described herein are fraudulent in that customers are likely to be deceived or have been deceived as to the nature, characteristics, and quality of the Continental products.
- 28. Continental has been injured, through at least injury to Continental's reputation, goodwill, and the functioning of its business, and lessening of goodwill associated with its trademarks and its products sold in connection with these marks, as a result of Defendant's false and disparaging statements and representations about the Continental products.
- 29. Continental has been further injured in fact and has lost money, through having to expend time and money to correct the misrepresentations made by Defendant about the Continental products.
- 30. By virtue of the previously described acts, Defendant has caused damage and irreparable injury to Continental in an amount to be determined at trial. These acts will result in further damage and irreparable injury if Defendant is not restrained from further violation of Continental's rights, for which Continental has no adequate remedy at law.
- 31. Continental is informed and believes, and on that basis alleges, that at all times herein mentioned, Defendant knew that its statements and representations were false and misleading, disparaging, and defamatory and that Defendant nevertheless continued to make these statements and representations with the knowledge or intent that such conduct would damage and cause injury to Continental.
 - 32. Defendant's willful acts in violation of California Business and

Professions Code § 17200 *et seq*. constitute fraud, oppression and malice. Accordingly, Continental is entitled to exemplary or punitive damages pursuant to California Civil Code § 3294.

THIRD CAUSE OF ACTION

(False Advertising, Cal. Bus. & Prof. Code § 17500 et seq.)

- 33. Continental re-alleges and incorporates by reference herein paragraphs 1-32 of the Complaint.
- 34. By virtue of the previously described acts, Defendant has intentionally disseminated or caused to be disseminated statements and representations concerning the Continental products that were false and misleading, in violation of California Business and Professions Code § 17500 et seq.
- 35. Continental is informed and believes, and on that basis alleges, that Defendant's previously described false and misleading statements are likely to deceive customers as to the nature, characteristics, and quality of the Continental products.
- 36. Continental has been injured, through at least injury to Continental's reputation, goodwill, and the functioning of its business, and lessening of goodwill associated with its trademarks and its products sold in connection with these marks, as a result of Defendant's false and misleading statements and representations about the Continental products.
- 37. Continental has been further injured in fact and has lost money, through having to expend time and money to correct the misrepresentations made by Defendant about the Continental products.
- 38. By virtue of the previously described acts, Defendant has caused damage and irreparable injury to Continental in an amount to be determined at trial. These acts will result in further damage and irreparable injury if Defendant is not restrained from further violation of Continental's rights, for

which Continental has no adequate remedy at law.

- 39. Continental is informed and believes, and on that basis alleges, that Defendant knew or should have known, that its previously described statements and representations were false and misleading, and that Defendant nevertheless continued to make these statements and representations with the intent to deceive consumers, and lure business away from Continental to competitors with which Defendant is affiliated.
- 40. Defendant's willful acts in violation of California Business and Professions Code § 17500 *et seq.* constitute fraud, oppression and malice. Accordingly, Continental is entitled to exemplary or punitive damages pursuant to California Civil Code § 3294.

FOURTH CAUSE OF ACTION

(Defamation/Slander Per Se)

- 41. Continental re-alleges and incorporates by reference herein paragraphs 1-40 of the Complaint.
- 42. Since at least as early as February 9, 2012, Defendant intentionally published or caused to be published to third parties false information regarding Continental and the Continental products.
- 43. This false information constitutes slander *per se* because the false and disparaging statements directly tend to injure Continental with respect to Continental's business and/or have a natural tendency to lessen Continental's profits. Furthermore, this false information defames Continental on its face, that is, without the need for extrinsic evidence to explain the statement's defamatory nature.
- 44. Continental is informed and believes, and on that basis alleges, that Defendant published or caused to be published this false information about Continental with knowledge of its falsity or with a reckless disregard of its truth or falsity.

- 45. Continental is informed and believes, and on that basis alleges, that Defendant published this information with the intent to harm Continental's interests or with knowledge that harm to Continental's interests inevitably would result.
- 46. By virtue of the previously described acts, Defendant has caused damage and irreparable injury to Continental in an amount to be determined at trial.
- 47. Specifically, as a direct and proximate result of Defendant's publication of false and disparaging information about Continental and the Continental products, Continental has suffered loss of reputation, loss of goodwill, and has been hurt in its business, all to its general damage.
- 48. As further direct and proximate result of Defendant's publication of false and disparaging information about Continental and the Continental products, Continental has suffered special damages, at least including having to expend time and money to correct the misrepresentations made by Defendant.
- 49. These acts will result in further damage and irreparable injury if Defendant is not restrained from further violation of Continental's rights, for which Continental has no adequate remedy at law.
- 50. Continental is informed and believes, and on that basis alleges, that Defendant made the above-described publications with malice, oppression, and fraud in that Defendant intended or knew that its conduct would vex, annoy, and injure Continental. Accordingly, Continental is entitled to exemplary or punitive damages pursuant to California Civil Code § 3294.

FIFTH CAUSE OF ACTION

(Trade Libel)

- 51. Continental incorporates by this reference paragraphs 1-50 of the Complaint.
 - 52. By virtue of Defendant's false and misleading statements as set

forth above, and by directly mentioning the Continental products in its YouTube video, Defendant has engaged in the intentional disparagement of the Continental products.

- 53. As a direct and proximate result of Defendant's false and misleading statements as set forth above and also as a direct and proximate result of Defendant's trade libel and intentional disparagement of the Continental products, Continental has suffered money damages in an amount not presently known, which will be proved at trial.
- 54. Defendant's conduct constitutes an intentional misrepresentation and false, defamatory statements, all with the intention of causing injury to Continental and is oppressive, fraudulent, and malicious conduct as defined in California Civil Code § 3294. Continental should recover, in addition to its actual damages, exemplary and punitive damages according to proof.

PRAYER FOR RELIEF

WHEREFORE, Continental prays for judgment as follows:

- A. That Defendant's false, misleading, and disparaging statements and representations as to the nature, characteristics and quality of the Continental products constitute product disparagement and unfair competition under 15 U.S.C. § 1125(a).
- B. That Continental's false, misleading, and disparaging statements as to the nature, characteristics and quality of the Continental products constitute unfair competition under California Business and Professions Code § 17200 et seq.
- C. That Continental's false, misleading, and disparaging statements as to the nature, characteristics and quality of the Continental products constitute false advertising under California Business and Professions Code § 17500 et seq.
 - D. That Defendant's false and misleading statements and

representations that Continental is knowingly selling a defective and dangerous product constitute defamation and/or slander *per se*.

- E. That Defendant's false and misleading statements and representations that Continental is knowingly selling a defective and dangerous product constitute trade libel.
- F. A preliminary and permanent injunction barring Defendant from disseminating in any manner any false or misleading, disparaging, or defamatory statements about Continental and the Continental products, or otherwise competing unfairly with Continental.
- G. That Defendant be ordered to pay Continental all damages that Continental has sustained as a result of the acts complained of herein, subject to proof at trial, and that Continental be awarded any profits derived by Defendant by reason of these acts, to the extent any such profits exist.
- H. That Defendant's acts complained of herein be deemed willful and that this case be deemed an exceptional case pursuant to 15 U.S.C. § 1117(a), and further that Continental be entitled to treble damages pursuant to 15 U.S.C. § 1117(a).
- I. That Continental be awarded exemplary damages from Defendant pursuant to California Civil Code § 3294.
- J. That Continental be awarded its costs, attorneys' fees and expenses in this suit pursuant to 15 U.S.C. § 1118.
- K. That Continental be awarded such other and further relief that the Court may deem just and proper.

1	R	tespectfully submitted,
2	K	NOBBE, MARTENS, OLSON & BEAR, LLP
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4	Dated: 2/16/12 B	y: Jan Valor
5	Dated D	Michael K. Friedland Lauren Keller Katzenellenbogen Charles Duan
6		Charles Duan
7		Attorneys for Plaintiff, CONTINENTAL APPLIANCES, INC.
8		CONTINENTAL ATTEIANCES, INC.
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<u>DEMAND FOR JURY TRIAL</u>

Plaintiff Continental Appliances, Inc., hereby demands a trial by jury as to all triable issues in this matter.

Respectfully submitted,

KNOBBE, MARTENS, OLSON & BEAR, LLP

Dated: 2/16/12 By: Xam Sales Michael K. Friedland

Lauren Keller Katzenellenbogen Charles Duan

Attorneys for Plaintiff, CONTINENTAL APPLIANCES, INC.

- 12 -

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UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

NOTICE OF ASSIGNMENT TO UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE FOR DISCOVERY

This case has been assigned to District Judge James V. Selna and the assigned discovery Magistrate Judge is Robert N. Block.

The case number on all documents filed with the Court should read as follows:

SACV12- 260 JVS (RNBx)

Pursuant to General Order 05-07 of the United States District Court for the Central District of California, the Magistrate Judge has been designated to hear discovery related motions.

Sub	bsequent documents must be filed at the following location:
A c	copy of this notice must be served with the summons and complaint on all defendants (if a removal action is d, a copy of this notice must be served on all plaintiffs).
	NOTICE TO COUNSEL
Ξ	=======================================
	All discovery related motions should be noticed on the calendar of the Magistrate Judge

Santa Ana, CA 92701-4516

Riverside, CA 92501

Failure to file at the proper location will result in your documents being returned to you.

Los Angeles, CA 90012

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT, CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA CIVIL COVER SHEET

I (a) PLAINTIFFS (Check box if you a CONTINENTAL APPLIANCES,			DEFENDANTS JOHN DOE, an unknown individual or entity							
(b) Attomeys (Firm Name, Address an yourself, provide same.)		representing	Attorneys (If Known)							
Michael K. Friedland, Lauren Kell KNOBBE, MARTENS, OLSON & 2040 Main Street, 14th Floor Irvir	& BEAR, LLP	0404								
II. BASIS OF JURISDICTION (Place	an X in one box only.)		SHIP OF PRINCIPAL PART In one box for plaintiff and o	•	s Only					
□ 1 U.S. Government Plaintiff 23	Federal Question (U.S. Government Not a Party)	Citizen of This		DEF Incorporated or F of Business in th						
☐ 2 U.S. Government Defendant ☐ 4	Diversity (Indicate Citizenship of Parties in Item III)	Citizen of Anotl	ner State	☐ 2 Incorporated and of Business in A	Principal Place 5 5 5 nother State					
		Citizen or Subje	ct of a Foreign Country 3	☐ 3 Foreign Nation	□6 □6					
IV. ORIGIN (Place an X in one box on	nly.)									
In the proceeding □ 2 Removed from Proceeding □ 3 Remanded from Appellate Court □ 4 Reinstated or Reopened □ 5 Transferred from another district (specify): □ 6 Multiplication □ 7 Appeal to District District Appeal to District Reopened										
V. REQUESTED IN COMPLAINT:	JURY DEMAND: Yes	No (Check 'Yes	only if demanded in complai	nt.)						
CLASS ACTION under F.R.C.P. 23:	□ Yes 🖪 No		MONEY DEMANDED IN C	OMPLAINT: \$ Acc	cording to Proof.					
VI. CAUSE OF ACTION (Cite the U.S	S. Civil Statute under which you	are filing and wri	te a brief statement of cause. I	Do not cite jurisdictional st	atutes unless diversity.)					
28 U.S.C. § 1125(a) False Represer	ntations/Product Disparagement;				tising, Cal. Bus. & Prof. Code					
VII. NATURE OF SUIT (Place an X i	n one box only.)	§ 17:	500 et seq.; Defamation/Slande	er Per Se; Trade Libel						
OTHER STATUTES	CONTRACT	TORTS	TORTS	PRISONER	LABOR					
• •		RSONAL INJURY		PETITIONS	☐ 710 Fair Labor Standards					
· ·		Airplane Airplane Produc	PROPERTY 1 370 Other Fraud	☐ 510 Motions to Vacate Sentence	Act ☐ 720 Labor/Mgmt.					
	Negotiable Instrument	Liability	☐ 371 Truth in Lending	Habeas Corpus	Relations					
Rates/etc. □ 150	Recovery of	Assault, Libel &		☐ 530 General	□ 730 Labor/Mgmt.					
	Overpayment &	Slander Fed. Employers		535 Death Penalty	Reporting & Disclosure Act					
	Indoment	Liability	☐ 385 Property Damage Product Liability	Other	☐ 740 Railway Labor Act					
Organizations □ 151	Medicare Act		BANKRUPTCY	☐ 550 Civil Rights	□ 790 Other Labor					
☐ 480 Consumer Credit ☐ 152	Recovery of Defaulted 343	Marine Product Liability	☐ 422 Appeal 28 USC	☐ 555 Prison Condition	Litigation					
	Student Loan (Excl.	Motor Vehicle	158 ☐ 423 Withdrawal 28	FORFEITURE / PENALTY	☐ 791 Empl. Ret. Inc. Security Act					
☐ 810 Selective Service ☐ 850 Securities/Commodities/ ☐ 153	Veterans) Recovery of □ 355	Motor Vehicle	HSC 157	□ 610 Agriculture	PROPERTY RIGHTS					
		Product Liability Other Personal	CIVIL RIGHTS	☐ 620 Other Food &	□ 820 Copyrights					
□ 875 Customer Challenge 12	Veteran's Benefits	Injury	441 Voting	Drug	830 Patent					
1	Stockholders' Suits Other Contract	Personal Injury-	☐ 442 Employment ☐ 443 Housing/Acco-	☐ 625 Drug Related Seizure of	■ 840 Trademark SOCIAL SECURITY					
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	Land Condemnation	Liability	Employment	☐ 650 Airline Regs	□ 864 SSID Title XVI					
	Foreclosure	MMIGRÁTION	☐ 446 American with	☐ 660 Occupational	□ 865 RSI (405(g))					
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<u> </u>	Torts to Land Tort Product Liability □ 463	Habeas Corpus-	Other ☐ 440 Other Civil	□ 690 Other	or Defendant)					
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SACV12-00260 JVS (RNBx)										
FOR OFFICE USE ONLY: Case Number:										
AFTER COMPLETING THE FRONT SIDE OF FORM CV-71, COMPLETE THE INFORMATION REQUESTED BELOW.										

Page 1 of 2

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT, CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA CIVIL COVER SHEET

If yes, list case number(s):	s this action been p	eviously filed in this court and dismissed, remanded or closed? We no Li Yes				
		eviously filed in this court that are related to the present case? Ve No Yes				
□ B. □ C.	Arise from the sam Call for determinat For other reasons v	se and the present case: e or closely related transactions, happenings, or events; or ion of the same or substantially related or similar questions of law and fact; or rould entail substantial duplication of labor if heard by different judges; or atent, trademark or copyright, and one of the factors identified above in a, b or c also is present.				
IX. VENUE: (When completing the	following informa	ion, use an additional sheet if necessary.)				
		outside of this District; State if other than California; or Foreign Country, in which EACH named plaintiff resides. oyees is a named plaintiff. If this box is checked, go to item (b).				
County in this District:*		California County outside of this District; State, if other than California; or Foreign Country	California County outside of this District; State, if other than California; or Foreign Country			
Orange County						
(,,	•	outside of this District; State if other than California; or Foreign Country, in which EACH named defendant resides. oyees is a named defendant. If this box is checked, go to item (c).				
County in this District:*		California County outside of this District; State, if other than California; or Foreign Country	California County outside of this District; State, if other than California; or Foreign Country			
		Unknown				
(c) List the County in this District; (Note: In land condemnation ca		outside of this District; State if other than California; or Foreign Country, in which EACH claim arose.				
County in this District:*		California County outside of this District; State, if other than California; or Foreign Country				
Orange County						
* Los Angeles, Orange, San Bernar Note: In land condemnation cases, us		entura, Santa Barbara, or San Luis Obispo Counties e tract of land involved				
X. SIGNATURE OF ATTORNEY (OR PRO PER):	Jan 75te Date 2/16/12				
or other papers as required by lav	v. This form, appro-	ivil Cover Sheet and the information contained herein neither replace nor supplement the filing and service of pleadings yed by the Judicial Conference of the United States in September 1974, is required pursuant to Local Rule 3-1 is not filed of statistics, venue and initiating the civil docket sheet. (For more detailed instructions, see separate instructions sheet.)				
Key to Statistical codes relating to So	cial Security Cases					
Nature of Suit Code	Abbreviation	Substantive Statement of Cause of Action				
861	НІА	All claims for health insurance benefits (Medicare) under Title 18, Part A, of the Social Security Act, as amended. Also, include claims by hospitals, skilled nursing facilities, etc., for certification as providers of services under the program. (42 U.S.C. 1935FF(b))				
862	BL	All claims for "Black Lung" benefits under Title 4, Part B, of the Federal Coal Mine Health and Safety Act of 1969. (30 U.S.C. 923)				
863	DIWC	All claims filed by insured workers for disability insurance benefits under Title 2 of the Social Security Act, as amended; plus all claims filed for child's insurance benefits based on disability. (42 U.S.C. 405(g))				
863	DIWW	All claims filed for widows or widowers insurance benefits based on disability under Title 2 of the Social Security Act, as amended. (42 U.S.C. 405(g))				
864	SSID	All claims for supplemental security income payments based upon disability filed under Title 16 of the Social Security Act, as amended.				
865	RSI	All claims for retirement (old age) and survivors benefits under Title 2 of the Social Security Act, as amended. (42 U.S.C. (g))				

CV-71 (05/08) CIVIL COVER SHEET Page 2 of 2