UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

NORTHER DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS, EASTERN DIVISION

JOURNALINESH, INC., a Colorado Corporation,	Case No.1:22-cv-03740 Hon. Matthew F. Kennelly
Plaintiff, V.	
THE PARTNERSHIPS and UNINCORPORATED ASSOCIATIONS IDENTIFIED ON SCHEDULE "A" a Foreign Entity Defendants	

MEMORANDUM IN SUPPORT OF PLAINTIFF'S *EX PARTE* MOTION FOR ENTRY OF A TEMPORARY RESTRAINING ORDER, INCLUDING A TEMPORARY INJUNCTION, A TEMPORARY ASSET RESTRAINT, AND EXPEDITED <u>DISCOVERY</u>

Plaintiff JOURNALINESH, INC. ("Plaintiff") submits this Memorandum in support of its *Ex Parte* Motion for Entry of a Temporary Restraining Order ("TRO"), including a temporary injunction, a temporary asset restraint, and expedited discovery (the "*Ex Parte* Motion").

MEMORANDUM OF LAW

I. INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY OF ARGUMENT

Plaintiff is requesting temporary *ex-parte* relief based on an action for trademark infringement, trade dress infringement, and copyright infringement against the defendants identified on Schedule A to the Complaint (collectively, the "Defendants"). As alleged in Plaintiff's Complaint, Plaintiff is an assignee of intellectual property of Dongguan Youmaimai Trading Company Limited (DYTCL or Plaintiff's assignor), a leader in the production of calendars, planners and journals ("Planners") and related products. DYTCL's products are distinguishable due to their specific design that involves copyrighted background artwork at the header of the pages of the planners, turquoise colored elements in the planners and motivational quotes included with each calendar month that the planner has ("Copyrighted Designs"). Defendants are promoting, advertising, marketing, distributing, offering for sale, and selling products using infringing and counterfeit versions of Plaintiff's trade dress (Plaintiff's Mark), unauthorized copies of Plaintiff's federally registered copyrighted designs, or both (collectively, the "Unauthorized Products") through at least the fully interactive e-commerce stores operating under the seller aliases identified in Schedule A to the Complaint (the "Seller Aliases").

Defendants run a sophisticated counterfeiting operation and have targeted sales to
Illinois residents by setting up and operating e-commerce stores using one or more
Seller Aliases through which Illinois residents can purchase Unauthorized Products. The ecommerce stores operating under the Seller Aliases share unique identifiers
establishing a logical relationship between them. Further, Defendants attempt to avoid
and mitigate liability by operating under one or more Seller Aliases to conceal both their
identities and the full scope and interworking of their operation. Plaintiff is forced to file
this action to combat Defendants' counterfeiting of its registered trademarks and

infringement of its registered copyright, as well as to protect unknowing consumers from purchasing Unauthorized Products over the Internet. Defendants' ongoing unlawful activities should be restrained, and Plaintiff respectfully requests that this Court issue *ex parte* a Temporary Restraining Order.

II. STATEMENT OF FACTS.

A. Plaintiff's Trade Dress, Copyright and Products.

Plaintiff is an assignee of a prominent designer and manufacturer of diaries, academic planners and calendars distributed throughout the U.S. and the world. Plaintiff consistently is ranked as top seller on online ecommerce platforms. Since 2020, Plaintiff's assignor has continuously used the turquoise color in its academic planners applied to each and every page where the month is indicated, and where holiday tabs are. Additionally, Plaintiff's assignor has applied copyrighted artwork to the header of each of his pages for the whole month, with a motivational quote at the top right-hand corner of the month indicator page ("Plaintiff's Mark"). Attached hereto as Exhibit 1 to the declaration of Min Li is a true and correct copy of US Copyright record of Plaintiff's copyright. This arbitrary, non-functional color pattern along with the artwork design and the quote is an indicator of Plaintiff's assignor as the source and origin of its planners. For example, the turquoise used in the planners is preeminently featured on all plaintiff's products. Attached hereto as Exhibit 2 is an example of Plaintiff's Product design with the Plaintiff's Mark.

Plaintiff's asignor offers and has sold a wide variety of planners and other similar products that have the distinctive color turquoise applied to the month and holiday designations, as well as the copyrighted artwork included along the header of the months on each page. These features as applied to the planners are not functional, nor do they serve merely a decorative or

utilitarian purpose, but rather is an unusual color to be applied to the planner and is done to distinguish Plaintiff's Products.

B. Defendants' Unlawful Conduct

As set out above, Plaintiff's assignor's and Plaintiff's use of Plaintiff's Mark in commerce is widespread and substantial in the United States. Given such widespread notoriety and use in commerce of the color turquoise combined with the other features of Plaintiff's Mark in sales and advertising, the color turquoise as applied to Planners and calendars with other features of the Plaintiff's Mark has secondary meaning—*i.e.*, acquired distinctiveness—as a source indicator for Plaintiff's products. Defendants have counterfeited Plaintiff's Mark by using identically designed planners and calendars. Defendants have targeted sales to Illinois residents by setting up and operating e-commerce stores that target United States consumers using one or more Seller Aliases, offer shipping to the United States, including Illinois, accept payment in U.S. dollars and, on information and belief, have sold Unauthorized Products to residents of Illinois.

Defendants concurrently employ and benefit from substantially similar advertising and marketing strategies. For example, Defendants facilitate sales by designing the e-commerce stores operating under the Seller Aliases so that they appear to unknowing consumers to be authorized online retailers, outlet stores, or wholesalers. E-commerce stores operating under the Seller Aliases appear sophisticated and accept payment in U.S. dollars via credit cards, Alipay, Amazon Pay, Western Union, and/or PayPal. E-commerce stores operating under the Seller Aliases often include content and images that make it very difficult for consumers to distinguish such stores from an authorized retailer. Plaintiff has not licensed defendants to use its marks.

III. ARGUMENT

Defendants' purposeful, intentional, and unlawful conduct is causing and will continue to cause irreparable harm to Plaintiff's reputation and the goodwill symbolized by the Plaintiff's trade dress and copyright design. Rule 65(b) of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure provides that the Court may issue an *ex parte* TRO where immediate and irreparable injury, loss, or damage will result to the applicant before the adverse party or that party's attorney can be heard in opposition. Fed. R. Civ. P. 65(b). The entry of a TRO is appropriate because it would immediately stop the Defendants from benefiting from the sale of Unauthorized Products, their wrongful use of the Plaintiff's Trade Dress and/or copying and distribution of the Plaintiff's Copyrighted Designs, and preserve the status quo until a hearing can be held.

In the absence of a TRO without notice, the Defendants can and likely will register new e-commerce stores under new aliases and move any assets to off-shore bank accounts outside the jurisdiction of this Court. *See* Declaration of Min Li (the "Li Declaration").

Courts have recognized that civil actions against counterfeiters present special challenges that justify proceeding on an *ex parte* basis. See Columbia Pictures Indus., Inc. v. Jasso, 927 F. Supp. 1075, 1077 (N.D. Ill. 1996) (observing that "proceedings against those who deliberately traffic in infringing merchandise are often useless if notice is given to the infringers"). As such, Plaintiff respectfully requests that this Court issue the requested *ex parte* TRO.

This Court has original subject matter jurisdiction over the claims in this action pursuant to the provisions of the Lanham Act, 15 U.S.C. § 1051, *et seq.*, the Copyright Act 17 U.S.C. § 501, *et seq.*, 28 U.S.C. §§ 1338(a)–(b), and 28 U.S.C. § 1331. Venue is proper pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1391. This Court may properly exercise personal jurisdiction over Defendants since

Defendants directly target their business activities toward consumers in the United States, including Illinois, through at least the fully interactive e-commerce stores operating under the Seller Aliases.

Specifically, Defendants have targeted sales to Illinois residents by setting up and operating e-commerce stores that target United States consumers using one or more Seller Aliases, offer shipping to the United States, including Illinois, accept payment in U.S. dollars and, on information and belief, have sold Unauthorized Products to residents of Illinois. *See* Complaint at ¶ 18-27. *See, e.g., Christian Dior Couture, S.A. v. Lei Liu et al.*, 2015 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 158225, at *6 (N.D. Ill. Nov. 17, 2015) (personal jurisdiction proper over defendants offering to sell alleged infringing product to United States residents, including Illinois; no actual sale required). Each of the Defendants is committing tortious acts in Illinois, is engaging in interstate commerce, and has wrongfully caused Plaintiff substantial injury in the State of Illinois.

A. Standard for a Temporary Restraining Order and Preliminary Injunction.

District Courts within this Circuit hold that the standard for granting a TRO and the standard for granting a preliminary injunction are identical. See, e.g. Charter Nat'l Bank & Trust

v. Charter One Fin., Inc., No. 1:01-cv-00905, 2001 WL 527404, at *1 (N.D. Ill. May 15, 2001) (citation omitted). A party seeking to obtain a preliminary injunction must demonstrate: (1) that its case has some likelihood of success on the merits; (2) that no adequate remedy at law exists; and (3) that it will suffer irreparable harm if the injunction is not granted. See Ty, Inc. v. The Jones Group, Inc., 237 F.3d 891, 895 (7th Cir. 2001).

If the Court is satisfied that these three conditions have been met, then it must consider the harm that the nonmoving party will suffer if preliminary relief is granted, balancing such

harm against the irreparable harm the moving party will suffer if relief is denied. *Id.* Finally, the Court must consider the potential effect on the public interest (non-parties) in denying or granting the injunction. *Id.* The Court then weighs all of these factors, "sitting as would a chancellor in equity," when it decides whether to grant the injunction. *Id.* (*quoting Abbott Labs*. *v. Mead Johnson & Co.*, 971 F.2d 6, 11 (7th Cir. 1992)). This process involves engaging in what the Court has deemed "the sliding scale approach" – the more likely the plaintiff will succeed on

the merits, the less the balance of harms need favor the plaintiff's position. *Id*.

B. Plaintiff Will Likely Succeed on the Merits

 Plaintiff Will Likely Succeed on Its Trade Dress and Trademark Infringement Claims.

A Lanham Act trademark infringement claim has two elements. *See* 15 U.S.C. § 1125(a). First, plaintiff must show "that its mark is protected under the Lanham Act." *Barbecue Marx, Inc. v. 551 Ogden, Inc.*, 235 F.3d 1041, 1043 (7th Cir. 2000). Second, a plaintiff must show that the challenged mark is likely to cause confusion among consumers. *Id.*

Plaintiff's mark is distinctive and has been continuously used by Plaintiff. Consumers have come to associate the distinctive turquoise color, the copyrighted artwork and other features of Plaintiffs Mark which comprise Plaintiff's trade dress, with Plaintiff's products and services. Through Plaintiff's promotional efforts, business conduct, and continuous use of its website and its ecommerce store and products, and their associated trade dress, Plaintiff and its assignor has developed and maintained clients throughout the United States, including in Illinois. Through its widespread and favorable acceptance and recognition by the consuming

public, the turquoise "look and feel" of the Plaintiff's Products have become an asset of substantial value as a symbol of Plaintiff, Plaintiff's high quality products and services, and its goodwill.

Accordingly, Plaintiff has established valid and enforceable rights in the turquoise "look and feel" of its products a described herein. Therefore Defendants' use of similar looking products and copying of Plaintiff's Mark on their unauthorized products is likely to cause confusion and make on believe that the unauthorized products are manufactured by Plaintiff. Plaintiffs has submitted evidence showing that defendants are selling products that look similar to Plaintiff's products and incorporate Plaintiff's Copyrighted Design and Plaintiff's Mark. Evidence of actual consumer confusion is not required to prove that a likelihood of confusion exists, particularly given the compelling evidence that Defendants are attempting to "palm off" their goods as genuine PEANUTS Products. *CAE*, *Inc.* v. Clean Air Eng'g, *Inc.*, 267 F.3d 660, 685 (7th Cir. 2001). Accordingly, Plaintiff is likely to establish a *prima facie* case of trademark infringement, and trade dress infringement.

ii. Plaintiff Is Likely to Succeed on Its Copyright Infringement Claim

The United States Copyright Act provides that "[a]nyone who violates any of the exclusive rights of the copyright owner ... is an infringer of the copyright." 17 U.S.C. § 501. Among these exclusive rights granted to Plaintiff under the Copyright Act are the exclusive rights to reproduce, prepare derivative works of, distribute copies of, and display the Copyrighted Designs to the public. 17 U.S.C. § 106.

To establish a claim for copyright infringement, a plaintiff must show: "(1) ownership of a valid copyright, and (2) copying of constituent elements of the work that are original." *JCW Invs., Inc. v. Novelty, Inc.*, 482 F.3d 910, 914 (7th Cir. 2007) (internal citations omitted).

Copying can be shown through direct evidence, or it can be inferred where a defendant had access to the copyrighted work and the accused work is substantially similar. *Spinmaster, Ltd. v. Overbreak LLC*, 404 F. Supp. 2d 1097, 1102 (N.D. Ill. 2005). To determine whether there is a substantial similarity that indicates infringement, Courts use the "ordinary observer" test which asks whether "an ordinary reasonable person would conclude that the defendant unlawfully appropriated protectable expression by taking material of substance and value." *Id.* A work may be deemed infringing if it captures the "total concept and feel of the copyrighted work." *Id.* With respect to the first element, Plaintiff is the owner of at one relevant federally registered copyrights. As to the second element, Defendants are willfully and deliberately reproducing the Copyrighted Designs in their entirety, and are willfully and deliberately distributing copies of the Copyrighted Designs to the public by sale. Defendants' unauthorized copies are identical or substantially similar to the Copyrighted Designs.

Such blatant copying infringes upon Plaintiff's exclusive rights under 17 U.S.C. §§ 106. As such, Plaintiff has proved it has a reasonable likelihood of success on the merits for its copyright infringement claim.

C. There Is No Adequate Remedy at Law, and Plaintiff Will Suffer Irreparable Harm in the Absence of Preliminary Relief.

The Seventh Circuit has "clearly and repeatedly held that damage to a trademark holder's goodwill can constitute irreparable injury for which the trademark owner has no adequate legal remedy." *Re/Max N. Cent., Inc. v. Cook,* 272 F.3d 424, 432 (7th Cir. 2001) (citing *Eli Lilly & Co. v. Natural Answers, Inc.,* 233 F.3d 456, 469 (7th Cir. 2000)). Likewise, an injury to a copyright holder that is "not easily measurable in monetary terms, such as injury to reputation or

goodwill, is often viewed as irreparable." EnVerve, Inc. v. Unger Meat Co., 779 F. Supp. 2d

840, 844 (N.D. Ill. 2011). Irreparable injury "almost inevitably follows" when there is a high probability of confusion because such injury "may not be fully compensable in damages." *Helene Curtis Industries, Inc. v. Church & Dwight Co., Inc.*, 560 F.2d 1325, 1332 (7th Cir. 1977) (citation omitted). "The most corrosive and irreparable harm attributable to trademark infringement is the inability of the victim to control the nature and quality of the defendants' goods." *Int'l Kennel Club of Chicago, Inc. v. Mighty Star, Inc.*, 846 F.2d 1079, 1092 (7th Cir. 1988). As such, monetary damages are likely to be inadequate compensation for such harm. *Ideal Indus., Inc. v. Gardner Bender, Inc.*, 612 F.2d 1018, 1026 (7th Cir. 1979).

Defendants' unauthorized use of the Plaintiff's Mark and Copyrighted Designs has and continues to irreparably harm Plaintiff through diminished goodwill and brand confidence, damage to Plaintiff's reputation, loss of exclusivity, and loss of future sales. The extent of the harm to Plaintiff's reputation and goodwill and the possible diversion of customers due to loss in brand confidence are both irreparable and incalculable, thus warranting an immediate halt to Defendants' infringing activities through injunctive relief. *See Promatek Industries, Ltd. v. Equitrac Corp.*, 300 F.3d 808, 813 (7th Cir. 2002) (finding that damage to plaintiff's goodwill was irreparable harm for which plaintiff had no adequate remedy at law).

Plaintiff will suffer immediate and irreparable injury, loss, or damage if an *ex parte* TRO is not issued in accordance with Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 65(b).

D. The Balancing of Harms Tips in Plaintiff's Favor, and the Public Interest IOS Served by Entry of the Injunction

As noted above, if the Court is satisfied that Plaintiff has demonstrated (1) a likelihood of success on the merits, (2) no adequate remedy at law, and (3) the threat of irreparable harm if preliminary relief is not granted, then it must next consider the harm Defendants will suffer if

preliminary relief is granted, balancing such harm against the irreparable harm that Plaintiff will suffer if relief is denied. *Ty, Inc.*, 237 F.3d at 895. As willful infringers, Defendants are entitled to little equitable consideration. "When considering the balance of hardships between the parties

in infringement cases, courts generally favor the trademark owner." *Krause Int'l Inc. v. Reed Elsevier, Inc.*, 866 F. Supp. 585, 587-88 (D.D.C. 1994). This is because "[o]ne who adopts the mark of another for similar goods acts at his own peril since he has no claim to the profits or advantages thereby derived." *Burger King Corp. v. Majeed*, 805 F. Supp. 994, 1006 (S.D. Fla. 1992) (internal quotation marks omitted). Therefore, the balance of harms "cannot favor a defendant whose injury results from the knowing infringement of the plaintiff's trademark." *Malarkey-Taylor Assocs., Inc. v. Cellular Telecomms. Indus. Ass'n.*, 929 F. Supp. 473, 478 (D.D.C. 1996).

As Plaintiff has demonstrated, Defendants have been profiting from the sale of Unauthorized Products. Thus, the balance of equities tips decisively in Plaintiff's favor. The public is currently under the false impression that Defendants are operating their ecommerce stores with Plaintiff's approval and endorsement. In this case, the injury to the public is significant, and the injunctive relief Plaintiff seeks is specifically intended to remedy that injury by dispelling the public confusion created by Defendants' actions. As such, equity requires that Defendants be ordered to cease their unlawful conduct.

IV. THE EQUITABLE RELIEF SOUGHT IS APPROPRIATE

The Lanham Act authorizes courts to issue injunctive relief "according to the principles of equity and upon such terms as the court may deem reasonable, to prevent the violation of any right of the registrant of a mark" 15 U.S.C. § 1116(a).

A. A Temporary Restraining Order Immediately Enjoining Defendants'
Unauthorized and Unlawful Use of the Plaintiff's Mark and Copyrighted Designs Is
Appropriate.

Plaintiff requests a temporary injunction requiring Defendants to immediately cease all use of the Plaintiff's Marks or substantially similar marks, and/or copying and distribution of the Copyrighted Designs on or in connection with all e-commerce stores operating under the Seller Aliases. Such relief is necessary to stop the ongoing harm to the Plaintiff's Marks and associated goodwill, as well as harm to consumers, and to prevent the Defendants from continuing to benefit from their unauthorized use of the Plaintiff's Marks and/or copying and distribution of the Plaintiff's Copyrighted Designs. The need for *ex parte* relief is magnified in today's global economy where counterfeiters can operate anonymously over the Internet. Plaintiff is currently unaware of both the true identities and locations of the Defendants, as well as other e-commerce stores used to distribute, sell and offer to sell Unauthorized Products. Many courts have authorized immediate injunctive relief in similar cases involving trademark counterfeiting and infringement. *See, e.g., Deckers Outdoor Corporation v. The Partnerships, et al.*, No. 15-cv-3249 (N.D. Ill. April 4, 2015) (unpublished) (Order granting *Ex Parte* Motion for Temporary Restraining Order).

B. Preventing the Fraudulent Transfer of Assets is Appropriate.

Plaintiff requests an ex parte restraint of Defendants' assets so Plaintiff's right to an equitable accounting of Defendants' profits from sales of Unauthorized Peanuts Products is not impaired.2 Issuing an ex parte restraint will ensure Defendants' compliance. If such a restraint is not granted in this case, Defendants may disregard their responsibilities and fraudulently transfer financial assets to overseas accounts before a restraint is ordered. Specifically, on

information and belief, the Defendants in this case hold most of their assets in off-shore accounts, making it easy to hide or dispose of assets, which will render an accounting by Plaintiff meaningless.

Courts have the inherent authority to issue a prejudgment asset restraint when plaintiff's complaint seeks relief in equity. *Animale Grp. Inc. v. Sunny's Perfume Inc.*, 256 F. App'x 707, 709 (5th Cir. 2007). In addition, Plaintiff has shown a strong likelihood of succeeding on the merits of its trademark infringement and counterfeiting claim, so according to the Lanham Act 15 U.S.C. § 1117(a)(1), Plaintiff is entitled, "subject to the principles of equity, to recover ... defendant's profits." Similarly, Plaintiff has shown a strong likelihood of succeeding on the merits of its copyright infringement claim, and therefore Plaintiff is entitled to recover "... any profits of the infringer that are attributable to the infringement." 17 U.S.C. § 504(b).

Plaintiff's Complaint seeks, among other relief, that Defendants account for and pay to Plaintiff all profits realized by Defendants by reason of Defendants' unlawful acts. Therefore, this Court has the inherent equitable authority to grant Plaintiff's request for a prejudgment asset freeze to preserve relief sought by Plaintiff. The Northern District of Illinois in *Lorillard Tobacco Co. v. Montrose Wholesale Candies* entered an asset restraining order in a trademark infringement case brought by a tobacco company against owners of a store selling counterfeit cigarettes. *Lorillard*, 2005 WL 3115892, at *13 (N.D. Ill. Nov. 8, 2005). The Court recognized that it was explicitly allowed to issue a restraint on assets for lawsuits seeking equitable relief. *Id.* (citing *Grupo Mexicano de Desarollo, S.A. v. Aliance Bond Fund*, 527 U.S. 308, 325 (1999)). Because the tobacco company sought a disgorgement of the storeowner's profits, an equitable remedy, the Court found that it had the authority to freeze the storeowner's assets. *Id.*

Plaintiff has shown a likelihood of success on the merits, an immediate and irreparable

harm suffered as a result of Defendants' activities, and that, unless Defendants' assets are frozen, Defendants will likely hide or move their ill-gotten funds to off-shore bank accounts. Accordingly, an asset restraint is proper.

C. Plaintiff is Entitled to Expedited Discovery

The United States Supreme Court has held that "federal courts have the power to order, at their discretion, the discovery of facts necessary to ascertain their competency to entertain the merits." Vance v. Rumsfeld, No. 1:06-cv-06964, 2007 WL 4557812, at *6 (N.D. Ill. Dec. 21, 2007) (quoting Oppenheimer Fund, Inc. v. Sanders, 437 U.S. 340, 351, 98 S. Ct. 2380 (1978)). Courts have wide latitude in determining whether to grant a party's request for discovery. *Id.* (citation omitted). Further, courts have broad power over discovery and may permit discovery in order to aid in the identification of unknown defendants. See Fed. R. Civ. P. 26(b)(2)). Plaintiff respectfully requests expedited discovery to discover bank and payment system accounts Defendants use for their counterfeit sales operations. The expedited discovery requested in Plaintiff's Proposed TRO is limited to include only what is essential to prevent further irreparable harm. Discovery of these financial accounts so that they can be frozen is necessary to ensure that these activities will be contained. See, e.g., Deckers Outdoor Corporation v. The Partnerships, et al., No. 15-cv-3249 (N.D. Ill. April 4, 2015) (unpublished). Plaintiff's seizure and asset restraint may have little meaningful effect without the requested relief. Accordingly, Plaintiff respectfully requests that expedited discovery be granted.

V. A BOND SHOULD SECURE THE INJUNCTIVE RELIEF

The posting of security upon issuance of a TRO or preliminary injunction is vested in the Court's sound discretion. *Rathmann Grp. v. Tanenbaum*, 889 F.2d 787, 789 (8th Cir. 1989).

Because of the strong and unequivocal nature of Plaintiff's evidence of counterfeiting, trademark infringement, copyright infringement, and false designation of origin, Plaintiff respectfully requests this Court require Plaintiff to post a bond of no more than ten thousand U.S. dollars (\$10,000.00). *See, e.g., Deckers Outdoor Corporation v. The Partnerships, et al.*, No. 15-cv-3249 (N.D. Ill. April 4, 2015) (unpublished) (\$10,000 bond).

VI. CONCLUSION

Defendants' unlawful operations are irreparably harming Plaintiff's business, its famous brand, and consumers. In view of the foregoing and consistent with previous similar cases, Plaintiff respectfully requests that this Court enter a TRO in the form submitted herewith.

Dated this August 31, 2022

/s/ Vahe Khojayan

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