## IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

CLAYBORNE E. CHAVERS, SR., ESQ. )	
7671 Midtown Road	
Fulton, Maryland 20759	
Plaintiff,	C' 'IN
v. )	Civil No.
HOWARD UNIVERSITY	JURY TRIAL DEMANDED
2400 Sixth Street, NW	
Washington, DC 20059	
)	
Serve On:	
Resident Agent )	
John G. Gloster, Jr.	
2400 6 <sup>th</sup> Street, N.W.	
Washington, D.C. 20059	
)	
Defendant.	

#### **COMPLAINT**

Plaintiff, Clayborne E. Chavers, Sr., Esq. ("Plaintiff" or "Attorney Chavers"), hereby asserts claims for copyright infringement against Defendant, Howard University ("Defendant" or "Howard"), and for his reasons states as follows:

#### THE PARTIES

1. Plaintiff, Attorney Chavers, is a resident of Fulton, Maryland. He is an attorney licensed to practice in Washington, D.C., and is the Managing Member of The Chavers Firm, LLC, which is located on Wisconsin Avenue in Washington, D.C. Attorney Chavers is a nationally renowned "Preeminent A/V Rated" attorney and leader in the fields of the arts & entertainment law and civil rights, corporate diversity, and inclusion. As explained more fully below, he conceived and is the author of a unique interdisciplinary curriculum program that he presented to Howard, his undergraduate and law school alma mater, that Howard then copied and

misappropriated without his permission or knowledge.

- 2. Attorney Chavers graduated from Howard University after returning as a Vietnam Veteran, and graduated after only two years from the College of Fine Arts, *cum laude*. He then attended the Howard University School of Law. He has engaged in a wide-ranging and highly respected legal career in the area of the arts, entertainment law, and the entertainment business for more than 40-years. Attorney Chavers established the first arts and law practice in Washington, D.C., and was featured on the cover of *Washington Lawyer Magazine* for arts in law, and he was also featured in *The Legal Times*. In 1979, he founded and was the first chair of the Arts, Entertainment, and Sports Law section of the National Bar Association (the largest section of the National Bar Association), and he has taught art and entertainment law for the D.C. Bar (including a CLE course that was the first-ever of its kind in Washington D.C.) and at numerous universities, including Temple, Georgetown, American, William & Mary, and others. Attorney Chavers is also co-founder of The Washington Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts.
- 3. Attorney Chavers also was a founding member of the firm that grew to be the largest minority-owned law firm in Washington, D.C., and throughout his career has repeatedly overcome racial prejudices and barriers to achieve success. It is through that success and his vast knowledge of entertainment and business law that led Attorney Chavers to develop and author a unique and proprietary interdisciplinary Arts and Entertainment Business Legal Clinic (the "Clinic") concept. He obtained two United States Copyright Registrations for his works pertaining to the Clinic: Registration No. TX0008981687 entitled "Sports and Entertainment," and Registration No. TX0008981860 entitled "Memorandum Proposal for the Development of an Entertainment and Art Law Clinic At Howard University School of Law."
  - 4. Defendant Howard is a private, federally chartered historically black research

university in Washington, D.C., founded in or about 1867. It is the school that Attorney Chavers and his wife supported in many ways and thus, is the institution that Attorney Chavers chose to first present his unique curriculum.

- 5. Howard sets a high standard for its students when it comes to academic honesty. Its policy provides in relevant part that, "As part of Howard's community of scholars, you are expected to hold the pursuit of learning and the search for truth in the highest regard while displaying unquestionable integrity and honesty. There is no place for academic dishonesty, regardless of any seeming advantage or gain that may accrue from such dishonesty. Students will be disciplined for any intentional act(s) of dishonesty in the fulfillment of academic course or program requirements and for intentionally representing as one's own, any ideas, writings and works of another without acknowledging that author."
- 6. Unfortunately, in the case of Attorney Chavers, Howard failed to live up to its own standard of unquestionable integrity and honesty, and also violated applicable law, when it misappropriated and copied salient aspects of Attorney Chavers' curriculum and launched the very Clinic that he had conceived, presented, and copyrighted.
- 7. Rather than acknowledge and agree to remedy its wrongful conduct, however, Howard instead chose to ignore Attorney Chavers' many requests to address these issues amicably. He therefore files this action with regret but with strong resolve to hold his to the same standards that it requires of its students and faculty.

#### **JURISDICTION AND VENUE**

- 8. This Court possesses subject matter jurisdiction pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1331, in that this matter arises under the Constitution, laws, or treaties of the United States.
  - 9. This Court possesses personal jurisdiction over Defendant because its principal

place of business is in Washington, D.C.

10. Venue is proper in this district pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1391(b)(1) because Defendant resides in Washington, D.C., and pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1391(b)(2) because a substantial part of the events or omissions giving rise to Plaintiff's claim occurred in Washington, D.C.

#### **FACTS**

- 11. As mentioned above, Attorney Chavers has worked in all aspects of the arts and entertainment legal field, including television deals, miniseries, book publishing, theater production, financing, and music.
- 12. It was because of this comprehensive background and his ties to Howard University, including having graduated from the College of Fine Arts and the Howard University School of Law, that Attorney Chavers first developed a unique and proprietary Clinic that combined disciplines and instruction from Howard's College of Fine Arts, School of Law, and Business School. A copy of The Entertainment and Arts Law Clinic that Attorney Chavers conceived, authored, and registered with the U.S. Copyright Office (Reg. No. TX0008981687) is attached hereto at **Exhibit A** (the "Copyrighted Clinic"). The Copyrighted Clinic describes an "interdisciplinary exercise" of talent, law, and business in ways that were unprecedented at the time. *See id*.
- 13. Attorney Chavers also authored a Memorandum Proposal for the Development of an Entertainment and Art Law Clinic at Howard University School of Law, which he also registered with the U.S. Copyright Office (Reg. No. TX0008981860), a copy of which is attached hereto at **Exhibit B** (the "Copyrighted Memorandum Proposal").
  - 14. Between 2004 and 2015, Attorney Chavers approached various Howard faculty and

leadership and presented ideas for beginning a Clinic program at Howard.

- 15. During this time, Attorney Chavers provided copies of his Copyrighted Clinic and the Copyrighted Memorandum Proposal to various individuals, including those identified immediately below.
- 16. Specifically, Attorney Chavers provided his Copyrighted Clinic and Copyrighted Memorandum Proposal to Dr. Wayne Frederick when Dr. Frederick was President of Howard.
- 17. Attorney Chavers also discussed these documents and the Clinic with Dr. Frederick on several occasions, culminating in a meeting about the Clinic that Dr. Frederick arranged between himself, Attorney Chavers, Mrs. Chavers, and Howard's Provost, Anthony K. Wutoh.
- 18. Attorney Chavers also provided his Copyrighted Clinic and Copyrighted Memorandum Proposal to Provost Wutoh, who also is Howard's Chief Academic Officer.
- 19. Dr. Frederick, Mr. Wutoh, Mrs. Chavers, and Attorney Chavers met to discuss the Clinic.
- 20. Attorney Chavers also provided his Copyrighted Clinic and Copyrighted Memorandum Proposal to Danielle Holley-Walker, the current Dean of the Howard University School of Law.
- 21. Attorney Chavers also provided his Copyrighted Clinic and Copyrighted Memorandum Proposal to Professor Spencer H. Boyer, who is the senior-most faculty member at the Howard University School of Law. Attorney Chavers and Professor Boyer had numerous discussions about the Clinic.
- 22. As a result, Professor Boyer became a strong advocate for Howard to establish the Clinic that Attorney Chavers had conceived. To that end, Professor Boyer authored and published a work titled, "The Need for an Interdisciplinary Entertainment Law Clinic at the Howard

University School of Law," that credits Attorney Chavers with the structure and proposal for the Clinic (much of which Professor Boyer's publication incorporates). Professor Boyer called the Clinic an "imaginative and innovative approach" and a "bold, far reaching, and innovative clinic" that "is the embodiment and culmination of what is possible" at Howard.

- 23. Professor Boyer's advocacy, resounding approval, and many accolades for the Clinic is significant. Professor Boyer is incredibly well respected and highly regarded. He has taught at the Howard University School of Law for more than 50 years, has served under seventeen Howard University School of Law deans and seven Howard University presidents, is one of the most senior law professors in the United States, and is the most senior African American law professor in the United States.
- 24. Professor Boyer has taught many courses over his long and distinguished career, including entertainment law. Indeed, some of his former students established the Spencer H. Boyer Scholarship to be awarded to outstanding law students at the annual Black Entertainment and Sports Lawyer Association Conference. A group of Professor Boyer's former students also established the Spencer H. Boyer Annual Keynote Address to invite an outstanding lawyer in the entertainment industry to give an address at the annual Sports and Entertainment Law Student Association, one of the largest student sport and entertainment law school organizations in the country. Like Attorney Chavers, Professor Boyer has also practiced law and his clients include numerous famous clients in the sports and entertainment field.
- 25. Yet, despite the excitement over his Clinic, numerous meetings regarding the Clinic organized by Howard's President and by the school's Provost, meetings with the former and current Deans of the law school, and Professor Boyer's advocacy and praise for Attorney Chavers' imaginative, innovative, and bold approach, no one from Howard followed up with Attorney

Chavers about starting the Clinic at Howard.

- 26. Thus, Attorney Chavers believed that the university had decided not to pursue the Clinic and decided not to pursue the school further about it.
- 27. As Attorney Chavers discovered years later, however, Howard had not dismissed, declined, or disregarded the concept and his description of the Clinic. Instead, and to Attorney Chavers' surprise and disappointment, the university moved forward with and implemented his Clinic without him.
- 28. The "Howard Entertainment Clinic," as it is called by Howard, launched in 2019. Howard teamed up with Amazon Studios for the Clinic which, as the Copyrighted Clinic and Copyrighted Memorandum Proposal from Attorney Chavers state, is a two-semester program that includes hands-on internship work for students.
- 29. A Howard press release announcing the launch of the Howard Entertainment Clinic states that, "The vision of Howard Entertainment is to offer a one-of-a-kind experience for students interested in all aspects of entertainment, from project greenlighting, to PR and marketing, to entertainment law and finance,' said President Wayne A. I. Frederick, M.D., MBA. 'This relationship aligns with Howard's strategic goals of enhancing academic excellence and inspiring new knowledge."
- 30. This statement by Mr. Frederick—who before this time had received, reviewed, and discussed Attorney Chavers' Clinic materials and vision—mirrors the core vision and key elements of Attorney Chavers' copyrighted materials. Howard even describes its clinic as "a unique interdisciplinary curriculum"—*i.e.*, the very interdisciplinary curriculum and Clinic that Attorney Chavers authored, provided to, and discussed at length with Howard's President, its Provost, two law School Deans, and the law school's most distinguished and, arguably, most

influential professor.

31. Multiple communications from Attorney Chavers to Howard that sought to discuss and resolve these issues have been ignored.

## **COUNT I COPYRIGHT INFRINGEMENT**

- 32. Attorney Chavers incorporates by reference the allegations in Paragraphs 1 through 31 of this Complaint as if stated fully herein.
- 33. Attorney Chavers is the rightful owner of United States Copyright Registration Nos. TX0008981687 entitled "Sports and Entertainment," and TX0008981860 entitled "Memorandum Proposal for the Development of an Entertainment and Art Law Clinic At Howard University School of Law" (collectively, the "Copyrighted Works").
- 34. Defendant copied the constituent elements of Attorney Chavers' Copyrighted Works without any license, right, or permission from Attorney Chavers, with respect to Defendant Howard Entertainment Clinic, which is substantially similar in material respects to the protected aspects of Attorney Chavers' Copyrighted Works.
- 35. Defendant, prior to their copying and creation of the Howard University Clinic, had access to Attorney Chavers' Copyrighted Works.
- 36. Accordingly, Plaintiff Attorney Chavers respectfully requests that the Court enter a judgment against Defendant in Attorney Chavers' favor that includes the following relief:
  - A. Temporary and permanent injunctive relief injunction pursuant to 17 U.S.C. § 502 prohibiting Defendant from continuing to offer the Howard Entertainment Clinic (or a clinic or curriculum that is similar thereto), unless and until Defendant have a license to the Copyrighted Works;
  - B. Plaintiff's actual damages, including without limitation, a reasonably

royalty imposed for the use of his Copyrighted Works;

- C. Any additional profits of Defendant attributable to their infringement and not taken into account in computing actual damages;
- D. Statutory damages pursuant to 17 U.S.C. § 504(c), at Plaintiff's election, including damages for Defendants' willful infringement of up to \$150,000.00 per Copyrighted Work;
- E. Plaintiff's costs and reasonable attorney's fee in pursuing this Action; and
- F. Such other declaratory relief that the Court deems necessary or just.

#### TRIAL BY JURY DEMAND

Plaintiff hereby demands a trial by jury on all matters so triable.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/

Matthew G. Hjortsberg (DC Bar No. 463953) hjortsberg@bowie-jensen.com BOWIE & JENSEN, LLC 210 W. Pennsylvania Ave., Suite 400 Towson, Maryland 21204 (410) 583-2400

Fax: (410) 583-2437

Counsel for Plaintiff, Clayborne E. Chavers, Sr., Esq.

#### CIVIL COVER SHEET

JS-44 (Rev. 11/2020 DC)		-						
I. (a) PLAINTIFFS CLAYBORNE E. CHAVERS,	SR ESO		DEFENDANTS HOWARD UNIVERSITY					
7671 Midtown Road	Ort., LOQ.		2400 Sixth Stree					
Fulton, Maryland 20759			Washington, D.C		a			
T uitori, iviai ylarid 20703			Washington, D.C	). 2000.	,			
(b) COUNTY OF RESIDENCE OF FIRST LISTED PLAINTIFF Howard (EXCEPT IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CASES)			COUNTY OF RESIDENCE OF FIRST LISTED DEFENDANT					
(c) ATTORNEYS (FIRMNAME, ADDRES Matthew G. Hjortsberg BOWIE & JENSEN LLC 210 West Pennsylvania Aven Towson, Maryland 21204 (410)583-2400			ATTORNEYS (IF KNO	WN)				
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Defendant (I	iversity ndicate Citizenship of	Citizen of	Another State	- 1110		ated and Principal Place	<b>O</b> 5	<b>O</b> 5
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#### Case 1:23-cv-01840-RJL Document 1-1 Filed 06/23/23 Page 2 of 2

O G. Habeas Corpus/ 2255	O H. Employment Discrimination	O I. FOIA/Privacy Act	O J. Student Loan				
530 Habeas Corpus – General 510 Motion/Vacate Sentence 463 Habeas Corpus – Alien Detainee	442 Civil Rights – Employment (criteria: race, gender/sex, national origin, discrimination, disability, age, religion, retaliation)	895 Freedom of Information Act 890 Other Statutory Actions (if Privacy Act)	152 Recovery of Defaulted Student Loan (excluding veterans)				
	*(If pro se, select this deck)*	*(If pro se, select this deck)*					
K. Labor/ERISA (non-employment)  710 Fair Labor Standards Act 720 Labor/Mgmt. Relations 740 Labor Railway Act 751 Family and Medical Leave Act 790 Other Labor Litigation 791 Empl. Ret. Inc. Security Act	L. Other Civil Rights (non-employment)  441 Voting (if not Voting Rights Act)  443 Housing/Accommodations  440 Other Civil Rights  445 Americans w/Disabilities – Employment  446 Americans w/Disabilities – Other  448 Education	M. Contract  110 Insurance 120 Marine 130 Miller Act 140 Negotiable Instrument 150 Recovery of Overpayment & Enforcement of Judgment 153 Recovery of Overpayment of Veteran's Benefits 160 Stockholder's Suits 190 Other Contracts 195 Contract Product Liability 196 Franchise	○ N. Three-Judge Court  441 Civil Rights – Voting (if Voting Rights Act)				
V. ORIGIN							
O 1 Original Proceeding From State Court Court State S							
VI. CAUSE OF ACTION (CITE THE U.S. CIVIL STATUTE UNDER WHICH YOU ARE FILING AND WRITE A BRIEF STATEMENT OF CAUSE.)  17 U.S.C. § 502 - Prohibiting Defendant from continuing to offer Copyrighted Work unless or until Defendant has a license.							
VII. REQUESTED IN COMPLAINT  CHECK IF THIS IS A CLASS ACTION UNDER F.R.C.P. 23  DEMAND \$  Check YES only if demanded in complaint YES X NO							
VIII. RELATED CASE(S) IF ANY	(See instruction) YES	NO X If yes, p	lease complete related case form				
DATE:06/23/2023	SIGNATURE OF ATTORNEY OF REC	CORD Matthew G.	Hjortsberg				

### INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING CIVIL COVER SHEET JS-44 Authority for Civil Cover Sheet

The JS-44 civil cover sheet and the information contained herein neither replaces nor supplements the filings and services of pleadings or other papers as required by law, except as provided by local rules of court. This form, approved by the Judicial Conference of the United States in September 1974, is required for the use of the Clerk of Court for the purpose of initiating the civil docket sheet. Consequently, a civil cover sheet is submitted to the Clerk of Court for each civil complaint filed. Listed below are tips for completing the civil cover sheet. These tips coincide with the Roman Numerals on the cover sheet.

- I. COUNTY OF RESIDENCE OF FIRST LISTED PLAINTIFF/DEFENDANT (b) County of residence: Use 11001 to indicate plaintiff ir resident of Washington, DC, 88888 if plaintiff is resident of United States but not Washington, DC, and 99999 if plaintiff is outside the United States.
- III. CITIZENSHIP OF PRINCIPAL PARTIES: This section is completed only if diversity of citizenship was selected as the Basis of Jurisdiction under Section II.
- IV. CASE ASSIGNMENT AND NATURE OF SUIT: The assignment of a judge to your case will depend on the category you select that best represents the <u>primary</u> cause of action found in your complaint. You may select only <u>one</u> category. You <u>must</u> also select <u>one</u> corresponding nature of suit found under the category of the case.
- VI. CAUSE OF ACTION: Cite the U.S. Civil Statute under which you are filing and write a brief statement of the primary cause.
- VIII. RELATED CASE(S), IF ANY: If you indicated that there is a related case, you must complete a related case form, which may be obtained from the Clerk's Office.

Because of the need for accurate and complete information, you should ensure the accuracy of the information provided prior to signing the form.

### UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

011122 21	for the
	District of Columbia
CLAYBORNE E. CHAVERS, SR., ESQ. 7671 Midtown Road Fulton, Maryland 20759  Plaintiff(s)  v.  HOWARD UNIVERSITY 2400 Sixth Street, N.W. Washington, D.C. 20059  Defendant(s)	) ) ) ) (ivil Action No. ) ) ) ) ) ) ) ) ) ) ) ) )
SUMM	IONS IN A CIVIL ACTION
To: (Defendant's name and address)  HOWARD UNIVE 2400 Sixth Street, Washington, D.C.	, N.W.
A lawsuit has been filed against you.	
are the United States or a United States agency, or P. 12 (a)(2) or (3) — you must serve on the plain the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure. The answer whose name and address are:  Serve On:  Matthew G. Hjorts BOWIE & JENSE	Ivania Avenue, Suite 400
If you fail to respond, judgment by defau You also must file your answer or motion with the	alt will be entered against you for the relief demanded in the complaint. he court.
	ANGELA D. CAESAR, CLERK OF COURT
Date:	Signature of Clerk or Deputy Clerk
	signature of Cierk or Deputy Cierk

AO 440 (Rev. 06/12) Summons in a Civil Action (Page 2)

Civil Action No.

#### **PROOF OF SERVICE**

(This section should not be filed with the court unless required by Fed. R. Civ. P. 4 (1))

was re	This summons for (nanceived by me on (date)	ne of individual and title, if any) .						
	☐ I personally served	the summons on the individual a	nt (place)					
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	☐ I left the summons	at the individual's residence or u	usual place of abode with (name)					
		, a person	n of suitable age and discretion who res	sides there,				
	on (date)	on (date), and mailed a copy to the individual's last known address; or						
		I served the summons on (name of individual),						
	designated by law to a	accept service of process on beha		; or				
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	My fees are \$	for travel and \$	for services, for a total of \$	0.00				
	I declare under penalty	y of perjury that this information	is true.					
Date:								
			Server's signature					
			Printed name and title					
			Server's address					

Additional information regarding attempted service, etc:

# EXHIBIT A

#### Case 1:23-cv-01840-RJL Document 1-3 Filed 06/23/23 Page 2 of 2

Type of Work: Text

Registration Number / Date:

TX0008981687 / 2021-07-08

Application Title: Sports and Entertainment.

Title: Sports and Entertainment.

Description: Electronic file (eService)

Copyright Claimant:

Clayborne Edwin Chavers Esq.

Date of Creation: 2014

Date of Publication:

2014-09-03

Nation of First Publication:

United States

Authorship on Application:

Clayborne Edwin Chavers Esq.; Citizenship: United States.

Authorship: text.

Rights and Permissions:

Caleb L. Green, Dickinson Wright PLLC, 3883 Howard Hughes

Parkway, Suite 800, Las Vegas, NV, 89169, United States,

(702) 550-4417, cgreen@dickinsonwright.com

Names: Chavers, Clayborne Edwin

\_\_\_\_\_\_

# EXHIBIT B

#### Case 1:23-cv-01840-RJL Document 1-4 Filed 06/23/23 Page 2 of 2

Type of Work: Text

Registration Number / Date:

TX0008981860 / 2021-07-08

Application Title: Memorandum Proposal for the Development of an

Entertainment and Art Law Clinic At Howard University

School of Law. .

Title: Memorandum Proposal for the Development of an

Entertainment and Art Law Clinic At Howard University

School of Law. .

Description: Electronic file (eService)

Copyright Claimant:

Clayborne Edwin Chavers Esq.

Date of Creation: 2014

Date of Publication:

2014-07-20

Nation of First Publication:

United States

Authorship on Application:

Clayborne Edwin Chavers Esq.; Citizenship: United States.

Authorship: text.

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(702) 550-4417, cgreen@dickinsonwright.com

Names: Chavers, Clayborne Edwin

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