

SOFTWARE FREEDOM LAW CENTER, INC.

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Erik Andersen and Rob Landley

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK**

_____x

ERIK ANDERSEN, an individual,
and ROB LANDLEY, an individual,

Civil Action No. CV _____

Plaintiffs,

-against-

BELL MICROPRODUCTS, INC.

D.B.A. HAMMER STORAGE,

a California corporation,

COMPLAINT

Defendant.

_____x

This is an action by Erik Andersen, an individual, and Rob Landley, an individual, (“Plaintiffs”) by and through their attorneys, the Software Freedom Law Center, Inc., to recover damages arising from infringement of their copyrights by Bell Microproducts, Inc. (“Defendant”) and to enjoin Defendant’s future infringement. Specifically, Defendant distributed and continues to distribute Plaintiffs’ copyrighted BusyBox software without Plaintiffs’ permission and despite the fact that Plaintiffs notified Defendant of its unlawful activity. Since Defendant has infringed Plaintiffs’

copyrights, and since that infringement is ongoing, Plaintiffs seek damages and injunctive relief.

THE PARTIES

1. Erik Andersen is a private individual with a residence in Springville, Utah. Rob Landley is a private individual with a residence in Austin, Texas. Erik Andersen and Rob Landley (“Plaintiffs”) develop, market, distribute and license computer software in a professional capacity.

2. Upon information and belief, Bell Microproducts, Inc. (“Defendant”) is a California corporation with its principle place of business at 1941 Ringwood Avenue, San Jose, CA 95131. Upon information and belief, Defendant is engaged in the business of manufacturing, advertising, marketing and distributing computer hardware and software. Upon information and belief, Defendant regularly transacts substantial business in this district, including at least through its website where it sells and distributes its hardware and software products.

JURISDICTION AND VENUE

3. This Court has subject matter jurisdiction over Plaintiffs’ claims for copyright infringement pursuant to 17 U.S.C. §501 and 28 U.S.C. §§1331 and 1338(a).

4. This Court has personal jurisdiction over Defendant pursuant to Rule 4(K)(1)(a) of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure and §§301 and 302 of the New York Civil Practice Law and Rules because, upon information and belief, Defendant has conducted and continues to conduct substantial business in the State of New York. This business includes owning and operating a website at shop.bellmicro.com for the purposes of directly marketing, selling and supporting various communications devices to people in New York state, including residents of New York state.

5. Venue in this district is proper under 28 U.S.C. §§1391 and 1400 because a substantial part of the events giving rise to the claims asserted herein arise in this district, and Defendant,

upon information and belief, is and at all times was doing business in this district.

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

6. Plaintiffs are authors and developers of the BusyBox computer program, and the owners of copyrights in that computer program. BusyBox is a single computer program that comprises a set of computing tools and optimizes them for computers with limited resources, such as cell phones, PDAs and other small, specialized electronic devices. BusyBox is extremely customizable, fast and flexible, and, upon information and belief, is used in countless products sold by more than 100 manufacturers all over the world, including IBM, Nokia, Hewlett-Packard, and Siemens.

7. Plaintiffs have distributed BusyBox since on or about November 4, 1999. They distribute BusyBox in source code form, the human-readable form of a computer program that a programmer must have in order to make changes to the program. Plaintiffs distribute BusyBox under a license entitled the “GNU General Public License, Version 2” (“the License”). A copy of the License is attached to this Complaint as Exhibit A.

8. Under the License, Plaintiffs grant certain permissions to other parties to copy, modify and redistribute BusyBox so long as those parties satisfy certain conditions. In particular, Section 2(b) of the License, addressing each licensee, states:

You must cause any work that you distribute or publish, that in whole or in part contains or is derived from the Program or any part thereof, to be licensed as a whole at no charge to all third parties under the terms of this License.

Thus, if a licensee redistributes a version of BusyBox, it may do so only under the terms of the License.

9. The License permits a licensee to distribute BusyBox, or works based on BusyBox, in object code or executable form, on the condition that the licensee gives recipients access to

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10. Plaintiffs have at no time granted any permission to any party to copy, modify or distribute BusyBox under any terms other than those of the License.

11. Upon information and belief, Defendant makes and sells various communications devices and hardware (the “Infringing Products”) that contain embedded executable software (the “Firmware”). Defendant also provides the Firmware itself for download via its website, at http://www.hammer-storage.com/support/software_updates.asp.

12. Upon information and belief, Defendant’s Firmware contains BusyBox, or a modified version of BusyBox that is substantially similar to BusyBox, in object code or executable form. Distribution of the Firmware, either as part of the Infringing Products or by itself, thus inherently includes distribution of BusyBox and, as such, Defendant is required to have Plaintiffs’ permission

to make that distribution. The only such permission available for BusyBox is the contingent one granted under the License.

13. Upon information and belief, Defendant offers copies of the Firmware on its website, but does not offer any source code corresponding to the Firmware. Upon information and belief, since at least April 23, 2007, Defendant has distributed to the public copies of the Firmware in its Infringing Products and via its website without providing source code to BusyBox. Defendant's Infringing Products include Defendant's MyShare HN1200 network attached storage device.

14. Under the License, any party that redistributes BusyBox in a manner that does not comply with the terms of the License immediately and automatically loses all rights granted under it. Section 4 of the License states:

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As such, any rights Defendant may have had under the License to redistribute BusyBox were automatically terminated the instant that Defendant made non-compliant distribution of the Infringing Products or Firmware. Since that time, Defendant has had no right to distribute BusyBox, or a modified version of BusyBox, under any circumstances or conditions.

15. Upon information and belief, on January 18, 2008, Defendant was notified by a third party of the relevant terms of the GPL and Defendant's infringement thereof. This notification was provided via an e-mail requesting the complete and corresponding source code of the GPL-licensed software on an Infringing Product.

16. On April 21, 2008, through their counsel, Plaintiffs notified Defendant of its unlawful conduct based upon its failure to comply with the License. Defendant has not responded to

Plaintiffs' notice and continues to distribute the Infringing Products and Firmware in violation of Plaintiffs' exclusive rights under the Copyright Act.

COUNT I
COPYRIGHT INFRINGEMENT

17. Plaintiffs reallege and restate paragraphs 1 through 16 as if more fully set forth herein.

18. Plaintiffs are, and at all relevant times have been, the copyright owners under United States copyright law in the software program known as BusyBox.

19. Defendant's distribution of its Infringing Products and Firmware without approval or authorization by Plaintiffs infringes Plaintiffs' exclusive copyrights in BusyBox pursuant to 17 U.S.C. §501.

20. Plaintiffs are entitled to recover from Defendant the amount of their actual damages incurred as a result of the infringement, in such amount as is shown by appropriate evidence upon the trial of this case. 17 U.S.C. §504.

21. Plaintiffs are also entitled to injunctive relief pursuant to 17 U.S.C. §502 and to an order impounding any and all infringing materials pursuant to 17 U.S.C. §503. Plaintiffs have no adequate remedy at law for Defendant's wrongful conduct because, among other things, (a) Plaintiffs' copyrights are unique and valuable property whose market value is impossible to assess, (b) Defendant's infringement harms Plaintiffs such that Plaintiffs could not be made whole by any monetary award, and (c) Defendant's wrongful conduct, and the resulting damage to Plaintiffs, is continuing.

22. Plaintiffs are also entitled to recover their attorneys' fees and costs of suit. 17 U.S.C. §505.

PRAYER FOR RELIEF

WHEREFORE, Plaintiffs respectfully request judgment against the Defendant as follows:

(1) That the Court issue injunctive relief against Defendant, and that Defendant, its directors, principals, officers, agents, representatives, servants, employees, attorneys, successors and assigns, and all others in active concert or participation with Defendant, be enjoined and restrained from copying, modifying, distributing or making any other infringing use of Plaintiffs' software.

(2) That the Court order Defendant to pay Plaintiffs' actual and consequential damages incurred, in an amount to be determined at trial;

(3) That the Court order Defendant to account for and disgorge to Plaintiffs all profits derived by Defendant from its unlawful acts;

(4) That the Court order Defendant to pay Plaintiffs' litigation expenses, including reasonable attorney's fees and costs of this action; and

(5) That the Court grant Plaintiffs any such further relief as the Court may deem just and proper.

Dated: New York, New York
June 9, 2008

Respectfully submitted,

SOFTWARE FREEDOM LAW CENTER, INC.

By: _____

Aaron K. Williamson (AW1337)

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New York, NY 10023-5882

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Attorney for Plaintiffs

Erik Andersen and Rob Landley

EXHIBIT A

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Version 2, June 1991

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