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8 SEAN HALL D.B.A. GIMME SOME HOT
SAUCE MUSIC AND NATHAN BUTLER
9 D.B.A. FAITH FORCE MUSIC

10 **UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT**
11 **CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA**

12 SEAN HALL d.b.a. GIMME SOME
13 HOT SAUCE MUSIC, an individual,
14 and NATHAN BUTLER d.b.a. FAITH
FORCE MUSIC, an individual,

15
16 Plaintiffs,

17 v.

18 TAYLOR SWIFT, an individual, KARL
19 MARTIN SANDBERG, an individual,
20 KARL JOHAN SCHUSTER, an
individual, SONY/ATV MUSIC
21 PUBLISHING, LLC a limited liability
22 company, KOBALT MUSIC
23 PUBLISHING AMERICA INC. a
Delaware Corporation, BIG MACHINE
24 LABEL GROUP, LLC, a limited
liability company, UNIVERSAL
25 MUSIC GROUP, INC., a California
26 Corporation, and DOES 1-5,

27 Defendants.
28

Case No.

**COMPLAINT FOR COPYRIGHT
INFRINGEMENT**

DEMAND FOR JURY TRIAL

1 Plaintiffs, SEAN HALL D.B.A. GIMME SOME HOT SAUCE MUSIC and
2 NATHAN BUTLER D.B.A. FAITH FORCE MUSIC hereby allege as follows:

3 **PARTIES**

4 1. Plaintiff SEAN HALL D.B.A. GIMME SOME HOT SAUCE MUSIC
5 (“Hall”) is a songwriter and a resident of the State of California. Hall is a co-author
6 of the musical composition entitled “*Playas Gon’ Play*” and a legal and/or beneficial
7 owner of a copyright interest in and to that musical composition.

8 2. Plaintiff NATHAN BUTLER D.B.A. FAITH FORCE MUSIC
9 (“Butler”) is a songwriter and a resident of the State of Georgia. Butler is a co-author
10 of the musical composition entitled “*Playas Gon’ Play*” and a legal and/or beneficial
11 owner of a copyright interest in and to that musical composition.

12 3. On information and belief, Defendant, TAYLOR SWIFT (“Swift”), is a
13 songwriter and a resident of the State of California and, at all material times, is and
14 was doing business in the State of California and within this judicial district.

15 4. On information and belief, Defendant KARL MARTIN SANDBERG
16 aka Max Martin (“Sandberg”), is a songwriter and a resident of the State of
17 California and, at all material times, is and was doing business in the State of
18 California and within this judicial district.

19 5. On information and belief, Defendant KARL JOHAN SCHUSTER aka
20 Shellback (“Schuster”), is a songwriter and a resident of the State of California and,
21 at all material times, is and was doing business in the State of California and within
22 this judicial district.

23 6. Defendant SONY/ATV MUSIC PUBLISHING, LLC (“Sony”) is a
24 limited liability company existing under the law of the State of Delaware, admitted
25 and authorized to conduct business in the State of California, and with offices in the
26 County of Los Angeles, State of California. On information and belief, Plaintiffs
27 allege that Sony owns or co-owns the publishing rights in and to the infringing
28 musical composition “*Shake it Off*”.

1 Defendants reside or may be found within this district and personal jurisdiction may
2 be properly obtained over the Defendants.

3 GENERAL ALLEGATIONS

4 **Plaintiffs And 3LW's "*Playas Gon' Play*"**

5 13. Plaintiff Hall is a songwriter and music producer. Since roughly 1993,
6 Hall has written and produced hundreds of songs for various artists such as Justin
7 Bieber, Color Me Badd, Xscape, 98°, Lionel Richie, Pink!, and Maroon 5.

8 14. Plaintiff Butler is a songwriter, music producer, vocal producer, and
9 recording artist. He has worked with multi-platinum artists such as Luther
10 Vandross, Victoria Beckham aka Posh Spice, Backstreet Boys, Christina
11 Milian, Stacie Orrico, JoJo, Aaron Carter, and several others. To date, Butler has
12 accounted for over 45 million records sold worldwide.

13 15. In 2001, Plaintiffs Hall and Butler co-authored the song entitled
14 "*Playas Gon' Play*". "*Playas Gon' Play*" was recorded by the girl group 3LW and
15 released to the public in May 2001.

16 16. After its release, "*Playas Gon' Play*" became a hit. "*Playas Gon' Play*"
17 stayed on Billboard's Hot 100 chart for weeks peaking at No. 81. "*Playas Gon'*
18 *Play*" also reached No. 56 on Billboard's Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs chart and No. 17
19 on Billboard's Rhythmic chart.

20 17. "*Playas Gon' Play*" helped springboard the career of 3LW – one of the
21 top girl groups of their era. The song "*Playas Gon' Play*" served as the second single
22 on 3LW's self-titled debut album *3LW*. That album reached No. 29 on the Billboard
23 200 album chart, No. 19 on the Billboard Top R&B/Hip-Hop chart, and was
24 certified platinum by the RIAA with over 1,000,000 units sold.

25 18. In addition, on March 7, 2001 "*Playas Gon' Play*" debuted at #7 on
26 TRL, MTV's video countdown show which played the ten most requested music
27 videos of the day. In the early 2000s, inclusion on the TRL top ten countdown was
28 the benchmark for a top 40 song's popularity.

1 19. In addition, 3LW performed “*Playas Gon’ Play*” several times national
2 television including on Regis & Kelly, MTV, and Fox Family.

3 20. “*Playas Gon’ Play*” includes the lyrical phrase “Playas, they gonna
4 play / And haters, they gonna hate.” The combination of playas/players playing
5 along with hatas/haters¹ hating may seem like common parlance today², however, in
6 2001 it was completely original and unique. Indeed, the combination had not been
7 used in popular culture prior to Plaintiffs’ original use.

8 21. While previous artists had used terms such as “playa hater(s)” or “playa
9 hater(s) hate...” those do not make Plaintiffs’ phrase any less original. The term
10 “playa hater(s)” was often used as a noun to describe a type of person. As commonly
11 used “playa hater(s)” described just one person, a person who hates playas.

12 22. Similarly, the term “playa haters hate” or simply “haters hate” was
13 often used to describe a certain thing that the playa hater or the hater actually held
14 with discontent. When used in this way the term described one person, either a playa
15 hater or a hater, who often engaged in hating.

16 23. Through Plaintiffs’ own originality they created the original and unique
17 lyrical phrase “Playas, they gonna play / And haters, they gonna hate” which is
18 featured prominently in the chorus of Plaintiffs’ work. A version of this phrase “The
19 playas gon’ play / Them haters gonna hate” appears in the introduction of the song.
20 As created by Plaintiffs, the lyrical phrase describes two separate people – one playa
21 who engages in playing and one hater who engages in hating.

22 24. That Plaintiffs originated the linguistic combination of playas/players
23 playing along with hatas/haters hating was recently espoused by the United States
24 District Court for the Central District of Los Angeles in the case *Jessie Braham v.*
25 *Sony/ATV Music Publishing, et. al.*, United States District Court for the Central
26

27 ¹ The terms’ spellings “playa”/”player” and “hater”/”hata” have been used interchangeably in
popular and hip hop culture.

28 ² In large part due to the success of the infringing song “*Shake it Off*”.

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