

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

RIDEAPP, INC.

Plaintiff

CIVIL ACTION NO. 18-cv-6625

v.

JURY TRIAL DEMANDED

LYFT, INC.

Defendant

COMPLAINT

In 1999, Georgia Tech Engineering Professor Stephen Dickerson conceived of a transportation system to provide greater convenience and service to customers, especially underserved communities such as the outer boroughs of New York City, and to reduce the social and personal costs of commuting. His system integrated cell phones, the Global Positioning System, and automatic billing technology to allow a passenger who needed a ride to be connected to a driver with an empty seat who was going to the same destination. The system he envisioned would identify the passenger to the driver and vice versa, estimate connection and arrival times, and automatically bill the passenger in a safe and secure manner that required no cash to change hands. And he conceived of all of this at a time during which no major cellphone manufacturer had yet integrated GPS technology into any commercially available cellphones, and certainly no cellphones allowed for automatic billing for anything other than cellphone calls.

In April 2000, he filed an application for a patent on the transportation system he invented. He was awarded U.S. Patent No. 6,697,730 to protect his ideas, and he later incorporated RideApp (“RideApp” or “Plaintiff”) to develop that transportation system.

More than ten years after Professor Dickerson filed his patent application, Lyft was formed. The core of its business model is the transportation system of Prof. Dickerson’s invention; without that system, Lyft literally cannot operate. Throughout its existence, it has egregiously infringed the ‘730 Patent without paying any compensation to Prof. Dickerson, despite earning up to \$1 billion in annual revenue. Prof. Dickerson seeks that compensation through this lawsuit.

A. NATURE OF ACTION

1. This is an action for patent infringement under the patent laws of the United States, Title 35 of the United States Code, arising from Defendant’s infringement of one or more claims of United States Patent No. 6,697,730 (the “‘730 Patent”).

B. PARTIES

2. Plaintiff RideApp, Inc. is a company organized and existing under the laws of the State of Delaware with a place of business at 227 Sandy Springs Place, Suite D-273, Sandy Springs, Georgia 30328. RideApp develops transportation system software to reduce the social costs of traffic congestion and inefficient travel, as more fully described below.

3. Defendant Lyft is a company organized and existing under the laws of the State of Delaware but with a principal place of business at 185 Berry Street, Suite 5000, San Francisco, CA 94107. Lyft has maintained a permanent business location with approximately 80 engineering, marketing, and sales employees at 245 West 17th Street, New York, New York, in this judicial district, since November 2017. Lyft’s agent for service of process is CT Corporation System, 111 Eighth Avenue, New York, NY 10011. Lyft is a privately-held, for-profit corporation that provides on-demand transportation services to individuals.

C. JURISDICTION AND VENUE

4. This action arises under the patent laws of the United States, Title 35 of the United States Code. This Court has subject matter jurisdiction over this action pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §§ 1331 and 1338(a).

5. This Court has personal jurisdiction over Defendant because, *inter alia*, Lyft maintains a regular and established place of business in this judicial district, Lyft transacts business in this district and has sufficient minimum contacts within the forum as a result of its business conducted within the this judicial district, and it has engaged in infringing conduct within or directed at this district.

6. Venue is proper in this District pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §§ 1391 and 1400(b).

D. FACTS AND BACKGROUND

1. Professor Dickerson Invents A Coordinated Transportation System To Minimize The Social Costs Of Traffic Congestion.

7. Dr. Stephen Dickerson received his Sc.D. degree from MIT in 1965. He was then hired as an Assistant Professor at Georgia Institute of Technology (“Georgia Tech”) in the George W. Woodruff School of Mechanical Engineering. Dr. Dickerson retired from Georgia Tech as a Professor Emeritus in 1996.

8. Around the time of his invention, Professor Dickerson had serious concerns about the social costs of urban transportation, such as traffic congestion, environmental impacts, costs of and impact on infrastructure, travel time and uncertainty, and high costs of individual transportation borne by families. Indeed, during this period, the city of Atlanta was undergoing explosive growth, with the increasingly negative effects of traffic usually attendant to such rapid expansion. Nearly a decade before companies like Lyft began operations, Professor Dickerson

was a pioneer in developing the radical idea of what we have come to know as ride- and vehicle-sharing services.

9. Professor Dickerson invented an automated transit system that uses wireless, hand-held devices to hail vehicles; includes integrated global positioning system (“GPS”) matching and billing for rides; provides for an automated, cash-free transaction; and advises both the driver and the passenger of each other’s GPS location and the time at which a driver is anticipated to arrive.

10. In approximately August 2006, Professor Dickerson donated \$1.5 million in proceeds from another invention to Georgia Tech to endow a chair for a professor to study and develop such transportation solutions.

2. The Patent-In-Suit Discloses An Integrated, More Efficient Transportation System.

11. Professor Dickerson is listed as the inventor of the ‘730 Patent.

12. On February 24, 2004, the United States Patent and Trademark Office (“USPTO”) issued the ‘730 Patent, entitled “Communications and Computing Based Urban Transit System.” The application that issued as the ‘730 Patent was filed on April 4, 2001, with priority claimed to a provisional patent application U.S. Ser. No. 60/273,286, also entitled “Communications and Computing Based Urban Transit System” (filed on March 1, 2001) and originally to U.S. Ser. No. 60/194,416, entitled “Communications and Computing Based Urban Transit System” (filed on April 4, 2000).

13. As a faculty member of Georgia Tech, Professor Dickerson was initially obligated to assign his ‘730 Patent to the Georgia Tech Research Corporation, and this assignment was recorded by the USPTO on April 4, 2001. The Georgia Tech Research Corporation licensed

the '730 Patent but made no effort to enforce it against any infringing parties during the time that it held the patent by assignment.

14. In early 2018, then retired but still interested in pursuing further development of the claimed technology, Professor Dickerson was able, in discussions with the Georgia Tech Research Corporation, to have the assignment for the '730 Patent returned to him. This was accomplished in an assignment recorded on February 20, 2018, with a corrected assignment subsequently recorded on April 26, 2018. Professor Dickerson subsequently assigned the '730 Patent to his newly formed transportation company, RideApp, Inc., with a recording date of May 7, 2018 in the USPTO.

15. RideApp is the current owner by assignment of all right, title, and interest in and to the '730 Patent and has standing to sue for the past, present, and future infringement of the '730 Patent. The claims of the '730 Patent are valid and enforceable. A true and correct copy of the '730 Patent is attached. *See Ex. A.*

16. The claims of the '730 Patent generally are directed to an automated transit system that integrates digital cellular communications, GPS locating technology, automatic billing and payment, and digital computers that interface with all of the foregoing to provide real-time command and control of passengers and vehicles.

17. The '730 Patent addresses the economic and social problems of commuting; offers car transportation services to underserved communities, such as the outer boroughs of New York City; reduces pollution; reduces the costs of purchasing, maintaining, owning, operating, and insuring motor vehicles; addresses the costs of building and maintaining highways, mass transportation systems, and other infrastructure required for individual transportation vehicles; addresses the inefficiencies attendant to the fact that, by some estimates, most passenger vehicles

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