

Lawsuit Over Web Site is an “Idol” Threat

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Winner Taylor Hicks may have crooned his last soulful tune on “American Idol”, but for attorney Jeff Valle and his client Adam Pick, the fun is just beginning.

The Valle & Associates LLP partner and his client have sued American Idol Productions Inc. and Fremantle Media of North America Inc. on behalf of client Adam Pick. The plaintiffs claim that the phenomenally successful show – more than 32 million Americans watched the finals – stole an interactive Web site idea from Pick, a local businessman and “Idol” fan. The site www.idolgohome.com, allowed fans to act as judges and pick which contestants were eliminated.

After Pick launched his site, he claims the defendants demanded it be shut down, even though they had passed on buying his idea prior to the launch. The official “Idol” site later added a fantasy game similar to Pick’s.

American Idol Productions declined to comment.

“This case premise is on a long-standing body of law largely arising in the Hollywood world where people come to producers and pitch ideas,” Valle said. “And the courts have recognized that it understood that I’m pitching this to you with the understanding that you’re not going to use it without compensating me. And if those circumstances are present an implied contract can arise.”

Valle added that “Idol” Web site’s traffic increased dramatically after implementing the fantasy game. The suit also contains an allegation that Pick’s site was shut down in part because it had a section with estimated voting results. There have been unsubstantiated allegations of vote tampering on “Idol” and Pick maintains that this site may have uncovered some of the inconsistencies.

The suit seeks unspecified damages and an order that the defendants stop using the fantasy game on their show’s Web site.