

Attorneys for Plaintiff Brittany Alexandria Sheets

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

BRITTANY ALEXANDRIA SHEETS, an individual, aka Mars Argo;

Plaintiff,

VS.

COREY MICHAEL MIXTER, an individual, aka Titanic Sinclair; TITANIC SINCLAIR PRODUCTIONS, INC., a California corporation; MORIAH ROSE PEREIRA, an individual, aka Poppy, aka ThatPoppy, aka I am Poppy; and I AM POPPY, INC., a California corporation

Defendants.

CASE NO. CV 18-3204

COMPLAINT FOR:

- 1. COPYRIGHT INFRINGEMENT
- 2. COMMON LAW RIGHT OF PUBLICITY
- 3. VIOLATION OF CALIFORNIA'S UNFAIR BUSINESS LAWS (Cal. Bus. & Prof. Code §§17200, et seq.)
- 4. DOMESTIC VIOLENCE DAMAGES (Cal. Code Proc. §340.15)

DEMAND FOR JURY TRIAL

COMPLAINT

Plaintiff Brittany Alexandria Sheets alleges as follows:

I. INTRODUCTION

- 1. Plaintiff Brittany Alexandria Sheets is an actress and recording artist known by the alter ego and stage name "Mars Argo."
- 2. Ms. Sheets is originally from Saginaw, Michigan, and, in 2008, met a local man named Corey Mixter. The two began a romantic relationship, and also began pursuing creative endeavors together. They subsequently moved together to Chicago and then to Los Angeles.
- 3. In addition to being the alter ego of Plaintiff Brittany Sheets, Mars Argo also is the name of a musical project between Ms. Sheets and Mr. Mixter, who is known by his alter ego of Titanic Sinclair ("Mr. Mixter" or "Titanic Sinclair"). In 2009, Ms. Sheets and Mr. Mixter began making music in their bedroom and releasing videos of their performances on their YouTube channel called Grocerybag.tv. All of the content on the channel was self-produced and consisted of short films, music videos, and a show called "Computer Show." The channel was active from 2009 through 2015, and roughly 92 videos were released during that time.
- 4. In addition to producing and publishing content through their YouTube channel, in early 2012, Mars Argo began performing live stage shows and performing for audiences at venues across the country.
- 5. Although Mars Argo was growing in popularity during this time, Ms. Sheets was living a nightmare and, behind closed doors, she was enduring severe emotional and psychological abuse and manipulation from Mr. Mixter.
- 6. In January 2014, after confronting Mr. Mixter about his recurrent infidelity, Ms. Sheets ended her relationship with Mr. Mixter, and asked that their association become strictly professional. However, Mr. Mixter did not honor Ms. Sheets' requests. Following the end of their romantic relationship,

- 7. Despite Mr. Mixter's abusive behavior, Ms. Sheets was hesitant to end their professional association because she had worked so hard to build Mars Argo, and the project was gaining notoriety.
- 8. In mid-2014, however, the abuse and manipulation from Mr. Mixter became too much, and Ms. Sheets stopped making new content with him. Upon losing Ms. Sheets, Mr. Mixter's intimidation only intensified.
- 9. Finally, in late 2015, Ms. Sheets decided she had no option but to leave Los Angeles, to try to protect herself from Mr. Mixter's threats and harassment.
- 10. Around the same time that Mr. Mixter had been actively harassing Ms. Sheets, in November 2014, Mr. Mixter calculatedly transformed another woman, Moriah Rose Pereira known by the stage name "ThatPoppy" or "Poppy" or "I'm Poppy" (collectively "Poppy") into a Mars Argo knockoff.
- 11. Although Poppy was a natural brunette, after meeting Mr. Mixter, Ms. Pereira dyed her hair a specific platinum blonde and, in character as Poppy, started to alter her voice to be a pitch higher to mimic Mars Argo's distinctive speaking voice.
- 12. Mr. Mixter and Ms. Pereira began to produce short segments on a YouTube channel that were set against substantially similar backdrops and in a deliberately similar format to the Mars Argo project.
- 13. From November 2014 to the present, through the Poppy project, Mr. Mixter and Ms. Pereira as Poppy, deliberately copied Mars Argo's identity, likeness, expression of ideas, sound, style, and aesthetic in YouTube segments,

- 14. Moreover, by combining that infringement with a sinister campaign of harassment, Mr. Mixter attempted to drive Ms. Sheets out of the entertainment business not only stealing her intellectual property but appropriating her entire persona.
- 15. Like many women, Ms. Sheets has previously been afraid to come forward with her story. She feared retribution and retaliation from Mr. Mixter, including further public disparagement and renewed intimidation of professional and personal acquaintances.
- 16. Ms. Sheets also continues to fear for her own personal safety, given Mr. Mixter's violent, menacing, and unstable conduct following their break-up.
- 17. Ms. Sheets realizes, however, that the only way to gain freedom from Mr. Mixter and to move forward both professionally and personally is to hold him and his enablers accountable and seek protection from the Court.
- 18. This complaint seeks damages from Mr. Mixter both for his personal abuse of Ms. Sheets, and from Mr. Mixter and from his company in copying Mars Argo's identity, likeness, and expression of ideas as part of his work with the artist Poppy, and for the blatant and willful infringement of Mars Argo's copyright.
- 19. In addition, given Mr. Mixter's past history of abuse, Ms. Sheets is simultaneously seeking a domestic violence restraining order against Mr. Mixter in state court during the pendency of this litigation so Ms. Sheets is protected from further retaliation and abuse as a result of this lawsuit.
- 20. Additionally, Ms. Sheets seeks damages from Ms. Pereira for being a knowing accomplice to Mr. Mixter's unlawful actions in deliberately copying,

stealing, and appropriating Ms. Sheets' identity, style, aesthetic, likeness, expression of ideas, content, and work as Mars Argo in her own work as Poppy.

II. JURISDICTION AND VENUE

- 21. This is an action for copyright infringement arising under the Copyright Act of 1976, as amended, 17 U.S.C. § 101 *et seq*. The Court has subject matter jurisdiction under 17 U.S.C. § 501 and 28 U.S.C. §§ 1331 and 1338(a). This Court also has supplemental jurisdiction over Plaintiff's claims arising under state law under 28 U.S.C. § 1367, as those claims form part of the same case or controversy.
- 22. Venue is proper in this District under 28 U.S.C. §§ 1391(b) and 1400(a) because Defendants Mixter and Pereira reside in this District, may be found in this District, and are subject to personal jurisdiction in this District. Mr. Mixter and Ms. Pereira also have substantial and continuous ties to this District.
- 23. This Court has personal jurisdiction over Defendant Mixter because, among other things, (i) Corey Michael Mixter, aka Titanic Sinclair, transacts business and works in this District, (ii) engaged in wrongdoing in this District; and (iii) resides in this District.
- 24. This Court has personal jurisdiction over Defendant Pereira because, among other things, (i) Moriah Rose Pereira, aka Poppy, transacts business and works in this District, (ii) engaged in wrongdoing in this District; and (iii) resides in this District.

III. PARTIES

- 25. The Plaintiff in this action is Brittany Alexandria Sheets an individual, who is now and at various relevant times was a resident of Los Angeles, California.
- 26. Plaintiff is informed and believes that Mr. Mixter is, and was at all relevant times, an individual and resident of the County of Los Angeles, State of

- 27. Defendant Titanic Sinclair Productions, Inc. is a California corporation that filed articles of incorporation on or around April 10, 2017. A December 5, 2017, State of California Statement of Information lists Defendant Mixter as the Chief Executive Officer, Secretary, Chief Financial Officer, and Director of the corporation. The corporation business type is "entertainment services."
- 28. Defendant Moriah Rose Pereira goes by the professional name "Poppy" aka "ThatPoppy" aka "I'm Poppy." Plaintiff is informed and believes that Ms. Pereira is, and was at all relevant times, an individual and resident of the County of Los Angeles, State of California.
- 29. Defendant I am Poppy, Inc. is a California corporation that filed articles of incorporation on or around July 11, 2017. An August 21, 2017, State of California Statement of Information lists Defendant Pereira as the Chief Executive Officer, Secretary, Chief Financial Officer, and Director of the corporation. The corporation business type is "entertainment services."

IV. BACKGROUND

- A. Ms. Sheets and Mr. Mixter Began Mars Argo In 2009 And Created Original Content for Mars Argo Until 2014
- 30. Mars Argo is the alter ego of singer, actress, YouTube artist and personality Brittany Sheets. It is also the name of the musical project between Ms. Sheets and Corey Mixter, who is known by his alter ego, Titanic Sinclair ("Titanic Sinclair" or "Mr. Mixter"). Ms. Sheets and Mr. Mixter began dating in 2008. In 2009, Ms. Sheets and Mr. Mixter began making music in their bedroom and released content on their YouTube channel called Grocerybag.tv.

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All of the content on the channel was self-produced and consisted of short films, music videos, and a show called "Computer Show." The channel was active from 2009 through 2015. Roughly 92 videos were released while still active. The videos were an artistic social commentary on the internet, celebrity, and pop culture, with a focus on the future and technology.

- 31. Throughout this time, Ms. Sheets created, developed, participated in, and contributed to Mars Argo content, scripts, directing, lighting, framing, filming, editing, motion graphics, color correction, hair/make-up, wardrobe, styling, sound design, lyrical composition, and imaging and branding for Mars Argo videos, songs, recordings and performances. Ms. Sheets' photography was largely responsible for the "look" of Mars Argo, and Mr. Mixter continues to appropriate that work to this day.
- In addition to her creative contributions, throughout their personal 32. and professional relationship, Mr. Mixter was essentially insolvent, relying on constant financial support from Ms. Sheets and her family.
- 33. In late 2012/early 2013, Ms. Sheets and Mr. Mixter moved to Los Angeles, and auditioned new members for their band to perform live shows in addition to producing internet content. When they moved to Los Angeles, Sheets and Mixter shared an apartment.
- Around this time, in early 2013, Ms. Sheets and Mr. Mixter 34. received a loan from Ms. Sheets' father, Don Sheets, to fund the Mars Argo project. As part of the loan, Ms. Sheets, Don Sheets, and Mr. Mixter formed the Mars Argo, LLC, a limited liability company in the state of Michigan, in which Don Sheets became an 83.3% owner of Mars Argo, LLC, with Brittany Sheets and Corey Mixter each respectively owning 8.3% of Mars Argo, LLC (incorporated in April 2013). Mars Argo LLC also was incorporated in Los Angeles in March 2013. The purpose of the Mars Argo, LLC was to develop

the Mars Argo brand to generate revenue from a variety of sources, including royalties, retail sales, licensing revenue and appearance fees.

- 35. Although the band Mars Argo grew in popularity during this time, Ms. Sheets was enduring severe emotional and psychological abuse and manipulation from Mr. Mixter. He constantly insulted her intellect and denigrated and degraded her in public and in private.
- 36. He repeatedly told her that she was getting old and that she needed him to be successful in her career. He created a sense that she was running out of time and that her only solution was to finance the project and create content for it. Unsurprisingly, a review of Mars Argo songs from the time shows that many lyrics were related to the controlling nature of the relationship with Mr. Mixter.
- 37. Ms. Sheets believes that Mr. Mixter deliberately sought to shatter her self-confidence so that she would not pursue any individual creative opportunities and would instead continue to support him both creatively and financially.
- 38. If Ms. Sheets had an opportunity to collaborate on an outside project, Mr. Mixter would belittle the opportunity and speak poorly of the person or project, so that Ms. Sheets would, in turn, feel doubt or distrust. Mr. Mixter would then advise her on how to respond to the opportunity or even take it upon himself to draft a response for her to turn down the project.
- 39. Finally, in January 2014, after confronting Mr. Mixter about his recurrent infidelity, Ms. Sheets ended the romantic relationship with Mr. Mixter, and shortly thereafter asked him to move out of the apartment they shared. However, they continued to work together professionally due to Mars Argo's rising popularity and upcoming live shows the band had scheduled. They also had recently shot the music video for the single "Using You" with a Grammy Award nominee for producer of the year and were in the process of editing the

video.

40. Shortly thereafter, in February 2014, Mars Argo released "Delete Your Facebook" on Grocerybag.tv.

- 41. During this time, the band Mars Argo continued to gain a cult following, and in March 2014, Mars Argo performed three successful showcases at the South by Southwest festival in Austin, Texas. Thereafter, Mars Argo continued to perform shows, including at the Nerdmelt Theater in Los Angeles, California.
- 42. Because of Mars Argo's rising success, Ms. Sheets attempted to maintain a working relationship with Mr. Mixter, but found it increasingly difficult due to his emotionally-abusive, demeaning, and manipulative conduct. This behavior by Mr. Mixter was witnessed by others including friends, neighbors, and Mars Argo band members.
- 43. As a result, on May 31, 2014, Ms. Sheets and Mars Argo canceled their first show at Belly of the Beast Blowout festival in Los Angeles, California.
- 44. In June 2014, Ms. Sheets put the band on hiatus from rehearsals and performances. Thereafter, Mr. Mixter's abusive conduct only grew worse.
- 45. Around this time, Mr. Mixter began frequently breaking into Ms. Sheets' gated apartment building and would wait for her in the courtyard of the building until she got home.

Pereira, known by her stage name at the time "ThatPoppy" (now "Poppy"),

through a mutual friend. At the time, Poppy was a brunette with dark brown

hair.

46.



Around the same time, in mid-2014, Mr. Mixter met Moriah Rose

47. Ms. Sheets is informed and believes that Mr. Mixter and Ms. Pereira began working together a few months after meeting, although Ms. Sheets was unaware of it at the time.

48. Soon thereafter, Ms. Pereira began to sport a shorter blonde hairstyle resembling that of Ms. Sheets at the time. Looking back on social media comments, it appears Mars Argo fans immediately noticed:



- 49. In August 2014, Ms. Sheets requested that Mr. Mixter not contact her going forward. However, throughout August and September 2014, Mr. Mixter continued to contact Ms. Sheets against her wishes, including sending a text message threatening his own suicide. Mr. Mixter also continued to break into Ms. Sheets' gated apartment complex to wait for her in the courtyard.
- 50. On one afternoon in September 2014, Ms. Sheets found Mr. Mixter sitting in her courtyard and he seemed jittery. He demanded that she delete all of the videos on their YouTube channel. His behavior and mannerisms frightened Ms. Sheets, who immediately changed the passwords to the Grocerybag.tv YouTube account to protect their work. Ms. Sheets had always been the one responsible for monitoring and managing the account, so it was not unusual for her to access the channel.
 - B. Mr. Mixter Begins To Copy The Mars Argo Project With Poppy
 And To Increasingly Threaten And Attack Ms. Sheets
- 51. In November 2014, Mr. Mixter started releasing videos with Poppy. The first video released was entitled "Poppy Eats Cotton Candy." When Ms. Sheets originally met Poppy, she had short brown hair and looked extremely different than how she appears today. Once Poppy began working with Mr. Mixter, however, she started sporting a blonde bob and her natural voice was altered in videos to be a pitch higher to sound like Mars Argo.
- 52. In addition to copying the look of Ms. Sheets, the aesthetic of the Poppy videos also is similar to that of Mars Argo. Like Mars Argo, most Poppy videos had a plain, white-hued backdrop, were framed like a portrait with the main subject in the middle of the frame. Poppy would tilt her head to the camera, and the videos had a colorful, childlike kawaii pop culture effect (kawaii is the culture of cuteness in Japan). Both Mars Argo and Poppy are often described as having a "doll-like" quality.

Poppy, on November 9, 2014, Mr. Mixter broke into Ms. Sheets apartment

through her bedroom window in the middle of the night. He was obviously

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intoxicated or high on drugs. Ms. Sheets asked him to leave and go home. Ms. Sheets photographed the broken window.

Around the same time Mr. Mixter released his first work with

- 54. A few weeks later, Mr. Mixter broke into Ms. Sheets' apartment when she was not home and went onto her computer to log into her Facebook account and block new friends of hers. Ms. Sheets discovered this only later when she tried to communicate with the blocked individuals.
- Because Ms. Sheets had worked so hard to create the "Using You" 55. music video as Mars Argo, on January 13, 2015, she released the video. That same day, Mr. Mixter also posted the video on his Instagram.

56. Shortly thereafter, Mr. Mixter once again broke into Ms. Sheets apartment while seemingly intoxicated and began smashing her wine glasses one by one. He said he was angry that Ms. Sheets had joined some Facebook group and repeatedly asked her for the name of the group.

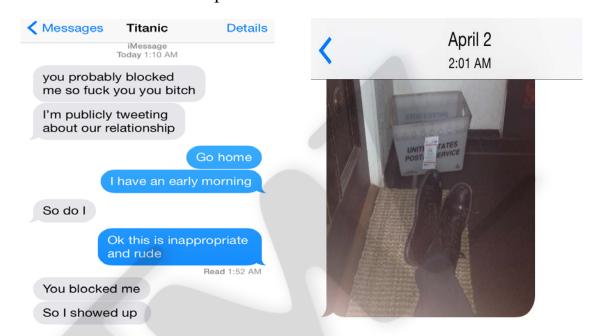




57. In addition to breaking into her home, Mr. Mixter continually tracked Ms. Sheets social media postings, and would either contact her shortly after she posted or thereafter post on his own social media and reference the places or things she had discussed online. Ms. Sheets began to feel like Mr. Mixter was monitoring her every move.

58. In March 2015, Mr. Mixter, aka Titanic Sinclair, began shooting the music video for a song called "Trust Fund." All of the lyrics of "Trust Fund" are an obvious jab at Ms. Sheets and her family's wealth. The song was later released in May 2015. A copy of the lyrics to Trust Fund is attached hereto as Exhibit A and incorporated by reference into the complaint.

59. On April 2, 2015, Mr. Mixter broke into Ms. Sheets' courtyard and texted her a picture of himself sitting outside her door on her door mat after midnight. The message was threatening and said "you probably blocked me so fuck you you bitch. I'm publicly tweeting about our relationship. . . . You blocked me. So I showed up."



- 60. During April 2015, Mr. Mixter sent another seemingly suicidal message to Ms. Sheets saying he wanted to see her one more time before "I go."
- 61. Thereafter, when Mr. Mixter learned of Ms. Sheets' plans to go into the studio to pursue a solo venture, he became violent. During the last week of April 2015, Mr. Mixter showed up unannounced and approached Ms. Sheets outside the gate to her home and viciously punched her in the face. He then followed her through the gate, through the courtyard, and to her apartment door. Ms. Sheets quickly ran inside her apartment, locked herself inside, and yelled for Mr. Mixter to leave. These actions terrified Ms. Sheets, but she was too afraid to report the incident to police, out of fear that Mr. Mixter would retaliate against her in even worse ways.
- 62. Shortly after the assault, in May 2015, Mr. Mixter took numerous actions aimed at isolating and intimidating Ms. Sheets, including but not limited

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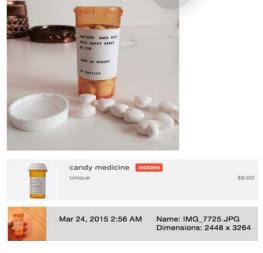
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to emailing and texting her disturbing messages, writing additional lyrics about her, copying her ideas and work as Mars Argo, and posting photos he knew she would recognize. If he could not work with her, he did not want anyone else to either.

- Pursuant to his threat on April 2, 2015 to "tweet about [the] relationship" to their fans, on May 6, 2015, Mr. Mixter falsely publicly tweeted that he "wrote every word of every video" on Grocerybag.tv.
- 64. On May 7, 2015, Mr. Mixter posted a photo on Instagram about his "Trust Fund" single, which he released that day on his own website. The photo he posted on Instagram and the album cover for "Trust Fund" again blatantly copied a concept that Ms. Sheets had confidentially told Mr. Mixter while still working together. In March 2015, Ms. Sheets was working on merchandise for a solo music venture named "Guppy," and one of the products that she created was heart shaped candy that comes in a prescription bottle. Mr. Mixter had seen Ms. Sheets' photograph of the candy bottle and later copied it. In May 2015, Mr. Mixter specifically used a photograph of prescription bottles as his Instagram announcement of Trust Fund. In April 2015, another artist with whom Titanic Sinclair was working at the time, had a show and sold a prescription bottle candy. Later, Poppy too made videos and sold a prescription bottle of candy.





65. The same day he posted the Trust Fund Instagram photo, on May 7, 2015, Mr. Mixter, aka Titanic Sinclair, also released the song "Guppy" and intentionally titled the track with the name of the new solo project that Ms. Sheets had been working on before she had a chance to release her project. Because of these actions, Ms. Sheets eventually decided to abandon her project.

- 66. The lyrics to the song "Guppy" by Mr. Mixter are another blatant stab at Ms. Sheets and, among other things, reference her father's money and their relationship. A copy of the lyrics to the song "Guppy" are attached hereto as Exhibit B to the complaint and incorporated by reference into the complaint.
- 67. On or around May 10, 2015, Poppy posted a photo taken by Mr. Mixter, in which she is wearing Ms. Sheets' jacket. Poppy now not only looked and sounded like Mars Argo but was wearing her actual clothes.







Poppy Copy

- 68. Presumably seeking to manipulate Ms. Sheets into speaking with him, on the following day, May 11, 2015, Mr. Mixter sent Ms. Sheets a text about a potential drug overdose saying "Just took 11 oxy's laterrrrr" followed by gibberish. His text messages were erratic and frightening.
- 69. On May 14, 2015, Mr. Mixter then emailed a direct threat to Ms. Sheets, saying: "You don't even realize the hole you are digging yourself into."

- 70. Throughout June 2015, Mr. Mixter continued to send threatening emails to Ms. Sheets, along with demeaning and untrue messages about Ms. Sheets to other people with whom she was in communication.
- 71. In September 2015, Mr. Mixter posted a creepy, distorted drawing of Ms. Sheets' mother, Diane, to his Instagram, saying: "I drew my mom Diane tonight. I miss my mom." Mr. Mixter's mother is not named Diane.



- 72. Finally, in December 2015, feeling not only harassed and in danger, but that all of her creative output was being sourced for Mr. Mixter's projects and the Poppy storyline, Ms. Sheets largely stopped posting online as Mars Argo, including Instagram and Facebook, which had been her direct avenue to communicate with her fans.
- 73. At this time, Ms. Sheets believed that the only way for her to avoid Mr. Mixter was to hide her whereabouts from him, isolate herself from former friends and acquaintances that Mr. Mixter kept in contact with, and essentially "disappear" so that Mr. Mixter could no longer belittle, abuse, stalk, threaten, harass, or find her.

| | 74. | Despite Ms. Sheets' absence, Mr. Mixter continued to demean Ms |
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| Sheet | ts on so | ocial media throughout 2016 and 2017, including the following |
| untru | e, false | e, and derogatory statements: |

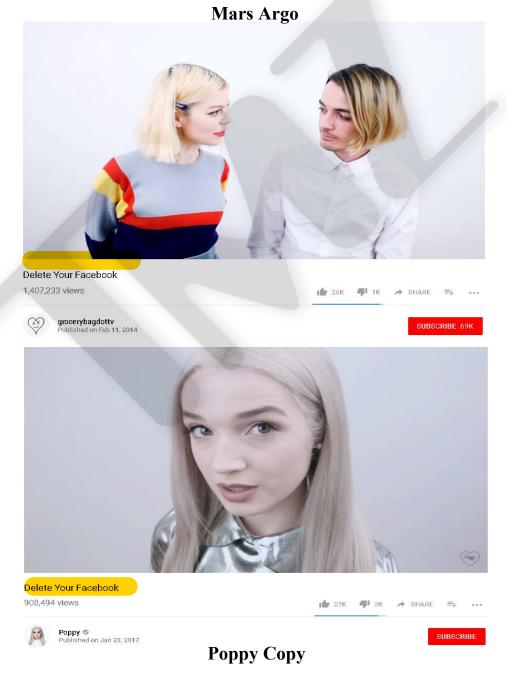
- calling Ms. Sheets a "complete nutcase"
- saying Ms. Sheets "gave up"
- claiming that "he designed everything and wrote/produced songs" relating to Mars Argo
- calling Ms. Sheets "evil"
- stating "how does it feel knowing I wrote every word you've ever heard her say"
- claiming "she [Ms. Sheets] wrote about ten percent of the words, I wrote all the music"
- describing Ms. Sheets as "a spoiled rich kid who quit because success was too much work"
- claiming he "invented" Mars Argo
- claiming "none of the songs were her original composition"
 and
- calling Ms. Sheets "a compulsive liar."
- 75. As a result of Mr. Mixter's actions, Ms. Sheets has been diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder, for which she has received regular treatment.

C. As Poppy Grows In Popularity, Numerous Fans And Commentators Note Substantial Similarities To Mars Argo

76. When the Mars Argo project ended, Mr. Mixter transformed Poppy into a new Mars Argo, and directly copied the content, style, aesthetic, sound, and expression of ideas of Ms. Sheets. Ms. Sheets is informed and believes that Mr. Mixter wanted to displace Mars Argo with Poppy. Just like Mars Argo, constant themes of Poppy related to the internet, celebrity, and pop culture, with a focus on the future and technology.

77. Over the years, many followers of both Mars Argo and Poppy have publicly commented on how Poppy is copying Mars Argo. One typical comment refers to Poppy as a "complete copycat."

78. For example, on or around February 11, 2014, Mars Argo released the "Delete Your Facebook" video on Grocerybag.tv YouTube Channel. On or around January 23, 2017, Poppy uploaded a video with the same title "Delete Your Facebook" and released it onto her YouTube channel.



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- 79. In April 2014, Ms. Sheets began studying Japanese language at the Fuji School in downtown Los Angeles. Later, in 2015, Ms. Sheets stopped attending when Mr. Mixter and Ms. Pereira became students there as well.
- In July 2015, Ms. Sheets modeled for the brand called "Little 80. Sunny Bite" based out of Tokyo, Japan. The work was published in Nylon Japan magazine and in promotional materials for the brand.



- On the left is a photograph of Ms. Sheets wearing a blue skirt by 81. the brand and a long sleeve white button-down shirt. On the right is a photograph of Poppy largely copying this same look, wearing a blue skirt with a long sleeve white button-down shirt.
- Not so coincidentally, in mid- to late-2017, Poppy worked with the 82. Little Sunny Bite brand. Similarly, Mars Argo would regularly wear Sanrio[®] Hello Kitty items in her videos. Later, Poppy became the face of Sanrio® Hello Kitty in 2017.

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Island Life NYC with Mr. Mixter and visually copied Mars Argo's look,

On or around August 27, 2015, Poppy performed at Island Records

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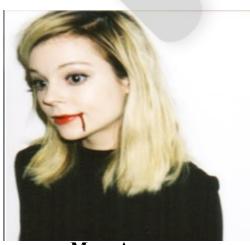
including wearing angel wings.





Poppy Copy

84. A 2016 Poppy YouTube video also directly copied a Mars Argo photograph in which Mars Argo had blood dripping out of her mouth. As Mars Argo, Ms. Sheets had also previously created a video in which she had blood pouring out of her mouth.



Mars Argo



Poppy Copy

85. Mr. Mixter also directed the Poppy "Lowlife" music video and ripped off a concept about a red devil with horns that Ms. Sheets had mentioned to Mr. Mixter while the two were creating content for Mars Argo (and understood that Mr. Mixter was only privy to such material for his work with Mars Argo). The devil in photos Ms. Sheets showed to Mr. Mixter are almost identical to the devil in Poppy's video: a red devil with a black goatee (the devil even copies the exact hand gesture). The "Lowlife" video was later released in July 2015 and Ms. Sheets learned then that the concept she shared had been stolen.









Poppy Copy

86. Poppy similarly herself has copied Mars Argo's distinctive hand gestures and lighting while performing, down to holding her fingers together with hands flared out at a ninety-degree angle with pinkish hued backlight, providing an ethereal effect.





Mars Argo

87. Poppy has further copied Mars Argo's use of the curtsy while wearing all white presumably as a commentary on innocence and propriety.







Poppy Copy

- There are numerous other examples of Titanic Sinclair's and 88. Poppy's use of Mars Argo's prior work, ideas, aesthetic, and style.
- In 2013 and 2014, Mars Argo often dressed in a bunny costume or 89. wore a bunny ears headband during segments. In 2016, Poppy similarly both

wore a bunny ears headband during one YouTube segment, and dressed in a

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bunny-like costume in another.





Poppy Copy

- 90. Poppy even did one YouTube segment where she blows up the very same (or if not same identical) inflatable plastic white bunny that Ms. Sheets purchased and used as a prop in her own Mars Argo YouTube videos.
- 91. After a blonde Mars Argo uploaded a YouTube segment of her in a light-colored bathtub filled with bubble bath set against a baby pink backdrop, a blonde "That Poppy" later released an EP on Island Records entitled "Bubblebath," in which she is in a light-colored bathtub set against a baby pink backdrop.



Mars Argo



Poppy Copy

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92. Poppy's copying of Mars Argo continued in February 2017, when Poppy posted a YouTube segment that reproduced a prior Mars Argo YouTube video. The Poppy video features Poppy holding up a large bag of brand-name potato chips and other commercial products and tasting them while looking directly at the camera. The concept, action, line delivery, and editing style employed in this video were virtually identical to a Mars Argo segment posted on the Grocerybag.tv channel in August 2013.





Mars Argo

Poppy Copy

Poppy's imitations of Mars Argo went so far as to even copy Mars 93. Argo's unique style of make-up, such as shown in the photo below, in which Ms. Sheets would wear white eye-liner on her waterline and a distinctive blue eye-liner directly beneath her lower lashes. On the left is Mars Argo, and on the right is Poppy.





Poppy Copy

94. Notably, the name of the original Mars Argo project on its YouTube channel was the "Computer Show" and Poppy's debut album and tour were entitled "Poppy.Computer."

- 95. Taken together, each of these instances and there are *many* others cannot be dismissed as mere coincidence; they show a clear, repeated and willful pattern of copying and stealing Ms. Sheets' work, content, identity, style, aesthetic, likeness, and expression of ideas as Mars Argo.
- 96. In fact, the two projects are so similar, that in August 2016, a potential music manager that Ms. Sheets was interested in working with pulled up the Poppy "Lowlife" music video during a meeting with Ms. Sheets, thinking it was Ms. Sheets in the video.
- 97. To add to the confusion to fans about whether the Poppy project was a continuation of Mars Argo, on November 8, 2016, a friend of Mr. Mixter's uploaded a video entitled "Everybody Wants It All" (a private video Ms. Sheets made as Mars Argo in 2013) to YouTube without Ms. Sheets' knowledge or consent. The video had been made for a provocative art event in downtown Detroit in 2013, and was never intended by Ms. Sheets to be put online, especially not in 2016 when there were so many questions surrounding Mars Argo's absence from the internet. Upon learning that the video had been posted, Ms. Sheets immediately sent an email to the individual who posted it, requesting that he remove it immediately. The request was ignored. Thereafter, Ms. Sheets filed a privacy complaint via YouTube.
- 98. Because Mars Argo has a gun in this video and puts it up to her head, many fans speculated that the video showed that Mars Argo was dead and replaced by Poppy, or that Mars Argo was working with Poppy and Poppy was the continuation of the Mars Argo project. On information and belief, Mr. Mixter, through his friend, purposely posted the video online to link Mars Argo to the Poppy project and/or to wrongly imply that Mars Argo chose to end her character so that Poppy could continue it. Ms. Sheets, of course, never consented to Poppy appropriating her persona or stealing her intellectual property.

99. Since the nonconsensual release of the "Everybody Wants It All" video, Ms. Sheets further is informed and believes that Mr. Mixter and Ms. Pereira purposely have used the disappearance of Mars Argo to their benefit by making subtle references to Mars Argo in Poppy projects. The Mars Argo "Everybody Wants It All" video was exactly 3:36 long. Poppy then directly referenced 3:36 in her own work several times:



- 100. Part of what has made Poppy so successful is the mystery surrounding her. That mystery would not be possible without Mars Argo's disappearance.
- 101. In November 2016, an article was published in the Odyssey online discussing Titanic Sinclair, Mars Argo, and Poppy, and commenting on how Poppy is a carbon copy of Mars Argo: "That Poppy seems to be the continuation of his project with Mars Argo, as both she and That Poppy have a bubblegum pop sound full of catchy hooks and choruses. They have similar aesthetics and are both young, pretty, and blonde-the perceived American ideal. **They are carbon copies of each other.**" (emphasis added).
- 102. In January 2017, Vice published an article about Poppy in which the reporter commented that: "It seems as though Poppy's character is directly based on the character of Mars Argo."
- 103. A few days later, the publication Noisey also released an article speculating about the relationship between Mars Argo and Poppy.
- 104. In January 2017, Poppy released a show on Comedy Central called, "Internet Famous with Poppy." The show shares a striking visual resemblance to Mars Argo, which fans pointed out in comments online. Poppy imitates Mars Argo in the videos by saying variations of lines Mars Argo has said in Computer Show episodes in the past.







Poppy Copy

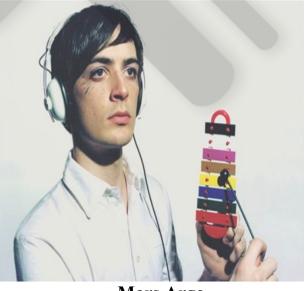
about Poppy, which discussed the origin of Poppy and noted the "striking resemblance" to Mars Argo: "Starting in the late 2000s, Sinclair hosted a YouTube series called 'The Computer Show' along with a woman known as Mars Argo. Most of the videos from the YouTube account that hosted this show have since been deleted, but the ones that remain bear a striking resemblance to the videos on Poppy's YouTube channel. In fact, it seems as though Poppy's character is directly based on the character of Mars Argo. . . ." (emphasis added). The author noted that during the email interview Poppy "made a point of not answering any questions about her relationship to Mars Argo."

106. In March 2017, the publication LogoMag released an article that similarly talks about Poppy imitating Mars Argo, stating: "Poppy both physically appears and acts in a similar manner to Mars Argo." (emphasis added).

- 107. On June 4, 2017, a Wired Magazine article stated: "Though Titanic says the two projects are unrelated, the timing of his first collaboration with Poppy and the crossover in themes has caused some fans to speculate that Poppy is a continuation of the Mars project. (Or that Poppy stole Mars' material or, in an even more out-there theory, that Poppy is Mars.)"
- 108. On January 24, 2018, a Refinery29 article about Poppy commented that before Poppy was Mars Argo, and described Mars Argo as a "Poppy prototype," adding "it's certainly not hard to see the similarities between the two musical projects." (emphasis added).
- 109. On March 5, 2018, thecut.com posted an article about Poppy entitled "Poppy might just be the Warhol of the internet era," which similarly commented that Mars Argo, whom Titanic Sinclair worked with prior to Poppy was a "Poppy prototype."

110. Recently, beginning in 2017, at public Poppy performances, individuals in the audience have begun yelling "Where's Mars Argo?" The portions of concerts when fans yell "Where's Mars Argo?" have been reposted on YouTube multiple times by fans. At one Poppy.Computer Tour show, during the 3:36 interlude, a fan shouted "Where's Mars Argo?" and Poppy responded, "Should we end this show early? Your choice."

- 111. Instagram accounts such as "thatargosinclair" available at https://www.instagram.com/thatargosinclair/ similarly link Titanic Sinclair, Mars Argo, and Poppy together as a unit. The account includes older pictures of Ms. Pereira before her transformation into the Mars Argo clone, Poppy.
- 112. Ms. Sheets expects that Mr. Mixter will claim that he was the creative force behind Mars Argo, or that she was not a joint contributor. However, that is simply untrue. Just the opposite. To this day, Mr. Mixter as Titanic Sinclair is directly copying Ms. Sheets' photography.
- 113. For example, on the left is a photograph that Ms. Sheets styled, composed, and shot of Mr. Mixter in 2010 and on the right is a photograph of Poppy in which Poppy is shot and composed in the same manner.







Poppy Copy

Similarly, on the right is a 2012 photograph Ms. Sheets took of Mr. Mixter wearing a white bodysuit that Ms. Sheets purchased and styled him in against a plain white backdrop; on the left is a photograph of Poppy in her "Lowlife" music video, which was directed by Mr. Mixter, aka Titanic Sinclair, using a virtually identical white bodysuit against a plain white backdrop.

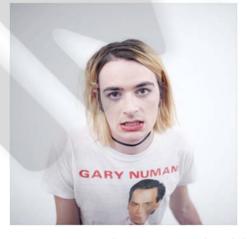




Mars Argo

Poppy Copy

Similarly, Ms. Sheets shot and styled photographs, such as the one below, that Mr. Mixter continues to use on his websites to this day.



- To this day, Poppy continues to work with Mr. Mixter and they continue to copy Mars Argo's work, content, identity, expression of ideas, and likeness as part of the Poppy project and performances.
- 117. Neither Mr. Mixter nor Ms. Pereira have requested permission from Ms. Sheets to use any portion of Ms. Sheets' prior work, content, identity, expression of ideas, or likeness as Mars Argo.

Ms. Sheets to use any portion of Ms. Sheets' prior work, content, identity, expression of ideas, or likeness as Mars Argo.

- 118. And, Ms. Sheets has never consented to Mr. Mixter or Ms. Pereira using her prior work, content, identity, expression of ideas, or likeness as part of the Poppy project.
- 119. On information and belief, Mr. Mixter and Ms. Pereira know that they are infringing and copying Mars Argo work as evidenced by the fact that Poppy's YouTube channel purposely blocks the use of the words "Mars Argo" in the comments section.
- 120. On information and belief, both Mr. Mixter and Ms. Pereira have received profits from the marketing, promotion and sale of merchandise, performances, tickets to concerts, music sales, and YouTube revenue as a result of their infringement and imitation of Ms. Sheets' work.

COUNT I

(Copyright Infringement)

(17 U.S.C. §§ 106 and 501)

(All Defendants)

- 121. Plaintiff incorporates herein by reference the preceding paragraphs of this Complaint as though fully set forth herein.
- 122. Plaintiff is an actress and musical artist known by the alter ego and stage name Mars Argo. Between 2009 and 2014, Plaintiff created original content and performed as Mars Argo with Defendant Corey Mixter, aka Titanic Sinclair.
- 123. Ms. Sheets and Mr. Mixter, aka Mars Argo and Titanic Sinclair, hold three joint copyrights for authorship in sound recording, performance, production, music and lyrics, relating to the "Linden Place EP" (compact disc and print material), the "Love in Black and White EP" (compact disc and print

material), and "Technology is a Dead Bird EP" (compact disc and printed lyrics).

- 124. As evidenced by these copyrights, Ms. Sheets made substantial and valuable contributions to the Mars Argo project. Ms. Sheets' contributions to Mars Argo videos, songs, recordings and performances included: photography, writing original content and scripts, improvisation, directing, lighting, framing, filming, editing, motion graphics, color correction, hair/make-up, wardrobe, styling, sound design, lyrical composition, imaging and branding. Ms. Sheets photography also contributed to the overall look and feel of Mars Argo.
- 125. In addition the three copyrights, Mars Argo also published a variety of content online in YouTube videos and segments in fixed, tangible medium.

 Ms. Sheets and Mr. Mixter have previously publicly stated that Mars Argo was a shared project.
- 126. As a copyright owner, Ms. Sheets is entitled to exclude others from creating work based on Mars Argo's copyrighted work.
- 127. In November 2014, Mr. Mixter, as Titanic Sinclair, began releasing content with Moriah Pereira as the musical artist "That Poppy" also known as "Poppy" or "I'm Poppy" ("Poppy"). The YouTube videos and other content created by Titanic Sinclair and Poppy are substantially similar in the total concept and feel of the works to the YouTube videos and other content created by Titanic Sinclair and Mars Argo. Since November 2014, Titanic Sinclair and Poppy have released numerous such videos.
- 128. Mr. Mixter has never requested permission from Ms. Sheets to allow him to copy, imitate, or use any portion of Mars Argo's character, work, or content as part of his work with Poppy. Ms. Pereira also has not requested permission to copy, imitate, or use any portion of Mars Argo's character, work, or content as Mars Argo in her work as Poppy.

129. Mr. Mixter, aka Titanic Sinclair, as the director of Poppy videos, performances, songs, and recordings has directly benefitted financially from the infringing activity. As director, Mr. Mixter had the right and ability to avoid infringing activity, but chose to directly copy the material, content, and expression of ideas of Mars Argo instead of creating original content with Poppy. Indeed, because Mr. Mixter worked closely with Ms. Sheets for almost eight years, Mr. Mixter had access to and knowledge of her copyrighted work. Mr. Mixter's work with Poppy is substantially similar to that of Mars Argo.

130. Ms. Pereira also had access to Ms. Sheets' work, both through the internet and her close relationship with Mr. Mixter, and Ms. Pereira had met Ms. Sheets in person on several occasions. Ms. Pereira was very aware of who Ms. Sheets is and her character, work, aesthetic, and style as Mars Argo. Indeed, as illustrated by the many news articles above, Ms. Pereira knows that Mars Argo is typically referenced alongside her whenever Poppy is discussed, and that fans still call out for Mars Argo at Poppy performances. Ms. Pereira cannot claim ignorance.

- 131. On information and belief, Ms. Pereira seeks to block the name "Mars Argo" from appearing in her social media comments on her social media accounts so that she can avoid references or comparisons to Ms. Sheets, aka Mars Argo. Instead of building her own independent career, Ms. Pereira has simply copied what Ms. Sheets worked so hard to create.
- 132. As a joint owner of the Mars Argo project, Ms. Sheets is entitled to her shares of profits attributable to the infringing activity of Corey Mixter, aka Titanic Sinclair, and Moriah Pereira, aka Poppy, relating to Poppy projects, in an amount to be proven at trial. 17 U.S. Code § 504(b). Ms. Sheets also reserves the right to elect to recover statutory damages for infringing activity of Mr. Mixter and Ms. Pereira pursuant to 17 U.S. Code § 504(c) and 17 U.S. Code § 504(c)(2), and all other relief allowed under the Copyright Act.

- 133. Ms. Sheets further is entitled to her attorney's fees and full costs pursuant to 17 U.S.C. § 505 and otherwise according to law.
- 134. Mr. Mixter's and Ms. Pereira's copyright infringement of Mars Argo was willful. Mr. Mixter and Ms. Pereira knew that they did not have permission to use any part of Ms. Sheets' copyrighted work, yet they substantially copied, imitated, and used Mars Argo's copyrighted content as part of the Poppy project.

COUNT II

(Common Law Right To Publicity)

(All Defendants)

- 135. Plaintiff incorporates herein by reference the preceding paragraphs of this Complaint as though fully set forth herein.
- 136. Defendants Mr. Mixter and Ms. Pereira have copied, imitated, mimicked, or otherwise used Plaintiff's identity and likeness as Mars Argo as part of their work in videos, projects and performances involving the artist Poppy.
- 137. Defendants Mr. Mixter and Ms. Pereira appropriated Plaintiff's identity as Mars Argo to their advantage, including for commercial purposes, and have profited as a result.
- 138. Neither Defendants Mr. Mixter nor Ms. Pereira have requested permission from Ms. Sheets to use Ms. Sheets' identity or likeness as Mars Argo.
- 139. Plaintiff has never consented to the use of her identity or likeness as Mars Argo by Mr. Mixter or Ms. Pereira.
- 140. As a direct and proximate result of the tortious, unlawful, and wrongful acts and conduct of Defendants, Plaintiff has suffered past and future special damages and past and future general damages in an amount according to proof at trial. Plaintiff has been damaged emotionally and financially, including

but not limited to suffering from fear, anxiety, depression, emotional distress, post-traumatic stress disorder, as well as loss of income, employment, and career benefits.

COUNT III

(Violation of California's Unfair Business Laws)

(Cal. Bus. & Prof. Code §§17200 et seq.)

(All Defendants)

- 141. Plaintiff incorporates herein by reference the preceding paragraphs of this Complaint as though fully set forth herein.
- 142. California Business and Professions Code section 17200 provides that unfair competition shall mean and include "all unlawful, unfair or fraudulent business act or practices and unfair, deceptive, untrue or misleading advertising."
- 143. Defendants' conduct as described above constitutes unlawful, unfair, and fraudulent competition in violation of California Business and Professions Code sections 17200 *et seq*.
- 144. As a direct and proximate result of the tortious, unlawful, and wrongful acts and conduct of Defendants Mixter and Pereira, Plaintiff has suffered past and future special damages and past and future general damages in an amount according to proof at trial. Plaintiff has been damaged emotionally and financially, including but not limited to suffering from anxiety, depression, emotional distress, post-traumatic stress disorder, as well as loss of income, employment, and career benefits.

COUNT IV

(Domestic Violence Damages)

(Cal. Code Proc. §340.15)

(Against Defendant Mixter)

145. Plaintiff incorporates herein by reference paragraphs 1 through 9, 15

through 17, 19, and 35 through 75 of this Complaint as though fully set forth herein.

- 146. Plaintiff is the former girlfriend of Defendant Mixter and the two had a dating relationship between 2008 and 2014.
- 147. Plaintiff and Defendant Mixter also were formerly cohabitants who resided together in Chicago and Los Angeles.
- 148. During and after their relationship, Defendant Mixter emotionally, physically, and psychologically abused Plaintiff, including breaking into Ms. Sheets' apartment, breaking her possessions, and assaulting Ms. Sheets physically. For example, in April 2015, Defendant Mixter waited at Ms. Sheets' apartment complex gate for her to come home and then punched her in the face once she arrived. Ms. Sheets was intimidated by Mr. Mixter and did not make a police report at the time because she was afraid that he would retaliate against her and the abuse would worsen. She feared retribution.
- 149. Plaintiff now seeks the recovery of damages suffered as a result of the domestic violence.
- 150. As a direct and proximate result of the tortious, unlawful, and wrongful acts and conduct of Defendant Mixter, Plaintiff has suffered past and future special damages and past and future general damages in an amount according to proof at trial. Plaintiff has been damaged emotionally and financially, including but not limited to suffering from fear, anxiety, depression, emotional distress, post-traumatic stress disorder, as well as loss of income, employment, and career benefits.
- 151. In engaging in the conduct as herein above alleged, Defendant Mixter acted with malice, fraud, and oppression and/or in conscious disregard of Plaintiff's health, rights, and well-being, and intended to subject Plaintiff to unjust hardship, thereby warranting an assessment of punitive damages in an

amount sufficient to punish Defendant Mixter and deter others from engaging in similar conduct.

PRAYER FOR RELIEF

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff prays for judgment against Defendants as follows:

- A. For general and special damages in an amount to be determined at trial, including future damages, that Ms. Sheets has sustained or will sustain as a result of the acts complained of herein, and that Ms. Sheets be awarded any profits derived by Mr. Mixter and his companies or Ms. Pereira and her companies, as a result of said acts, or as determined by said accounting;
- B. For an accounting of, and the imposition of a constructive trust with respect to Defendants' work with and as Poppy attributable to infringement of Plaintiff's copyright, or in Plaintiff's election, an award of statutory damages, including statutory damages for willful infringement; and
 - C. For pre- and post-judgment interest according to proof;
 - D. For punitive and exemplary damages;
- E. For costs of suit including reasonable attorney's fees and statutory fees, as allowed by law;

For all other further relief as the Court deems just and proper.

JURY TRIAL DEMAND

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

DATED: April 17, 2018 Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Matthew Donald Umhofer

> Matthew Donald Umhofer Dolly K. Hansen Spertus, Landes & Umhofer, LLP Attorneys for Brittany Alexandria Sheets



EXHIBIT A

"Trust Fund" Song Lyrics

Oh where, oh where is my trust fund? Why can't I get ahead? 'Cause I have to work My daddy's such a jerk For not giving me all his cash

There's something I can't get off my mind
This happens to me every time I get high
I want to know what it's like to be a regular guy
With a brother and a sister and mom
And a father and we all get along
And we pick money off our family tree
And spend it all happily

Oh where, oh where is my trust fund? Why can't I get ahead? 'Cause I have to work My daddy's such a jerk For not giving me all his cash

There's something I try hard to forget
It fills my little heart with regret
I can't lie
It's when I tried to pretend that I was a good friend
But I always seem to fuck it all up
When there's no more whiskey left in my cup
I guess I'll stop and I'll think
And pour myself a new drink

Oh where, oh where is my trust fund? Why can't I get ahead? 'Cause I have to work My daddy's such a jerk For not giving me all his cash

Oh where, oh where is my trust fund? Why can't I get ahead? 'Cause I have to work My daddy's such a jerk For not giving me all his cash

EXHIBIT B

"Guppy" Song Lyrics

I hope you're having fun in your hotel
I hope you're having fun with my friends
Because we both know that you needed a vacation
In la la land

You've been working so fucking hard Yeah, you probably wanted a break You spent a year doing nothing Now you're in New York on holiday

And we both know that you earned it Your life is so fucking hard I know it must be so stressful On your father's credit card

All I ever wanted to do was to love you And to need me the same way I needed you

Do you still think I'm a loser? Because I think you are too It must be weird being twenty seven years old Without a clue

But maybe you'll figure it out
I thought you might eight years ago too
I guess I'm back where I started
Before I fell in love with you

All I ever wanted to do was to love you And to need me the same way I needed you All I ever wanted to do was to love you And to need me the same way I needed you All I ever wanted to do was to love you And to need me the same way I needed you

Complaints and Other Initiating Documents

2:18-cv-03204 Sheets v. Mixter et al

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

Notice of Electronic Filing

The following transaction was entered by Umhofer, Matthew on 4/17/2018 at 9:04 AM PDT and filed on 4/17/2018

Case Name: Sheets v. Mixter et al
Case Number: 2:18-cv-03204

Filer: Brittany Alexandria Sheets

| Document Number: 1 | |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| Docket Text: | |
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| | |
| 2:18-cv-03204 Notice has been electronically mailed to: | |
| Matthew Donald Umhofer | |
| 2:18-cv-03204 Notice has been delivered by First Class U. S. Mail or by o | other means <u>BY THE FILER</u> to: |
| The following document(s) are associated with this transaction: | |
| Document description: Main Document | |
| Original filename: | |
| Electronic document Stamp: | |
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| Document description: Exhibit A-B | |
| Original filename: | |
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