

Source URL: <http://www.hollywoodreporter.com/thr-esq/so-you-think-you-can-dance-lawsuit-260614>

## 'So You Think You Can Dance' Producers Settle Lawsuit Claiming Idea Theft

8:26 AM PST 11/11/2011 by Eriq Gardner

- 0
- 0
- 0

**A dance instructor and his partner have reached an agreement with Fox, 19 Entertainment, and Dick Clark Productions to resolve a six-year-old conflict about who came up for the idea to hit dance reality show.**



Adam Rose/FOX

Fox Broadcasting, 19 Entertainment and Dick Clark Productions have settled a lawsuit that claimed that the concept for the hit reality show *So You Think You Can Dance* was stolen from a celebrity dance instructor and his partner. The agreement comes on the verge of a trial that was scheduled to begin next Monday.

**John Cassese**, who calls himself the "[Dance Doctor](#) <sup>[5]</sup>," filed the lawsuit six years ago, claiming that he and his writing partners registered a concept with the WGA entitled "So You Think You Can Dance." The registration described a 60-minute elimination-style contest each week where dancers around the nation competed by being forced to master unfamiliar dance styles, paired with others, and wore elaborate costumes in front of live audiences.

The plaintiff hired an agent, who shopped it around in 2003, including to CAA. Allegedly, agents then divulged the ideas to 19 and DCP in formal pitch meetings held at Fox. The defendants argued there was no evidence that CAA had accepted the treatment or that the plaintiffs weren't merely attempting to seek to hire CAA as their own agents.

Cassese's breach of contract lawsuit was dismissed twice by a Superior Court judge but revived each time by an appeals court. Last month, a judge [refused to dismiss](#) <sup>[2]</sup> the lawsuit for a third time, leading to a potential showdown before a jury on whether CAA brought the dance instructor's submitted idea to the producers, and whether they failed to pay for use of the idea per an "implied-in fact contract."

Now, the parties says they have reached a settlement on "mutually acceptable terms." Details haven't been revealed. A notice of settlement has been filed in the case.

**Jim Spertus** represented the plaintiffs. The defendants were represented by **Michael Niborski** at Pryor Cashman and **Mark Holscher** and **Dianna Torres** at Kirkland & Ellis.

E-mail: [eriqgardner@yahoo.com](mailto:eriqgardner@yahoo.com)

Twitter: [@eriqgardner](https://twitter.com/eriqgardner)

**Links:**

- [1] [http://pinterest.com/pin/create/button/?url=www.hollywoodreporter.com/thr-esq/so-you-think-you-can-dance-lawsuit-260614&media=http://www.hollywoodreporter.com/sites/default/files/imagecache/thumbnail\\_570x321/2011/11/11/ar8mg1042\\_a\\_l.jpg&description=&#039;So You Think You Can Dance&#039; Producers Settle Lawsuit Claiming Idea Theft](http://pinterest.com/pin/create/button/?url=www.hollywoodreporter.com/thr-esq/so-you-think-you-can-dance-lawsuit-260614&media=http://www.hollywoodreporter.com/sites/default/files/imagecache/thumbnail_570x321/2011/11/11/ar8mg1042_a_l.jpg&description=&#039;So You Think You Can Dance&#039; Producers Settle Lawsuit Claiming Idea Theft)
- [2] <http://www.hollywoodreporter.com/thr-esq/jury-decide-you-think-you-245548>
- [3] <http://www.hollywoodreporter.com/live-feed/fox-renews-you-think-you-245188>
- [4] <http://www.hollywoodreporter.com/live-feed/you-think-you-can-dance-222679>
- [5] <http://www.dancedoctor.com/>