

Seinfeld Knocks Out Copyright Case over Comedians in Cars Getting Coffee

October 7, 2019

Blog Post

Jerry Seinfeld has secured the dismissal of a lawsuit claiming he stole the concept for his hit show, *Comedians in Cars Getting Coffee*.

In his airing of grievances, writer-director Christian Charles alleges he came up with the idea for Seinfeld's hit show about comedians driving and talking over coffee. Charles claims he and Seinfeld worked together on the treatment for the show, they had a falling-out in 2012 when Charles demanded compensation and involvement on the back-end after Seinfeld relegated him to a work-for-hire role, and yada yada yada Charles was out of the project.

Years later, in 2016, Charles filed for copyright registration of the treatment. After Netflix inked *Comedians in Cars Getting Coffee* the following year, Charles filed suit for copyright ownership and infringement against Seinfeld and the show's distributors.

In a succinct opinion, SDNY Judge Nathan found Charles' claims were rooted in his contested assertion of copyright ownership, a claim that accrues just once and has a 3-year statute of limitations. Relying on longstanding Second Circuit precedent, the court found it was evident from Charles' pleading that Seinfeld repudiated the ownership claim in 2012, rendering Charles' claims time-barred. The court also declined to exercise supplemental jurisdiction over Charles' remaining state law claims—not that there's anything wrong with that.