

Bird Marella Secures Dismissal for South Korean Media Giants in U.S. Copyright Case

Bird Marella partners Timothy Yoo and Christopher Jumin Lee obtained dismissal with prejudice on behalf of South Korean media companies SBS, MBC, MBN, and state-owned bank Industrial Bank of Korea (“IBK”) in a copyright-infringement lawsuit concerning the works of South Korean composer Jae-Ho Lee.

The plaintiff alleged that these Korean companies had infringed his U.S. copyright by making Jae-Ho Lee’s music available on their streaming platforms, or by using them in Korean-language YouTube videos. On March 14, 2025, the Honorable Mark C. Scarsi agreed with the defendants’ argument that uploading music to a globally available website such as YouTube was not sufficient to allow a U.S. Federal Court to exercise personal jurisdiction over Korean defendants, and that the plaintiff’s claims against IBK were barred by the Foreign Sovereign Immunities Act, and dismissed the plaintiff’s claims, with prejudice.

Mr. Yoo and Mr. Lee had previously obtained dismissal of similar claims against Kakao Entertainment, Genie Music, NHN Bugs, TJ Media, Keum Young, MBC, and TV Chosun in 2022, a decision that was later affirmed by the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals.