



## Client Alerts

### Update on Woodall v. The Walt Disney Company – Disney Victorious in Copyright Suit

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By [Jenifer Wallis](#)

We previously covered the cases of [Buck G. Woodall v. The Walt Disney Co., et al.](#), case number 2:20-cv-03772 (“Woodall I”) and [Buck G. Woodall v. The Walt Disney Co., et al.](#), case number 2:25-cv-00273 (“Woodall II”), both pending in the U.S. District Court for the Central District of California. In those copyright infringement cases, Buck Woodall accused Disney of stealing ideas from his animation project “Bucky” for Disney’s blockbuster hit “Moana.” On March 10, 2025, a federal jury in Los Angeles ruled in favor of Buena Vista Home Entertainment, a Disney DVD distribution arm, in Woodall I. After deliberating for nearly three hours, the jury found that Woodall did not prove that the creators of “Moana” accessed his copyrighted materials. This ruling meant they did not need to assess the similarity between the two works.

Woodall’s claims centered around shared elements like shapeshifting demigods and ocean voyages, which he argued were integral to both projects. He suggested that Disney obtained his ideas through a relative who had worked for the company, a claim she denied during the trial. Disney’s representatives maintained that “Moana” was an original creation based on extensive research into Polynesian mythology.

Woodall’s legal team expressed disappointment with the verdict, stating they would evaluate their next steps. Disney emphasized their pride in the creation of “Moana,” asserting that the jury’s decision confirmed their stance.

The case was part of larger litigation that initially included multiple Disney entities but was narrowed down by the court. Woodall also filed a new lawsuit on January 10, 2025, regarding a potential sequel, which is being handled separately. That case is titled [Buck G. Woodall v. The Walt Disney Co. et al.](#), Case No. 2:25-cv-00273 (“Woodall II”), in the U.S. District Court for the Central District of California. We will continue to follow and provide updates on Woodall II, however, the jury’s verdict in Woodall I should provide Disney’s attorneys with substantial ammunition to assert res judicata and collateral estoppel in that recently filed case.

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