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The "Situation" is Creating a Situation

November 2, 2011 by Tiffany Blofield

I recently blogged about [Trademarks held by and registered to the Kardashians](#). Another popular reality show is “Jersey Shore” that follows the lives of eight twenty-something roommates initially at the Jersey Shore (hence the name of the show), but also living in Miami and Italy during seasons 2 and 4. They are known for their partying, tanning, boozing and hooking up. They have even developed their own language, including introducing the terms creeping, smooshing and guidos. In addition, the acronym “GTL” was created by Jersey Shore roommate Michael Sorriento (“[The Situation](#)”)—a shorthand symbol for his daily routine: “Gym, Tan, Laundry.” His company (with his brother) MPS Entertainment LLC obtained trademark registrations for “GTL” and “GTL finder”, and “GTL University” and likely others, as trademarks.

GTL Fuel, LLC (“GTL Fuel”) filed trademark applications for “GTL Fuel” in connection with energy drinks and plastic tubes for packaging non-alcoholic drinks in test tube containers. It has obtained a trademark registration for GTL Fuel in connection with energy drinks.

The Situation’s company has sued GTL Fuel for trademark infringement, unfair competition, among other things. The Complaint contends that GTL Fuel has been engaged in developing and marketing “products to fuel your GTL life,” including gym products, tanning products, laundry products, energy shots, bronzers, tanning lotions, and shampoos among other things. The Situation’s company contends that GTL Fuel is infringing on its trademarks and attempting to associate its products with the Situation and Jersey Shore. The Complaint alleges that GTL Fuel’s Facebook page only has two other pages it “Likes” – a cancer site and “DJ Pauly D” who is a Jersey Shore roommate of the Situation. Accordingly, the Complaint alleges that “it is apparent that GTL Fuel was created to capitalize upon the goodwill of Plaintiff’s Mark and the Mark’s association with [the Situation], and to illegally profit off of the use of the Mark in commerce.”

I have written a couple prior blogs about [lawsuits where Facebook is a party](#). Facebook is not only involved as a party to lawsuits but is also a place where trademark holders can find evidence of others infringing on their trademarks. Other social media such as Twitter is another fertile ground for evidence of trademark infringement. Indeed, GTL Fuel announced a “Guido contest” in connection



with its energy drink. This too appears to be a way for the company to link itself to the Situation and his Jersey Shore compatriots—as they often use the term on the show.

The Kardashians and Jersey Shore roommates will likely not be the only reality stars filing for trademarks. As this new genre of television is so popular and capitalizes on marketing their brands, disputes regarding reality show related trademarks are likely to continue popping up.

