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YouTube Star Bethany Mota and Her Father Sued Over Failed Skincare Campaign



Getty Images

Bethany Mota

Studio 71 says the star didn't keep up her end of an endorsement deal, but Mota's attorney says the company is just trying to avoid paying her.

YouTube star and social media influencer Bethany Mota and her father are being sued for fraud after allegedly failing to deliver content for a skincare ad campaign.

The 21-year-old vlogger and *Dancing With the Stars* alum — who boasts more than 10 million YouTube subscribers and 5.7 million Instagram followers — agreed to create videos and posts to promote a skincare brand across several social media sites, according to a complaint filed Friday in Los Angeles County Superior Court. Under the deal, Mota would be paid a talent fee of \$325,000 and the video would show her applying the product while getting ready for her day on location in Kauai, according to the complaint.

Studio 71, a company that pairs influencers with brands, flew Mota and her dad/manager to Hawaii to film for the campaign — and says Tony Mota acted like a "diva Dadager" and encouraged his daughter to ignore her responsibilities.

"Once in Kauai, Tony Mota put his diva behaviors on full display by demanding, among other things, on two separate days that Studio 71 have a driver and a production assistant take him around the island so that he could sightsee and fly his drone," writes attorney Bryan Freedman in the complaint. "Although Mota had been flown to Kauai to film the YouTube video, Tony Mota counseled his daughter to disregard her contractual obligations."

Mota failed to include the Kauai footage in the YouTube video and deliver the posts as promised, according to the complaint, which caused Studio 71 to breach its agreement with the the advertising agency that engaged it to promote the skincare brand.

"Mota and her representatives did not provide the video and stubbornly refused to commit to a timetable for its production to Studio 71," writes Freedman, adding that they received nothing until two days before the planned campaign launch.

"Studio 71 was shocked to discover that the 'video' that Mota sent did not contain any of the agreed upon creative components," writes Freedman. "Instead, Mota's 'video' consisted of a 'shout out.' Mota informed Studio 71 that she was going to add this 'shout out' to another video, which had not been reviewed or approved by Studio 71, the advertising agency, or the advertiser."

The advertiser agreed to allow Mota to either create something closer to the agreed upon outline or create a revised video that "meaningfully included" the footage from Hawaii.

"Mota disregarded the advertisers proposed concessions and provided a revised video that again failed to include the footage from Kauai," writes Freedman in the complaint. "This footage was a critical creative component that was central to the Campaign and product, which is why Mota had been flown to Kauai."

Studio 71 is suing for breach of contract and fraud, among other claims, and is seeking both damages and a declaration that it doesn't have to pay Mota because she didn't hold up her end of their deal. (Read the complaint below.)

Mota's attorney Michael Weinsten of Lavelly & Singer sent *The Hollywood Reporter* a statement Monday in response to the complaint. "Studio 71's lawsuit is nothing short of a pre-emptive tactic to avoid payment of hundreds of thousands of dollars we believe are owed to Ms. Mota," he says. "We will seek early dismissal of this bogus complaint and will soon be filing substantial counterclaims to recover what is due Ms. Mota."



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