

Press Coverage | May 23, 2024

Scarlett Johansson vs. OpenAI: Legal Weighs in on Right of Publicity Claims, ‘Sultry Female Voices’

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[Michael D. Hobbs, Jr.](#)

Mike Hobbs, a partner in Troutman Pepper’s Intellectual Property Practice Group, was quoted in the May 23, 2024 *Legaltech News* article, “[Scarlett Johansson vs. OpenAI: Legal Weighs in on Right of Publicity Claims, ‘Sultry Female Voices’](#).”

Mike Hobbs: “She’s got a very strong claim.”

Partner, Troutman Pepper

I think she’s got a very strong right of publicity claim. There are cases that are between 15 and 20 years old involving the singers Bette Midler and Tom Waits, both of whom brought right of publicity claims successfully against advertisers for use of approximator voices. And I think Scarlett Johansson has a very similar claim here.

I think the difficulty that OpenAI is going to have [is] that Sam Altman reached out to [Johansson] on several occasions to ask her to do the voice. So that means this was not a case of “they were unaware of her voice.”

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