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## BUSINESS

# Latin rapper Bad Bunny accuses South Florida brewery of illegally using his images and trademark

By RON HURTIBISE

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Rapper Bad Bunny is accusing a South Florida craft brewer of bad behavior.

The popular Puerto Rican rapper, singer, songwriter, actor and producer says Hialeah-based Unbranded Brewing Company is illegally using his name, image and likeness to market one of its brews.

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In a lawsuit filed Monday in U.S. District Court in Miami, Bad Bunny, whose real name is Benito Antonio Martinez Ocasio, said the company named one of its beer products San Benito — the trademark that Ocasio uses to provide producer services.

[Lee en español: Rapero puertorriqueño Bad Bunny acusa a cervecería del sur de Florida de usar ilegalmente su imagen y marca registrada »](#)



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The beer can's design portrays a man resembling Ocasio surrounded by imagery "well known by Ocasio's fan base as closely associated with Ocasio," including a bunny and "third eye" symbol, the suit states.

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On Tuesday, the brewery's founder, Zachary Swanson, acknowledged that the image on the beer can resembles Ocasio and said sales of the San Benito brand has been stopped until a new design can be developed.

"So basically we have a character that looks similar to him," said Swanson in an interview. "We've agreed to stop using the iconography or imagery that looks anything like Bad Bunny."

However, Swanson said the company will continue to use the name San Benito because Ocasio has not trademarked the name in association with alcoholic beverage sales. The term refers to St. Benedict and the beer brewing tradition of the Benedictine monks, Swanson said.

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Ocasio's attorney, Karen Stetson of the law firm Gray Robinson, P.A., did not immediately respond to a request to discuss the lawsuit.

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Unbranded Brewing Company's website continued on Tuesday to display images targeted in the suit, which were also sold by the brewery on t-shirts and stickers.

Swanson said the San Benito brand was sold at its Hialeah taproom and in retail stores across Florida, including Whole Foods and Total Wine & More. The company had intended San Benito to help it break into the Puerto Rico market, where Ocasio rose to fame, Swanson said.

The brewery "never sought or obtained permission to utilize Ocasio's name, trademark or image for any purpose," the suit states, adding, "Moreover, [the company] never responded to [Ocasio's] cease and desist letter."

Swanson said his team decided to stop selling beers with Ocasio's imagery after the lawsuit was filed on Monday. But it's not true that the company "never responded" to the cease and desist letter sent a few weeks ago, he said.

"I asked our trademark attorney to respond and say that we needed a couple of weeks to discuss it in-house," he said. "I don't know why they're claiming they did not receive that."

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According to Allmusic.com, a website chronicling the history of popular music, Bad Bunny, 27, released his first single in 2016 and gained fame collaborating with such artists as Cardi B, Drake and Daddy Yankee.

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His style is described as a mixture of reggaeton and Latin trap blended with rock, soul and hip-hop.

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With 35.8 million Instagram followers, Ocasio has a huge global fan base and was named by Time magazine as one of the 100 most influential people in the world, the lawsuit noted. Last December, his album “El Último Tour del Mundo” became the first album sung entirely in Spanish **to reach the top of the Billboard Top 200.**

He also already has a beer endorsement deal with Corona Extra. Since August 2020, he has appeared in Corona Extra commercials by himself and alongside rapper Snoop Dogg.

Ocasio was himself accused of copyright infringement in a lawsuit filed in September by BM Records. That suit claims that Ocasio, his collaborators and their business partners failed to license three samples of tracks by artist DJ Playero that appeared on the Bad Bunny single “Safaera” in 2020.

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