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## Ask a Lawyer Archive

Copyright Infringement Claim: How To Select A Lawyer
Kristie Prinz

**Q.**

In 2005 a major television show used content from a short script that I wrote and entered into a local Albuquerque writing competition in 2002, where my script won honorable mention. How do I find a lawyer to help me get compensation and credit?

-- *Bobby Lee*

**A.**

If someone appropriated content from a work you wrote, then you may have a good claim against that person for copyright infringement. Thus, you should look to consult with and retain an attorney licensed in your state who practices in the area of copyright law.

In finding such an attorney, you should consider two issues: (a) the skills and experience of the practitioner and (b) whether you feel comfortable with and will want to work with that practitioner. To find attorneys meeting the first criteria, you may want to (i) ask any attorneys you know and trust for referrals, (ii) consult with writer colleagues and ask for names of attorneys they have used in the past for copyright matters, or (iii) simply do some Internet research for attorneys in your area with experience in handling copyright matters.

After you have compiled a short list of names of potential attorneys meeting the first criteria, the next step is to make some calls to or set up some consultations with the attorneys on the list and decide who you would want to work with and who you trust to handle your matter. At this stage, you should consider the attorney's responsiveness, his or her personality, the firm's charges, whether or not the attorney will be personally handling the matter, whether or not the attorney is primarily a litigator or a transactional attorney, and how you anticipate wanting to resolve your matter (i.e. what are your goals in consulting an attorney: are you looking to resolve this matter by litigation and can you afford to take this approach, or do you anticipate wanting to resolve this matter outside the courtroom?).

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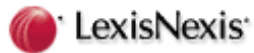Type in an area of law or a lawyer/firm name:

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Once you have made these determinations, you should be in a position to retain the right lawyer to advise you on your options and help you to decide how best to proceed with your matter.

-- *Kristie Prinz*

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