

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF
CALIFORNIA

Cooperative Entertainment, Inc. v. Alibaba Cloud US LLC

Cooperative Entertainment · No. 25-cv-01842-LJC · Decided April 16, 2025

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Northern District of California denied William P. Ramey III's application to appear pro hac vice for Plaintiff Cooperative Entertainment, Inc., with prejudice. The court found that Ramey falsely represented the number of prior pro hac vice admissions and cited his alleged unauthorized practice of law and related misconduct. The court ordered Ramey to show cause why monetary and other sanctions should not be imposed and ordered Plaintiff to submit a declaration concerning Ramey's prior involvement in the case.

OPINION

1 2 3 4 UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT 5 NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA 6 7
COOPERATIVE ENTERTAINMENT, Case No. 25-cv-01842-LJC INC., 8 Plaintiff, ORDER
DENYING APPLICATION TO 9 APPEAR PRO HAC VICE AND ORDER v. TO SHOW
CAUSE WHY SANCTIONS 10 SHOULD NOT BE IMPOSED ALIBABA CLOUD US LLC, 11
Re: Dkt. No. 13 Defendant. 12 13 Plaintiff filed this action on February 20, 2025, apparently
represented only by attorney 14 Jennifer Ishimoto, a member in good standing of the California
Bar and the bar of the Court.

15 On April 14, 2025, attorney William P. Ramey III applied to appear pro hac vice to 16
represent Plaintiff as co-counsel to Ishimoto. ECF No. 13. In that application, Ramey declares 17
under penalty of perjury that he has “been granted pro hac vice admission by the Court 0 times in
18 the 12 months preceding this application.” Id. That declaration is false: Ramey has been
granted 19 permission to appear pro hac vice at least five times in this District in the last year.

WirelessWerx 20 IP, LLC v. Zipline Int’l, No. 24-cv-08462-PHK, ECF No. 27 (N.D. Cal. Mar. 4,
2025); Kephart 21 Consulting, LLC v. AxxonSoft US, Inc., No. 24-cv-06770-KAW, ECF No. 30
(N.D. Cal. Feb. 24, 22 2025); CyboEnergy, Inc. v. Duracell Power Ctr., LLC, No. 24-cv-08891-
LJC, ECF No. 10 (N.D. 23 Cal. Dec. 12, 2024); WirelessWerx IP, LLC v. Life360, Inc., No. 23-
cv-06725-AMO, ECF No. 38 24 (N.D.

Cal. Oct. 8, 2024); WirelessWerx IP, LLC v. Lyft, Inc., No. 24-cv-01144-VKD, ECF No. 57 25
(N.D. Cal. Apr. 30, 2024).1 26 1 Ramey also falsely declared under penalty of perjury in the
CyboEnergy and WirelessWerx v. 27 Lyft cases that he had not previously been permitted to
appear pro hac vice in the preceding twelve 1 A. Denial of Application 2 Previous pro hac vice

appearances are material to the consideration of an application 3 because this Court's local rules prohibit appearing pro hac vice "if the applicant... [i]s regularly 4 engaged in the practice of law in the State of California." Civ.

L.R. 11-3(c). 5 Ramey's misrepresentation here is particularly egregious because Ramey has recently been 6 sanctioned by another judge in this District for unauthorized practice of law and misconduct 7 related to pro hac vice applications.

In *Koji IP, LLC v. Renesas Electronics America, Inc.*, Judge 8 Kang identified "at least fifty-six... civil actions in the Northern District of California in which 9 Mr. Ramey registered as an attorney of record for a party on the docket for each of those cases, or 10 at a minimum, signed the pleadings identifying himself to be the plaintiff's counsel with 'pro hac 11 vice' status or 'pro hac vice anticipated' language added." *Koji IP*, No. 24-cv-03089-PHK, 2025 12 WL 917110, at *3 (N.D.

Cal. Mar. 26, 2025), appeal docketed, No. 25-1639 (Fed. Cir. Apr. 11, 13 2025).² Judge Kang noted that Ramey sought permission to appear pro hac vice in only ten of 14 those cases—including each of the five cases listed above where Ramey was granted such status in 15 the year preceding his present application—and specifically quoted the number of prior pro hac 16 vice appearances that Ramey reported on each of those applications.

Id. at *4. 17 As Judge Kang noted, among other serious concerns, "Given the sheer number of cases in 18 this District alone in which Mr. Ramey and [another attorney not appearing here] have been 19 involved in recent years, had they properly filed motions for pro hac vice admission in these cases, 20 they would certainly have reached the point of disqualification for pro hac admission due to their 21 regular engagement in the practice of law in California"—not to mention "the numerous cases in 22 which they have also appeared in the Central District of California." *Id.* at *16.

23 Judge Kang imposed monetary sanctions of \$45,264 against Ramey and ordered him to 24 include that sanctions order "as an attachment to any motion for pro hac vice admission filed by or 25 on behalf of any of these lawyers in any action filed in a California federal court during the next 26 five years," as well as providing notice in pending cases and to various disciplinary bodies "no 27 1 later than April 26, 2025." *Id.* at *21 (emphasis omitted).

But less than three weeks after Judge 2 Kang issued that sanctions order, Ramey filed his present application in this case, with the above- 3 noted false representation of prior pro hac vice appearances, and without a copy of Judge Kang's 4 order.

On April 16, 2025, Ramey filed another copy of his application for admission pro hac vice, 5 still bearing an April 14 signature date and the false assertion that he has never been admitted pro 6

pro hac vice in the last year, but this time attaching Judge Kang's sanctions order, as well as a second order by Judge Kang in Koji IP imposing sanctions in response to a motion by the defendant.

ECF 8 No. 14. Under this Court's local rules, the "assigned Judge shall have discretion to accept or reject the application" to proceed pro hac vice. Civ. L.R. 11-3(d). Ramey's application to appear pro hac vice is DENIED, with prejudice, based on: (1) Ramey's false representation under penalty of perjury that he had not been granted permission to appear pro hac vice in the preceding twelve months; and (2) Ramey's extensive and pervasive unauthorized practice of law in this District, false representations regarding pro hac vice status, and related misconduct documented by Judge Kang in Koji IP.

Each of those reasons is sufficient in itself to deny the application. Ramey also appears to have violated at least the spirit of Judge Kang's sanctions order (if not the letter, depending on how the April 26, 2025 deadline is parsed) by failing to file a copy of that order with the original version of his present application, although he rectified that violation—and only that violation—in his subsequent filing.

B. Sanctions Against Ramey Ramey's misrepresentation regarding his previous permission to appear pro hac vice may also warrant sanctions beyond the denial of his application. "By presenting to the court a pleading, written motion, or other paper—whether by signing, filing, submitting, or later advocating it—an attorney... certifies that... the factual contentions have evidentiary support...." Fed.

R. Civ. P. 11(b). "If, after notice and a reasonable opportunity to respond, the court determines that Rule 11(b) has been violated, the court may impose an appropriate sanction on any attorney, law firm, or party that violated the rule or is responsible for the violation." Fed. R. Civ. 1 "A sanction imposed under this rule must be limited to what suffices to deter repetition of the conduct or comparable conduct by others similarly situated," and may "include nonmonetary directives" or "an order to pay a penalty into court." Fed.

R. Civ. P. 11(c)(4). "The district court has wide discretion in determining the appropriate sanction for a Rule 11 violation." *Hudson v. Moore Bus. Forms, Inc.*, 836 F.2d 1156, 1163 (9th Cir. 1987); see also *Koji IP*, 2025 WL 917110, 6 at *8. Ramey's assertion that he had "been granted pro hac vice admission by the Court 0 times in the 12 months preceding this application," ECF No. 13 at 1, does not appear to have had evidentiary support.

It is directly contradicted by this Court's records, including but not limited to Judge Kang's recent sanctions order, which Ramey undoubtedly read and considered mere weeks before filing his application in this case, and then attached to his second application that repeated the same false statement. Judge Kang's imposition of substantial monetary sanctions does not appear to have been sufficient to deter Ramey from continuing to make false representations

related to pro hac vice applications in this District.³ Ramey is therefore personally ORDERED TO SHOW CAUSE why the following sanctions should not issue under Rule 11, the Court's inherent authority, or any other applicable authority: (1) monetary sanctions in the amount of \$1,000 payable to the Court; (2) referral to this Court's Standing Committee on Professional Responsibility to consider additional consequences, potentially including remedial education or restrictions on Ramey's ability to practice in this District; and (3) a requirement to provide a copy of this Order (and any subsequent order imposing sanctions) to the same recipients and in the same circumstances as required by Judge Kang's sanctions order in Koji IP.

Ramey shall file a response to this Order no later than April 30, 2025. The Court notes that Ramey made the same false statement in two other cases where he applied for pro hac vice admission on April 14, 2025 (and filed subsequent versions of the same applications attaching Judge Kang's orders on April 16, 2025), but this Order does not rely on those false statements as the basis for sanctions in this case.

See *CyboEnergy, Inc. v. N. Elec. Power Tech., Inc.*, No. 23-cv-06121-JST, ECF Nos. 45, 47 (N.D. Cal. Apr. 14 & 16, 2025); *Lime Green Lighting, LLC v. Brilliant NextGen Inc.*, No. 25-cv-00950-VKD, ECF Nos. 8, 9 (N.D. Cal. 1 C. Declaration by Plaintiff 2 Ramey previously represented to Judge Kang that his and his colleagues' "plan... going 3 forward [was] to work on California cases by ghostwriting pleadings, briefs, and infringement 4 || contentions, as well as lead settlement negotiations, all in the background without informing the 5 || judge (or their opponents) of the substantial work they are doing on those cases." Koji IP, 2025 6 WL 917110, at *18.

Accordingly, Plaintiff is ORDERED to file a declaration by Jennifer 7 Ishimoto by the same deadline, separate from Ramey's response, indicating whether Ramey 8 authored any of the filings in this action prior to his application to appear pro hac vice. 9 IT IS SO ORDERED. 10 || Dated: April 16, 2025 ll am [rey A J. CISIWEROS ited States Magistrate Judge 15 16 17 Z 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28