

# Shakespeare v. Anthropic: 100+ Authors Sue AI Giant

*100+ authors sue Anthropic in Shakespeare et al. v. Anthropic, alleging piracy of nearly 500 copyrighted works and seeking jury trial.*

SAN FRANCISCO, CA, UNITED STATES, June 17, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- More than 100 authors filed a federal copyright infringement lawsuit today against Anthropic PBC in the United States District Court for the Northern District of California, after Anthropic confidentially filed a draft S-1 registration statement earlier this month with the Securities and Exchange Commission in advance of its intended IPO. The case, Thomas William Shakespeare, et al. v. Anthropic PBC, et al., No. 3:26-cv-5931, names Anthropic, co-founder and Chief Executive Officer Dario Amodei, and co-founder Benjamin Mann as defendants, and alleges infringement of nearly 500 registered copyrighted works.

Each plaintiff in this action previously opted out of the proposed class settlement in Bartz v. Anthropic to pursue individual claims and a jury trial. Plaintiffs seek statutory damages of up to \$150,000 per infringed work, along with injunctive relief, attorneys' fees, and costs under the Copyright Act.

## Allegations in the Complaint

The complaint alleges that Anthropic made deliberate use of pirated books as training data for its artificial intelligence systems without authorization from or compensation to rights holders. Among the specific allegations: defendant Benjamin Mann personally downloaded at least five million books from Library Genesis using BitTorrent in June 2021, and separately obtained the Books3 dataset, which the complaint alleges was compiled from pirated sources. The complaint further alleges that Anthropic subsequently downloaded at least two million additional books from Pirate Library Mirror, and that defendant Dario Amodei personally authorized and directed the company's book-acquisition strategy. Because BitTorrent simultaneously downloads and uploads files, plaintiffs further allege that Anthropic's use of that technology also distributed copyrighted works to other BitTorrent users.

## Quote from Plaintiffs' Counsel

"As Anthropic reportedly prepares for an IPO, investors deserve to know whether its reported valuation is burdened by unresolved copyright exposure," said [James H. Bartolomei III](#), co-lead

counsel for plaintiffs. "This group of plaintiffs opted out of the Bartz settlement to pursue individual claims for statutory damages, and a jury should decide what Anthropic owes them."

## The Plaintiffs

The plaintiffs include authors across fiction, nonfiction, memoir, biography, young adult literature, science writing, and genre fiction. Among them are Atari co-founder Nolan Bushnell; Academy Award-nominated JFK screenwriter Zachary Sklar; Mexican author Laura Esquivel, whose novel *Like Water for Chocolate* has sold millions of copies worldwide; Newbery Medal winner Donna Barba Higuera; bestselling novelists Brenda Hampton, Kiki Swinson, Wahida Clark, and Rebecca Zanetti; PEN/E.O. Wilson Award winner Florence Williams; steampunk pioneer K. W. Jeter; celebrity biographer J. Randy Taraborrelli; and international bestselling mystery and thriller author Christopher Greyson.

## Case Information

Case: Shakespeare, et al. v. Anthropic PBC, et al., No. 3:26-cv-5931-JST

Court: United States District Court for the Northern District of California, Hon. Jon S. Tigar

Plaintiffs' Counsel: James H. Bartolomei III, [Stephen Doniger](#), [Adam Gafni](#), and Michael Manapol

Claims: Federal copyright infringement involving nearly 500 registered works

Relief Sought: Statutory damages, injunctive relief, attorneys' fees, costs, and other relief under the Copyright Act

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Note: The allegations described herein are those of the plaintiffs as set forth in the complaint. Anthropic has not yet responded to the lawsuit.

James Bartolomei

James H. Bartolomei III PA

+1 501-228-7600

copyright@duncanfirm.com

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