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## Copyright dispute turns into a saga

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**KEY POINTS:**

An Auckland publisher said he had been paid \$65,000 as settlement in a dispute over copyright.

Real estate authors Olly Newland, Mark Withers and Peter Aranyi and their publisher Empower Leaders Publishing and Empower Education filed a claim in the High Court at Auckland last year.

Their claim was against property seminar business Richmastery Ltd, director Phil Jones and Richmastery franchise manager John Bedggood over copying material from the book Commercial Real Estate Investors' Guide which had material from three authors.

Aranyi said a settlement was reached and money was paid in June. The matter did not go to court for a fixture.

"Part of the settlement was a formal acknowledgment of the copyright breach which had earlier been denied and an undertaking filed in the court that no further breaches would be made," Aranyi said.

The defendants have undertaken not to copy, sell or distribute any material that might infringe the copyright again.

Richmastery runs seminars with titles such as Massive Passive Cashflow Generator, and these are often conducted by Phil Jones at Richmastery's leased Penrose premises.

Aranyi said he had published eight books, all on real estate, after establishing his business in 2001. His titles include How To Survive and Prosper in a Falling Property Market, The Rascal's Guide to Real Estate, Property Tax (A New Zealand Investors' Guide), Property Law and The Day the Bubble Bursts.

Jones said: "The copyright dispute between Empower Education and Richmastery was resolved months ago and the victory statement issued on Empower Education's website has more holes than Swiss cheese, conveniently leaving out gaping facts consumers deserve to know.

"Court documents filed by Empower Education confirmed that Empower Education didn't own the copyright it was claiming Richmastery breached.

"Had the copyright case proceeded to trial, Empower Education's name would have to have been withdrawn from the case as it was not a party to the copyright breach.

"This is significant. Empower Education misled the public and the media by ... claiming Richmastery

had breached Empower Educations copyright when in fact it didn't own the copyright," Jones said.

He also claimed Empower Education had spent substantial amounts of money on legal fees and costs - more than the settlement paid.

Aranyi took issue with Jones. He and the authors did own the copyright and he disputed Jones' statements about the legal fees, he said.