

"Who dat?" phrase

Although it is an English idiom originating in New Orleans over a century ago, more recently, the phrase "Who dat?", has become a chant of team support. It is most widely used by fans of the New Orleans Saints, an American football team.

In January 2010, the NFL sent cease and desist letters to several Louisiana t-shirt shop owners ordering them to stop producing t-shirts bearing the phrase "Who dat?", apparently claiming to own the trademark on the term "Who dat?", and that unlicensed t-shirts bearing the phrase would cause confusion among fans of the Saints as to the official status of the merchandise.

Afterwards the Monistere brothers released a statement on NewOreleans.com claiming rights to the phrase, which they had registered in 1983 after recording their version of "When the Saints Go Marching In", which incorporated the chant. The Monistere's record is listed as inactive, meaning it was not renewed on expiry. The Saints organization, through their company The New Orleans Louisiana Saints Limited Partnership, also registered the trademark "Who Dat" in 1988 when used in conjunction with the "fleur-de-lis design", but later the Saints released their claim of ownership to WhoDat, Inc., asserting that they owned the phrase.

On March 4, 2010, the Monisteres' company, Who Dat? Inc., filed suit in federal court against the Saints, NFL Properties, and the state of Louisiana, alleging improper interference with their business interests. The suit alleges that: in 1987 the New Orleans Saints were granted a license by Who Dat?, Inc. to use the Who Dat phrase; in that agreement, the Saints agreed that the trademark was original and that Monistere was the first use owner of the trademark; the Saints also agreed to never challenge Monistere's ownership of the trademark or aid anyone else in doing so; and the Saints were to also help protect the trademark from infringement by others on behalf of the licensors (Who Dat?, Inc.). Who Dat? Inc. subsequently amended their complaint to name several local retailers as defendants, most notably Fleurty Girl, and the matter was set for initial hearing in the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Louisiana on November 10, 2010.

In January 2012, it was reported that the NFL and the Monisteres had agreed to dismiss their claims against each other and to cooperate in the production of "co-branded merchandise". The lawsuit continued in terms of some of the other defendants, pending hearing of their motions to dismiss the case. In October 2012, it was reported that the remaining parties had settled the case on confidential terms. According to one attorney and restaurant owner who had been a party to the case, "The net effect of the settlement is that nobody owns Who Dat".