

Activision adds EA to suit against former execs

January 20 2011

(AP) -- Activision Blizzard Inc. has added rival video game maker Electronic Arts Inc. to its \$400 million countersuit against former executives at Infinity Ward, the studio that created the top-selling "Call of Duty" series.

Activision alleges that EA courted the executives, Jason West and Vince Zampella, while they were still under contract with Activision.

In court papers filed Wednesday in Los Angeles Superior Court, Activision shows what it says are e-mails between EA executives, the former studio heads and a Hollywood agent. Activision says the e-mails show that EA actively recruited the executives while they were under contract with Activision

EA representatives did not immediately return messages seeking comment Thursday.

In its lawsuit, Activision alleges EA intentionally interfered with contracts, engaged in unfair competition and aided and abetted breaches of fiduciary duty by the executives.

It says EA started wooing the men as early as July 2009, when they had two years left in their contract, at times using talent agency Creative Artists Agency as an intermediary. The lawsuit claims that in August 2009, EA whisked West and Zampella in a private jet to a secret meeting at the home of EA's CEO, John Riccitiello.

In one e-mail shown in the court document, Activision says an agent for Creative Artists wrote to Zampella in August 2009 that "JR is really amped to see you, and is basically agenting me with calls. Like I said I think it's a good time if nothing else. " The filing says later e-mails between Riccitiello and Chief Operating Officer John Schappert show the two were planning to meet West and Zampella in what was "more than a social call," designed to interfere with their employment contracts with Activision.

West and Zampella originally sued Activision last March for \$36 million, claiming that the company fired them to avoid paying royalties on "Call of Duty." They have since formed Respawn Entertainment, hiring about 40 employees away from [Activision](#). Respawn's games are released exclusively by EA.

The most recent "Call of Duty," which has made more than \$1 billion in sales, was made by another studio, called Treyarch. It was the top-selling game in the United States last year.

©2010 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed.

Citation: Activision adds EA to suit against former execs (2011, January 20) retrieved 10 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2011-01-activision-ea-execs.html>

<p>This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.</p>
--