



## Katten Obtains Favorable Rulings for Eddie Murphy, Wendy Williams and the *Wendy Williams Show* in Defamation Suit

June 13, 2014

Katten obtained favorable rulings for famed comedian and actor Eddie Murphy and television talk show host Wendy Williams in a defamation lawsuit brought by an aspiring comedian who changed his last name to Murphy and who purportedly looks like and mimics a young Eddie Murphy. Eddie's attorneys sent cease-and-desist letters to plaintiff for allegedly insinuating he was the Eddie's son to get publicity. Plaintiff sued Eddie for defamation and interference with his career, as well as the *Wendy Williams Show* and the *National Enquirer* for allegedly falsely reporting that he was Eddie's son and/or an imposter posing as Eddie's son. Judge William Stewart of the Los Angeles Superior Court agreed that defendants' conduct falls within the category of specially protected First Amendment activity under California's anti-SLAPP statute, holding that the cease and desist letters to the young comedian were in "anticipation of litigation" and that the media defendants' statements were in furtherance of the constitutional right of free speech because "there is a public interest in Eddie Murphy in light of his accomplishments as a comedian and actor." When plaintiff failed to show he had a probability of prevailing in the lawsuit, Judge Stewart adopted a tentative ruling, stating there was not competent and admissible evidence that Eddie Murphy or the other defendants "made an intentional publication of fact or that the statement was false and unprivileged." Litigation and Dispute Resolution partner Joel Weiner represents Eddie Murphy, Wendy Williams and the *Wendy Williams Show* in the case. ("[Eddie Murphy Beats Comedian's Defamation Lawsuit](#)," June 12, 2014)

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### CONTACTS

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