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# Why Patagonia Filed A Trademark Infringement Lawsuit Against 'Pattie Gonia'

By **Pamela N. Danziger**, Senior Contributor. ⓘ Pam Danziger reports on...



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TELLURIDE, COLORADO - MAY 25: Drag queen and environmentalist Pattie Gonia poses for portraits during Mountainfilm documentary festival in Telluride, C.O., on Saturday May 25, 2024. (Photo by Sarah Silbiger for The Washington P ... [More](#) THE WASHINGTON POST VIA GETTY IMAGES

The trademark infringement lawsuit filed by Patagonia Inc. against Entrepreneur Enterprises, doing business as Pattie Gonia Productions, and environmental activist Wyn Wiley—better known as drag performer Pattie Gonia—has ignited a social-media firestorm, positioning the outdoor apparel retailer as a corporate Goliath taking aim against an unprepossessing, grassroots David. 🌀 The clash is made even more disruptive because both parties claim the same mission: advancing the environmental cause.

But this issue isn't going to be decided in the court of public opinion. It will be decided in a court of law. Patagonia isn't looking for monetary gain—it is asking only for one dollar in damages.

However, it is seeking for Entrepreneur Enterprises to pay the company's reasonable attorney's fees and investigative expenses—typical in trademark infringement cases. Such a payout is intended to discourage further trademark encroachment and restore the previous state of détente that existed between the two parties.

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unless the two parties reach an agreement, which in these early days looks unlikely.

## Serious Intent Behind A Symbolic Lawsuit

Pattie Gonia forced Patagonia’s hand in September 2025 when the Entrepreneur Enterprises filed to trademark “Pattie Gonia” for exclusive rights to sell clothing, engage in online marketing and secure future endorsement deals under the brand name—a moniker widely thought to be a parody-based riff on “Patagonia,” though [performer maintains](#) the South American region is the true inspiration, not the company.

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its brand among the company's many stakeholders, including employees, customers and the many environmental causes it supports.

“The last thing we wanted was a legal fight with someone who shares our values, but we must protect our business and employees,” the company stated.

“That name carries trust, purpose and decades of work connected to environmental activism, product, storytelling and community impact. Protecting the Patagonia trademark is part of protecting the ability of this company to continue doing that work in the future,” it continued.

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As a public benefit corporation, Patagonia plays by a different set of rules than other public and private companies—but it is no less serious about business. Patagonia Inc., the outdoor apparel and equipment business, is owned by two entities: Patagonia Purpose Trust, which holds all voting stock in the company (2% of total shares), and Holdfast Collective, which holds 98% of nonvoting shares, gives profits to environmental and community causes. [As founder Yvon Chouinard said, “Earth is now our only shareholder.”](#)🌱



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Profits that are not reinvested back into the business for Patagonia Inc. and related ventures—Patagonia Provisions (food), Patagonia Media (books, films), Fletcher Chouinard Designs (surfboards), Tin Shed Ventures (investments) and others—are distributed to Holdfast Collective as dividends to various causes. The company projects annual payouts of roughly \$100 million, “[depending on the health of the business.](#)”

As for the health of the business, Patagonia’s recently released “[Work In Progress 2025 Impact Report](#)” revealed the company generated \$1.5 billion in revenues, employed roughly 4,000 employees, operated 160 Patagonia stores (106 company-owned and the partner-operated) in 25 countries, as well as distributed products through nearly 6,000 wholesale partners across 45 countries worldwide. In addition, it contributed \$15 million to environmental causes last year—1% of sales, not profits.

The company is transparent about its shortcomings. “We are not perfect, as this report will show,” said chief impact and communications officer Corley Kenna, in a statement. But Patagonia steadfastly holds itself to its higher corporate purpose.

“Businesses must exist to do more than provide a good service or make a quality product, and they definitely need to exist to do more than enrich a handful of

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To many observers, Patagonia's lawsuit against Pattie Gonia looks like the company is reverting to the typical corporate playbook—a powerful brand moving to quash a smaller competitor. “Pursuing legal action feels less like necessary trademark protection and more like corporate overreach,” wrote a commentator on the Patagonia Works website.

## Responsible Businesses Protect Their Trademarks

Despite the backlash, protecting a trademark is not optional; it is a business necessity, attorneys say. “There is a legitimate business interest to all brand stakeholders—whether they be a big corporation or a small startup— in protecting their trademark rights,” shared intellectual property attorney Mark Mizrahi, partner at Saul Ewing.

“This case is not about whether Pattie Gonia—the performer, influencer and activist—can continue to do what they were doing. The issue is about going into a new business venture of consumer goods, which is an escalation and deviation of the previous agreement between the two parties,” he continued.

For Patagonia, the trademark represents over 50 years of reputation and goodwill—assets that must be defended from encroachment that could threaten future operations. The court filing lists 12 different Patagonia trademarks for various uses, including consumer products, entertainment and books.

It argues, “Contrary to Pattie Gonia’s 2022 commitment to respect Patagonia’s trademark rights, and notwithstanding Patagonia’s objections and warnings, Pattie Gonia has adopted and used PATTIE GONIA—a nearly identical copy of Patagonia’s PATAGONIA word mark.”

The complaint details various uses of the Pattie Gonia word mark across commercial ventures that overlap with Patagonia’s uses and includes images of Pattie Gonia wearing apparel and accessories featuring a near-identical label.

confusion already has occurred), or that the products and services are the result of collaboration between Patagonia and Pattie Gonia,” the filing continued.

The potential for confusion extends beyond Pattie Gonia’s own merchandise. Pattie Gonia claims Patagonia direct competitors The North Face and REI as [brand partners](#). Other partners include Google, Hoka, American Express, Smithsonian Museum, NASA, National Geographic, and Microsoft.

For the company, these relationships heighten the risk that consumers could mistakenly believe similar partnerships exist with Patagonia as well.

## Laches Doctrine Requires Swift Action

This is hardly the first time that Patagonia has had to step in to halt trademark encroachments. It had to stop infringements from brands selling FRATAGONIA, CATAGONIA, PETAGONIA, PATROGONIA and GATAGONIA merchandise. Protecting its trademark, the company argues, is simply how a responsible business operates.

“To maintain our own rights, we must prevent others from copying our brands and logos. If we do not, we risk losing the ability to defend our trademarks entirely,” the company stated. Ironically, Pattie Gonia is seeking the same trademark protection for the “Pattie Gonia” brand. Note: Pattie Gonia did not respond to request for comment before posting.

Attorney Mizrahi notes that Patagonia had to act quickly once potential infringement was discovered. Timely action is critical because of the legal doctrine of laches, which prevents trademark owners from “unreasonable” delays in taking action.

“Laches is an equitable doctrine, which is similar to a statute of limitations, but it’s more flexible,” he explained. “If a company sits on its trademark rights for an extended period of time after potential infringement, it dilutes the remedies available to the trademark holder. A holder must act in a timely manner to protect its rights.”



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Some have argued that the [name Pattie Gonia](#) is inspired by the geographical region and therefore cannot be owned by Patagonia, though the performer has parodied the brand in the past.

“It could be considered a parody mark,” said Mizrahi as he explained the law grants more leeway when a brand is parodied in creative works, like a song, movie or painting or for social commentary. “But it’s an entirely different matter when it crosses over into consumer goods.”

He points to the landmark 2014 lawsuit brought by Jack Daniel’s against VIP Products. VIP created a parody “Bad Spaniels” pet toy shaped like a Jack Daniels whiskey bottle that put a humorous twist on the brand label. Jack Daniel’s argued the toy infringed on its trademark and tarnished the brand.

That case went through the lower courts and ended up in the U.S. Supreme Court in 2023, where, in a rare [unanimous decision](#), the Court sided with Jack Daniel’s. However, SCOTUS did not impose penalties on VIP Products and remanded the case back to U.S. District Court for final resolution. [Levi Strauss and Campbell Soup](#) filed amicus briefs urging clarity around trademark law and parody spoofing.

“There is a dichotomy here concerning the Patagonia-Pattie Gonia case,” Mizrahi said. “On one side, you have the expressive environmental advocacy for Pattie Gonia and on the product side, Patagonia’s arguments fit the Jack Daniel’s case quite well. How it all turns out will be highly instructive.”

## Patagonia Offers Compromise

Patagonia has offered to settle the dispute if Pattie Gonia agrees to three conditions:

1. Withdraw all trademark applications
2. Stop using Patagonia’s logos
3. Stop selling and promoting apparel and other products as Pattie Gonia



Monday, June 1—the first day of Pride Month, adding, “We wish this lawsuit had not been necessary, and we want to acknowledge any hurt it has caused, especially in the LGBTQ+ community.”

Pattie Gonia rejected the offer, objecting primarily to the third provision. “Patagonia is not just talking about my upcycled t-shirt merch in that bullet point. They’re talking about the partnership with other brands that I’ve done for year,” she [posted on Instagram](#). “If I can’t do partnerships as Pattie Gonia, it breaks the whole ecosystem of advocacy and community engagement.”

She argued that performing artists commonly sell branded merchandise and insisted she has never used Patagonia’s logo, font, or other brand elements on her merch site.

Referring to examples in Patagonia’s legal filing, she said they were “playful parody and fan art” that the company was portraying as widespread logo misuse. “Drag is built on parody, puns and jokes,” she said.

## Partners In Name Only

Patagonia says it brought this lawsuit because its future business—and its environmental mission—demands it. Trademarks are not undertaken lightly and once established, must be defended vigorously.

“For more than three years, Patagonia has engaged in open dialogue with Pattie Gonia to discuss ways she could continue her environmental and social advocacy, brand deals and other work without infringing on our trademark,” the company stated. “While we wish we didn’t have to do this, it has become necessary to protect the brand we have spent the last 50 years building.”

Attorney Mizrahi described the core dichotomy: the expressive use of the Pattie Gonia brand name versus its commercial use, which may conflict with Patagonia’s business interests.

into consumer goods, the lanes converged. And when two entities are in the same lane, collisions are hard to avoid.

That tension mirrors a deeper truth about Patagonia, one that CEO Ryan Gellert transparently acknowledged:

“Patagonia is a paradox. Our charter mandates we follow social and environmentally responsible practices, yet every product we make takes irreplaceable resources from the planet. Our existence seems counter to our purpose. That tension is not lost on us.”

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