

TBN sued over Omega Code

Trinity Broadcasting Network (TBN) is being sued by a woman who claims that the organization stole her ideas for its successful end-times movie, The Omega Code.

Sylvia Fleener wants the \$40 million the film reportedly made since its release last October, according to a suit filed in Los Angeles last week. Fleener charges trademark and copyright infringement, reported Broadcast & Cable magazine.

Described as a "Christian minister and supporter of TBN," Fleener says she created the characters in The Omega Code, which surprised the mainstream movie world with a strong box office showing. The PG-13 apocalyptic drama that mixed last-days prophecy with a secret Bible code earned a Top 10 placing in its opening weekend and was released on video earlier this year.

The suit, filed by attorneys Kirtland and Packard in Los Angeles, claims that Fleener's work was "misappropriated" by TBN in an "infringement" that was "willful and deliberate," according to Broadcast & Cable. TBN legal counsel Colby May told Charisma that the suit would be contested.

"The Omega Code was and is an original work," May said. "There is no infringement on [her] copyright or any intellectual property. She seems to believe that she and she alone might write about pre-tribulation, pre-millennium activities. We are going to defend ourselves appropriately, and we deny utterly any of the claims or charges."

At online bookseller , Keener's 380-page 1997 paperback, *The Omega Syndrome*, is described as "an exciting, fast-paced novel based on biblical revelations" in which a one-world government controls people's lives. The publisher's information says the techno-thriller "will both inspire and challenge the reader to review his own lifestyle and live in a state of awareness of current events and the return of Jesus Christ."

Starring mainstream veterans Michael York and Catherine Oxenberg and filmed on location in Jerusalem, Rome and Los Angeles, *The Omega Code* was made with \$7 million from TBN and produced by Matt Crouch, son of network founders Jan and Paul Crouch. It boosted its audience attendance by promoting heavily to Christians through television and the Internet.

Matt Crouch said then that the film's success "sent a message" to Hollywood that Christians were a consumer group that had been long overlooked.