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Sports & Entertainment Beat

Sports & Entertainment Spotlight: Capitol Records Pulls the Plug on its Virtual Rapper FN Meka

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Welcome back to the “Spotlight!” As some of you may have noticed, smartphones are everywhere. They have the power to entertain insomniac authors (who shall remain nameless) suffering from writer's block. They have the power to bring the eyes of the whole world (or close to it), to the vantage point of the person holding the device with a few taps of the finger. The results of that capability have been mixed. They have exposed injustice and sparked global movements for change (the George Floyd murder being a prime example). They have captured humorous and bizarre moments - this week, an unsuspecting spectator at a Yankees-Mets Subway Series game (that the Yankees swept, by the way) showed millions that a hot dog could be hollowed out and used as a straw for drinking beer. But they have also been used for nefarious and callous purposes - including by law enforcement officials in Los Angeles to share photos of Kobe Bryant's and other victims' corpses in the rubble of a tragic January 26, 2020 helicopter crash that killed all passengers on board. Yesterday, ironically on Kobe Bryant Day (8/24), a Los Angeles jury awarded $31 million in damages for violation of the right to privacy and infliction of emotional distress to the victims' families (including Bryant's), as if to send a message to all smartphone users that such behavior should not be tolerated. The subjects of their videos and photos are people with families and dignities that take precedent over sharing tasteless photos to impress drinking buddies. So the next time you raise your smartphone to record or photograph, think about your motivations for doing so, and that the people in front of the lens are just that. People with families and dignities who may deserve not to have that content in the Spotlight.

- Earlier this summer, Capitol Records made headlines by signing virtual recording artist, "FN Meka" to its label. Now, Capitol Records is making headlines for terminating the FN Meka project due to blowback at the racially-charged stereotypes that FN Meka embodied. Hopefully those at Sony Music Japan are taking notes on what not to do for its newly launched virtual talent development and management project. The lesson?: Even virtual reality bytes.
- In an effort to engage a broader audience, while battling the competition from LIV Golf, the PGA Tour announced enhanced prizes, more star participation and most notably a partnership with Tiger Woods' and Rory McIlroy's TMRW Sports in the creation of the TGL golf league that will feature teams of players competing on a virtual golf course in front of a live audience. Time will tell whether this is the right approach for hitting the "green."

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- A new drama called "The Good Lawyer" is in development at ABC. These television show titles just keep getting more and more outlandish...

Endorsement Deals, Sponsorships & Investments **NFL's Dak Prescott Signs Multi-Year Deal With Blockchain.com** *August 24, 2022 via Bloomberg (subscription may be required)* Dallas Cowboys quarterback Dak Prescott has signed a multi-year endorsement deal with cryptocurrency firm Blockchain.com as the crypto industry boosts its presence in sports to lure more users.

St. John Bosco Football Signs Historic NIL Deal Worth $400 per Player *August 22, 2022 via Los Angeles (LA) Daily News* The St. John Bosco football team, one of the top high school programs in the nation, has reached a name, image and likeness (NIL) agreement with a Dallas-based sports performance and wellness group that might be the first ever to pay all members of a high school team.

Ohio State Fans Could Soon Pay $50 for Football Players to Follow Them on Instagram or Send Them Videos *August 22, 2022 via Biz Journals (subscription may be required)* The Ohio State Buckeyes prepare to take the field at Ohio Stadium. Doug Buchanan THE Foundation, an NIL fan collective founded by Columbus developer Brian Schottenstein, is working with FanJolt, a platform where fans can pay to interact directly with celebrities.

NCAA Asks Members for Help With NIL Violation Investigations *August 18, 2022 via Myrtle Beach Sun News* NCAA officials sent a letter to its membership noting its enforcement's staff pursuit of "potential violations" of the name, image and likeness compensation policy and emphasizing the need for schools to help investigations.

Sports **NFL's Dominance Grows as Preseason Games Crush MLB, Premier League, MLS** *August 24, 2022 via Sportico (subscription may be required)* Pre-season TV ratings may

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be a fairly cloddish metric with which to forecast the success of the upcoming NFL season, but with just two weeks to go before the 2022 campaign officially gets underway, the league already is making short work of its competition on the track, pitch and diamond.

EA Continues to Strengthen Ties With Leagues as FIFA Deal Nears End *August 23, 2022 via Sportico (subscription may be required)* Gaming powerhouse Electronic Arts Inc. and Major League Soccer have extended their partnership.

NBA Wins Counterfeit Case Versus Chinese Company Over IP, Jurisdiction *August 18, 2022 via Sportico (subscription may be required)* A new ruling by a federal court of appeals makes it clear that if an overseas company sells products that impermissibly use American sports leagues' trademarks, the company can be tried in an American court-even if only one sale occurred, and it was to a league investigator.

Music Biz **Megan Thee Stallion Demands $1 Million From Record Label for Alleged 'Underpayment of Royalties'** *August 23, 2022 via Greenwich Time* On the heels of the release of her sophomore album, "Traumazine," Megan Thee Stallion ‘s ongoing legal battle with Carl Crawford’s indie label 1501 Certified Entertainment continues.

Music Industry Moves: Republic Records Launches Kids and Family Label, Helmed by Bree Bowles *August 22, 2022 via Register Citizen* Republic Records has launched a kids and family division, spearheaded by the appointment of Bree Bowles as VP of marketing and strategy.

Reservoir Media to Hold ‘Virtual Town Hall’ on Copyright Royalty Board Issues *August 18, 2022 via All Access* Music company Reservoir Media is holding a “virtual town hall” webinar to discuss copyright royalty board issues on August 25th. The event will feature Reservoir C.E.O. Golnar Khosrowshahi and National Music Publishers Association Pres./C.E.O. David Israelite, and will include a Q&A session.

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Capitol Records Severs Ties With A.I. Rapper FN Meka, Apologizes to Black Community for "Insensitivity" *August 23, 2022 via Hollywood Reporter* Activist groups like Industry Blackout had described the project as a "direct insult to the Black community" in an open letter earlier on Tuesday.

Sony Music Japan is Building 'the Largest Virtual Talent Development and Management Project in History' *August 22, 2022 via Music Business Worldwide* One of MBW's most talked about stories of the summer has been the signing of 'virtual artist' FN Meka to Capitol Records in the U.S.

Film & TV **Tiger and Rory Launch Media and Tech Firm TMRW Sports** *August 23, 2022 via Sportico (subscription may be required)* Tiger Woods and Rory McIlroy are starting a new tech-focused venture around sports, media and entertainment, TMRW Sports, pronounced "Tomorrow Sports."

UFC Sues Documentary Production Team in Copyright Dispute *August 23, 2022 via Sportico (subscription may be required)* At a time when "The Last Dance," "Athlete A," "Untold: The Girlfriend Who Didn't Exist" and other popular documentaries prominently feature copyrighted audiovisuals of athletes, the UFC is suing the producers of "Bisping: The Michael Bisping Story" over unauthorized video use.

'The Good Doctor' Legal Spinoff 'The Good Lawyer' With Female Lead in Works at ABC as Backdoor Pilot *August 22, 2022 via Deadline* After expanding one popular long-running procedural drama, "The Rookie," with a planted spinoff for next season, ABC is looking to do it for another, "The Good Doctor" with an embedded episode.

Paramount Beats Amazon With $1.5 Billion Deal for Champions League Rights *August 20, 2022 via Bloomberg (subscription may be required)* Paramount Global renewed its U.S. media

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rights to Champions League football matches in a deal valued at more than $1.5 billion over six years, more than doubling the size of its previous contract in a sign of the sport's growing popularity with Americans.

Big Ten Signs Richest T.V. Deal in College Sports *August 18, 2022 via Biz Journal (subscription may be required)* The most notable absence in this set of deals is ESPN, which had a 40-year relationship with the Big Ten, but couldn't come to terms with the conference during the most recent negotiations.

Non-Fungible Tokens (NFTs) **McFadyen Digital Launches Varsity Gems NFT Marketplace for NIL Incentive** *August 24, 2022 via Yahoo Finance* New platform helps D-I, D-II and D-III athletes benefit from NIL (Name, Image, and Likeness) rules with a centralized marketplace for fans and alumni to support student athletics.

NFTs Democratize Music Industry and Redistribute Song Rights *August 20, 2022 via Crypto Consulting* The music industry continues to find inventive ways to integrate decentralized technology into new releases to benefit both artists and their fans.

NFL Joins NBA Top Shot Maker to Test Digital Collectibles Demand *August 18, 2022 via Sportico (subscription may be required)* NFL All Day, a digital collectible platform built by Dapper Labs, officially launches today as the league continues to develop its blockchain offering.

Posted in Sports & Entertainment Spotlight

Authored by

Joshua A. Bloomgarden

Principal|New York

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Foster Garvey

212.965.4529 josh.bloomgarden@foster.com

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