

Anheuser-Busch Drops 'Hold My Beer and Watch This' after Craft Brewer Sues

JIM SALTER, Associated Press

ST. LOUIS (AP) — Anheuser-Busch Cos. Inc. has removed the "Hold my beer and watch this" videos from its Bud Light YouTube page, and the craft brewer that sued over use of the phrase has dropped the legal action.

Big Sky Brewing Co. of Missoula, Mont., sued Anheuser-Busch in December, saying it had a trademark for the phrase "Hold my beer and watch this" and had used the slogan since 2004. Big Sky dropped the suit on Wednesday in exchange for Anheuser-Busch removing the videos. There was no financial settlement, Anheuser-Busch spokeswoman Lisa Weser said.

The three videos were created by actor John Krasinski, best known as Jim Halpert on NBC's *The Office*, and his business partner, Danny Stessen. They depict strange things that could happen after asking someone to hold your beer. In one, a grandmother celebrating her 100th birthday feigns death after asking a young man to hold her beer, then she and a friend high-five and laugh after the man and his friends leave.

The videos, which debuted in early December, were popular — they had several million views before being taken down on Jan. 15.

"We may revisit the concept," Weser said Thursday. "We stand by our original statement that there was no trademark use of the phrase 'Hold my beer and watch this,' nor was there any intent to create any association with Big Sky."

Messages seeking comment from Big Sky's attorney were not immediately returned.

Anheuser-Busch-InBev is the world's largest brewer, based in Belgium. InBev purchased Anheuser-Busch in 2008 and retained St. Louis as U.S. headquarters. The company makes top-selling beers like Bud Light and Budweiser, and commands 47.6 percent of the U.S. beer market.

Big Sky makes craft beers with such names as "Moose Drool," "Trout Slayer" and "Slow Elk." The company website says it is the nation's 50th largest brewer with sales of around 50,000 barrels of beer in 2013. Big Sky brews are sold in 24 states.

The A-B videos were online only and did not air on television.

Big Sky's lawsuit filed Dec. 20 included photos of cans of one of its brews, the back reading "Hold my beer and watch this." Anheuser-Busch officials contended that countless videos, jokes and other references used words and phrasing similar to

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"hold my beer and watch this."

"We liked the videos," Weser said. "They got great views. We thought they had run their course and right now we're really focused on our Super Bowl advertising that will debut in the game."

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