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Beastie Boys Settle Lawsuit Over 'Girls' Toy Commercial

Toy company GoldieBlox will issue public apology and payment to Beastie Boys-selected charity

BY JON BLISTEIN March 18, 2014



Beastie Boys Ebet Roberts/Redferns

The Beastie Boys have settled a legal battle with GoldieBlox for an undisclosed amount over the toy company's viral video ad parodying the group's 1987 song "Girls."

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"The lawsuit between the Beastie Boys and GoldieBlox concerning GoldieBlox's use of the Beastie Boys song 'Girls' has been settled," a spokesperson for the company tells *Rolling Stone*. "That settlement includes (a) the issuance of an apology by GoldieBlox, which will be posted on GoldieBlox's website, and (b) a payment by GoldieBlox, based on a percentage of its revenues, to one or more charities selected by Beastie Boys that support science, technology, engineering and mathematics education for girls." A representative for the Beastie Boys directed *Rolling Stone* to GoldieBlox's statement.

GoldieBlox specializes in engineering and construction toys for girls, and in the ad for the "[Princess Machine](#)," three young girls built a Rube Goldberg machine and sang the Beastie Boys track with altered lyrics to reflect the company's mission ("Girls to build a spaceship / Girls to code the new app / Girls to grow up knowing / That they can engineer that").

Garnering millions of views, the Beastie Boys responded to the company claiming copyright infringement, causing GoldieBlox to [file an official lawsuit](#) that argued the ad was a parody and therefore protected under fair use. The suit focused specifically on the sexist nature of the original song's lyrics ("Girls to do the dishes / Girls to clean up my room / Girls to do the laundry / Girls and in the bathroom"), saying the company was trying to "make fun of the Beastie Boys song" and "break down gender stereotypes and to encourage young girls to engage in activities that challenge their intellect, particularly in the fields of science, technology, engineering and math."

When [the Beastie Boys responded](#), they did voice their support for GoldieBlox's message and efforts, but noted: "Make no mistake, your video is an advertisement that is designed to sell a product and long ago, we made a conscious decision not to permit our music and/or name to be used in product ads. When we tried to simply ask how and why our song 'Girls' had been used in your ad without our permission, *you sued us*." The group's claim was bolstered by a [stipulation in late member Adam Yauch's will](#) that read "in no event may my image or name or any music or any artistic property created by me be used for advertising purposes."

GoldieBlox responded positively to the group, [pulling the viral video and saying](#) they did not know about Yauch's request, nor did they want to engage in a legal battle with the group. Still, the [Beastie Boys filed an official counter-suit](#) in December, criticizing GoldieBlox for not developing an original advertising campaign "to inspire its customers to create and innovate," instead using one that "condones and encourages stealing from others." The group went on to point out GoldieBlox has used music from other popular artists to sell toys including [Queen](#), [Daft Punk](#), Avicii, Slam, k.flay, Trevor Guthrie and others.

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