

## **ADMINISTRATIVE PANEL DECISION**

Hearst Communications, Inc. v. Niket Verma  
Case No. D2025-4886

### **1. The Parties**

The Complainant is Hearst Communications, Inc., United States of America (“USA”), internally represented.

The Respondent is Niket Verma, India.

### **2. The Domain Name and Registrar**

The disputed domain name <harpersbazaarusa.com> is registered with GoDaddy.com, LLC (the “Registrar”).

### **3. Procedural History**

The Complaint was filed with the WIPO Arbitration and Mediation Center (the “Center”) on November 24, 2025. On November 25, 2025, the Center transmitted by email to the Registrar a request for registrar verification in connection with the disputed domain name. On November 26, 2025, the Registrar transmitted by email to the Center its verification response disclosing registrant and contact information for the disputed domain name which differed from the named Respondent (Private (redacted), Registration Private, Domains By Proxy, LLC) and contact information in the Complaint. The Center sent an email communication to the Complainant on November 26, 2025, providing the registrant and contact information disclosed by the Registrar, and inviting the Complainant to submit an amendment to the Complaint. The Complainant filed an amendment to the Complaint on December 1, 2025.

The Center verified that the Complaint together with the amendment to the Complaint satisfied the formal requirements of the Uniform Domain Name Dispute Resolution Policy (the “Policy” or “UDRP”), the Rules for Uniform Domain Name Dispute Resolution Policy (the “Rules”), and the WIPO Supplemental Rules for Uniform Domain Name Dispute Resolution Policy (the “Supplemental Rules”).

In accordance with the Rules, paragraphs 2 and 4, the Center formally notified the Respondent of the Complaint, and the proceedings commenced on December 9, 2025. In accordance with the Rules, paragraph 5, the due date for Response was December 29, 2025. The Respondent sent email communications to the Center on November 30, 2025 and December 1, 2025.

The Center appointed Andrea Jaeger-Lenz as the sole panelist in this matter on January 6, 2026. The Panel finds that it was properly constituted. The Panel has submitted the Statement of Acceptance and Declaration of Impartiality and Independence, as required by the Center to ensure compliance with the Rules, paragraph 7.

#### **4. Factual Background**

The Complainant is a diversified media, information and services company. Among its divisions is Hearst Magazines, which is the publisher of the magazine with the title Harper's Bazaar. This magazine was launched in 1867 as the first women's fashion magazine in the USA. It reaches over 3 million print readers a month, there are over 7 million visitors per month to its website, and over 20 million followers on its social media channels.

The Complainant, according to Annex 5 to the Complaint, owns numerous trademarks worldwide in the designation HARPER'S BAZAAR, including the following:

- USA trademark no. 274802 HARPER'S BAZAAR, registered on September 9, 1930, for goods in Class 16;
- USA trademark no. 3504927 HARPER'S BAZAAR, registered on September 23, 2008, for services in Class 41;
- Indian ("IN") trademark no 568351 HARPER'S BAZAAR (word), registered on February 26, 1992, for goods in Class 16;
- IN trademark no. 3813765 HARPER'S BAZAAR (word), registered on April 23, 2018, for services in Class 41.

The Complainant's HARPER'S BAZAAR magazine is available online at the domain <harpersbazaar.com> as per Annex 4 to the Complaint.

The disputed domain name was registered on May 28, 2024. Before the filing of the Complaint it resolved to a website, excerpts of which are presented in Annex 3 to the Complaint, displaying covers of magazines that purported to be the USA edition of the HARPER'S BAZAAR magazine.

#### **5. Parties' Contentions**

##### **A. Complainant**

The Complainant contends that it has satisfied each of the elements required under the Policy for a transfer of the disputed domain name.

Notably, on the first element, the Complainant contends that it owns trademarks in the designation HARPER'S BAZAAR.

On the second element, the Complainant puts forth that the disputed domain name was registered to mislead the Complainant's actual and potential website visitors, and that the Respondent has no right or legitimate interest with respect to the disputed domain name.

On the third element, the Complainant claims that the disputed domain name was registered for the sole reason to intentionally mislead consumers and potentially collect identifying information on unsuspecting users of the Complainant. The Complainant adds that by using the disputed domain name, intentional attempts are being made to attract visitors for commercial gain by creating confusion with the Complainant's trademark.

## **B. Respondent**

The Respondent sent messages that he would be shutting down its website, but did not reply to the Complainant's contentions.

## **6. Discussion and Findings**

### **A. Identical or Confusingly Similar**

It is well accepted that the first element functions primarily as a standing requirement. The standing (or threshold) test for confusing similarity involves a reasoned but relatively straightforward comparison between the Complainant's trademark and the disputed domain name. WIPO Overview of WIPO Panel Views on Selected UDRP Questions, Third Edition ("[WIPO Overview 3.0](#)"), section 1.7.

The Complainant has shown rights in respect of a trademark or service mark for the purposes of the Policy. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 1.2.1.

The entirety of the mark is reproduced within the disputed domain name. Accordingly, the disputed domain name is confusingly similar to the mark for the purposes of the Policy. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 1.7.

Although the addition of other terms here, "usa", may bear on assessment of the second and third elements, the Panel finds the addition of such term does not prevent a finding of confusing similarity between the disputed domain name and the mark for the purposes of the Policy. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 1.8.

The Panel finds the first element of the Policy has been established.

### **B. Rights or Legitimate Interests**

Paragraph 4(c) of the Policy provides a list of circumstances in which the Respondent may demonstrate rights or legitimate interests in a disputed domain name.

Although the overall burden of proof in UDRP proceedings is on the complainant, panels have recognized that proving a respondent lacks rights or legitimate interests in a domain name may result in the difficult task of "proving a negative", requiring information that is often primarily within the knowledge or control of the respondent. As such, where a complainant makes out a prima facie case that the respondent lacks rights or legitimate interests, the burden of production on this element shifts to the respondent to come forward with relevant evidence demonstrating rights or legitimate interests in the domain name (although the burden of proof always remains on the complainant). If the respondent fails to come forward with such relevant evidence, the complainant is deemed to have satisfied the second element. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 2.1.

Having reviewed the available record, the Panel finds the Complainant has established a prima facie case that the Respondent lacks rights or legitimate interests in the disputed domain name. The Respondent has not rebutted the Complainant's prima facie showing and has not come forward with any relevant evidence demonstrating rights or legitimate interests in the disputed domain name such as those enumerated in the Policy or otherwise.

Panels have held that the use of a domain name for illegitimate activity here, claimed impersonation, can never confer rights or legitimate interests on a respondent. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 2.13.1.

The Panel finds the second element of the Policy has been established.

### **C. Registered and Used in Bad Faith**

The Panel notes that, for the purposes of paragraph 4(a)(iii) of the Policy, paragraph 4(b) of the Policy establishes circumstances, in particular, but without limitation, that, if found by the Panel to be present, shall be evidence of the registration and use of a domain name in bad faith.

In the present case, the Panel notes that the Respondent has registered the disputed domain name containing the Complainant's trademark in its entirety, adding only the geographic term "usa", and redirecting the same to a website (as per Annex 3 to the Complaint) on which covers of magazines copying the look and feel of the Complainant's HARPER'S BAZAAR magazine were displayed and which purported to belong to the USA edition of the HARPER'S BAZAAR magazine.

Paragraph 4(b) of the Policy sets out a list of non-exhaustive circumstances that may indicate that a domain name was registered and used in bad faith, but other circumstances may be relevant in assessing whether a respondent's registration and use of a domain name is in bad faith. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 3.2.1. In the present case, given the distinctiveness of the Complainant's trademark and the use to which the disputed domain name has been put, there is no conceivable other reason for its registration but that the Respondent intended to target the Complainant's trademark and impersonate the Complainant.

Panels have held that the use of a domain name for illegitimate activity here, impersonation, constitutes bad faith. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 3.4. Having reviewed the record, the Panel finds the Respondent's registration and use of the disputed domain name constitutes bad faith under the Policy.

The Panel finds that the Complainant has established the third element of the Policy.

### **7. Decision**

For the foregoing reasons, in accordance with paragraphs 4(i) of the Policy and 15 of the Rules, the Panel orders that the disputed domain name <harpersbazaarusa.com> be transferred to the Complainant.

*/Andrea Jaeger-Lenz/*

**Andrea Jaeger-Lenz**

Sole Panelist

Date: January 13, 2026