

ADMINISTRATIVE PANEL DECISION

William Grant & Sons Limited v. Hents McGee

Case No. D2026-1259

1. The Parties

The Complainant is William Grant & Sons Limited, United Kingdom, represented by Com Laude Limited, United Kingdom.

The Respondent is Hents McGee, South Africa.

2. The Domain Name and Registrar

The disputed domain name <wgrant.com> is registered with Hostinger Operations, UAB (the "Registrar").

3. Procedural History

The Complaint was filed with the WIPO Arbitration and Mediation Center (the "Center") on March 24, 2026. On March 24, 2026, the Center transmitted by email to the Registrar a request for registrar verification in connection with the disputed domain name. On March 24, 2026, 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 (Redacted for Privacy) and contact information in the Complaint. The Center sent an email communication to the Complainant on March 26, 2026, 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 amended Complaint on March 31, 2026.

The Center verified that the Complaint together with the amended 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 April 1, 2026. In accordance with the Rules, paragraph 5, the due date for Response was April 21, 2026. The Respondent did not submit any response. Accordingly, the Center notified the Respondent's default on April 22, 2026.

The Center appointed Kathryn Lee as the sole panelist in this matter on April 29, 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 company founded in 1887 that distills, markets, and distributes Scotch whisky and other spirits. The Complainant's core brands include GRANT'S, a blended Scotch whisky; GLENFIDDICH and BALVENIE, both single malt Scotch whiskies; HENDRICK'S gin; and TULLAMORE DEW, an Irish whiskey. The Complainant owns a number of trademark registrations for the mark GRANT'S, including United Kingdom Trademark Registration Number UK00000542300 registered on June 15, 1933; Canada Trademark Registration Number NFLD2054 registered on May 31, 1934; and United States Trademark Registration Number 346426 registered on May 25, 1937. The Complainant has used the domain name <wgrant.com> for its official website since its registration in 1996, with each of its 2,800 employees worldwide assigned an "@wgrant.com" email address and millions of emails sent since then to customers, clients, suppliers and other third parties.

Based on information from the Registrar, the Respondent is reportedly an individual with an address in South Africa.

The disputed domain name was registered on December 3, 2025, and at the time of filing the Complaint, it resolved to the Registrar's parking page. According to the Complainant, the Respondent also used the disputed domain name to send emails, purportedly impersonating one of the Complainant's employee, asking for third-parties' payment.

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, the Complainant contends that it has unregistered rights in the term WGRANT, and that the disputed domain name is confusingly similar to WGRANT since the letter "g" is replaced with the visually similar letter "q". The Complainant also contends that the disputed domain name is confusingly similar to GRANT'S in which it has trademark rights since the disputed domain name adds the prefix "w", replaces the letter "g" with the visually similar letter "q" and omits the possessive "s", rendering the GRANT'S mark visually recognizable within the disputed domain name.

The Complainant also contends that the Respondent has no rights or legitimate interests in the disputed domain name and confirms that it has not authorized or licensed rights to the Respondent in any respect. The Complainant further contends that the Respondent sent phishing emails impersonating one of the Complainant's employees which does not confer rights or legitimate interests on the Respondent.

Finally, the Complainant contends that the disputed domain name was registered and is being used in bad faith. Specifically, the Complainant contends that the Respondent's impersonation of the Complainant's employee was in furtherance of illegal activity, and thus, evidence of bad faith registration and use of the disputed domain name.

B. Respondent

The Respondent 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 Select UDRP Questions ("[WIPO Overview 3.1](#)"), section 1.7.

Here, the Complainant uses WGRANT as an abbreviation of its name and past UDRP decisions have recognized the Complainant's unregistered rights in the term. See *William Grant & Sons Limited v. fang yun li*, WIPO Case No. [D2019-2872](#); *William Grant & Sons Limited v. Daniel Bachhiesl, DES GmbH*, WIPO Case No. [D2025-2949](#). Besides, the top results for WGRANT on Bing all refer to the Complainant. Accordingly, the Panel finds the Complainant has established unregistered trademark rights for the purposes of the Policy. [WIPO Overview 3.1](#), section 1.3.

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 that 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 3.1](#), 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 illegal activity - here, claimed phishing, can never confer rights or legitimate interests on a respondent. [WIPO Overview 3.1](#), 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 registered the disputed domain name which contains a misspelled version of the Complainant's unregistered mark, using instead of the letter "g", the letter "q" which is visually similar to it. Given the distinctiveness of the Complainant's mark, the Panel finds that this constitutes typosquatting. Absent response from the Respondent and given the manner in which the Respondent used the disputed domain name, the Panel concludes that the Respondent likely registered

the disputed domain name intending to target the Complainant and its mark in order to carry out a fraudulent scheme.

Further, Panels have held that the use of a domain name for illegal activity - here, claimed phishing constitutes bad faith. [WIPO Overview 3.1](#), 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 <wqrant.com> be transferred to the Complainant.

/Kathryn Lee/

Kathryn Lee

Sole Panelist

Date: May 12, 2026