



# Springfield Native Makes Them Pay

## Jonathan Faber helps win big bucks for rock star Nikki Sixx

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News-Sun Starr Writer



Faber

Jonathan Faber once again found himself in the Theatre of Pain. But the Springfield native is no stranger to the court of law. In fact, he doesn't just have the looks that kill, he has the expertise, too.

Faber recently was used by Motley Crue bassist Nikki Sixx as an expert witness in his plight to take Vans shoes to the cleaners for using his likeness in an ad without permission. After the jury's ruling last week, Sixx didn't go away mad. He went away richer. Thanks to Faber's testimony the rocker could be awarded close to \$1 million when all the expenses are totaled. "Ever seen that AL Pacino-Keanu Reeves movie 'The Devil's Advocate?' Pacino has this great line: 'The law is the ultimate backstage pass,'" Faber remarked.

The 1990 North High grad is the president of CMG Worldwide, an Indianapolis-based celebrity licensing company. His job is to safeguard the intellectual property of about 200 (most dead) clients, including the likes of Buddy Holly, Humphrey Bogart and even Malcolm X. The 32-year-old law school grad has put the smack down on companies hawking everything from James Dean beer to Marilyn Monroe condoms, making him a much sought-after authority when it comes to punishing those who don't first ask before using a celebrity's image.

So, when Franklin C. Feranna got his day in court earlier this month, Faber flew out to Low Angles to take the stand — on behalf of Feranna's alter-ego, Nikki Sixx. "My goal is to figure out how much this thing's worth," Faber explained. The suit was filed in 2003 when Vans, the skater shoe company, used

a photo of Sixx with skate pro/Cure fan Tony Trujilo in a national campaign. As if using photo without asking wasn't bad enough, one caption declared, "Live Fast, Die Young." Sixx thought that sounded a tad too close to the name of Crue's trashy first album, "Too Fast for Love." But perhaps the thing that truly kick-started Sixx's heart is the fact he has his own clothing line — one that competes with Vans. "These big companies, it always amazes me, don't have much regard for the liability they're taking on," Faber said. "They should have known better."

To come up with an appropriate award, Faber reviewed Sixx's past and present business deals and then considered the not-so-obvious. "How do you measure the success of an advertisement?" he said. "But they used him in advertising and it helped sell shoes." He suggested an award of \$600,000 with interest. The jury was sold. The award, however, is pocket change compared to what Sixx and the rest of the Crue likely will pull down on their reunion tour, which hits Columbus' Schottenstein Center on March 8. "I like some of their stuff, but I don't have Motley Crue tattooed across my back," Faber said. Still, Sixx has offered up free tickets to whatever show he wants to see. And maybe Faber should keep the Crue in his Rolodex — Tommy Lee seems to always need a good attorney.



Motley Crue's Nikki Sixx, left, is a lot richer after Springfield native Jonathan Faber testified on his behalf in a suit against Vans shoes, which used the bassist in an ad without permission. The reunited Crue will play in Columbus on March 8.

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