

# Lawyer Who Founded ‘Copyright Trolling’ Prenda Law Is Disbarred

John Steele, one of the masterminds behind the Prenda Law “copyright trolling” scheme, has been disbarred, **reports Ars Technica**.

Steele agreed to the disbarment two months after pleading guilty to federal fraud and money laundering charges.

Reporter **Joe Mullin** writes that Steele said he and a co-defendant, Paul Hansmeier, made more than \$6 million over a two-year period with “sham entities” that threatened Internet users with copyright lawsuits.

Steele “conspired to extort settlement funds from thousands of Internet users in a multi-jurisdictional copyright litigation scheme,” Illinois attorney regulators said in a statement of charges. “Specifically, they attempted to exact settlements from users who allegedly infringed on the copyrights of certain pornographic movies, including movies that Mr. Steele himself produced and distributed.”

**Read the Ars Technica article.**

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