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TV firm sues partner over business failure

By [ALEXANDRA CLOUGH](#)

Palm Beach Post Staff Writer

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Scott Woolley's business troubles might make for a sobering reality television show.

But it's not a show, it's Woolley's life - and the death of his venerable TV production company, Boca Raton-based **Five Star Productions**.



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During the 1990s, the grocery store heir founded the independent Five Star and turned it into a formidable player in Palm Beach County TV production. Five Star counted hair guru **John Paul Dejoria**, chairman of **John Paul Mitchell Systems**, as a partner. The company fashioned syndicated news and information programs starring such celebrities as **Ed Begley Jr.**, **Cindy Williams**, **George Hamilton** and **Kim Alexis**. It even handled sports animation and computer graphics for baseball's **Florida Marlins** and hockey's **Florida Panthers**. By 2001, Five Star was up to 70 employees.

But Woolley says in court records he's lost everything he built. The culprit, according to a lawsuit filed in Palm Beach County Circuit Court, is **02 Media**, a Pompano Beach business, and its officials, **Gerald Czarnecki** and **Mark Alfieri**. In September 2008, Five Star formed a new venture with 02 Media called **BrandStar Entertainment LLC**. BrandStar's purpose was to market Five Star's half-hour show, *The Balancing Act*, which airs daily on the **Lifetime** cable TV channel.

Things didn't go as planned. In the September complaint filed by Woolley and Five Star, Woolley alleges BrandStar never paid him \$314,000 in consulting fees, never repaid him a \$250,000 advance, and never paid \$1.2 million in rent. Even worse, Woolley alleges BrandStar stripped Five Star's Boca Raton studio, walking out in February with equipment, computers and employees - all unrelated to BrandStar.

Among the files removed were those of **Paul Mitchell**, the **Dan Marino Foundation** and **Alonzo Mourning Charities**.

Five Star "has pretty much ceased operations," said Woolley's attorney, **Ken Lipman**. "To say (Woolley) is upset is to put it mildly."

Patricia Klein, an attorney and registered agent for 02 and BrandStar, did not return a phone call requesting comment.

In his complaint, Woolley said he learned after he struck the deal with 02 Media that the company wasn't what it seemed. In addition to learning 02 Media grossed only about \$700,000 a month, instead of the promised \$1.4 million, Woolley claims he learned that 02 Media is featured on a Web site, [scam.com](#). On this Web site, the lawsuit alleges, posters have this to say about 02 Media: "Don't do business with them."

- Egyptian restaurant **Off the Hookah** has snared a prime location on Clematis Street in downtown West Palm Beach. Look for belly dancers, hookah pipes, waterfalls and "flair bartenders" when the spot opens in December.

But will the building's current owner be around to enjoy the fun?

Last month, **JPMCC 2005-LDP2 Olive Avenue LLC** sued building owner **314 Clematis LLC** in Palm Beach County Circuit Court for allegedly failing to make payments on a \$3 million mortgage. The lawsuit seeks to foreclose on the property, which contains the 15,000-square-foot space just leased to Off the Hookah. The space was occupied by

- Gallerie, a Gardena, Calif.-based home furnishings retailer that filed Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection earlier this year.

Paul Snitkin, the West Palm Beach broker for the Off the Hookah deal, said banking officials have told him the foreclosure will have no effect on the lease.

And it's possible the lease might have an effect on the foreclosure - for the good, said **Robert Kanjian**, a prominent downtown attorney and one of four owners of the property. Kanjian says the Off the Hookah deal might rescue him and his partners from the foreclosure, which occurred after

- Gallerie stopped paying rent. "We had a period of months where half the building's income was gone," Kanjian said.

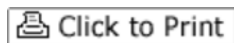
JBMCC filed the expected foreclosure action on Sept. 15, only a couple of weeks before the Off the Hookah deal was inked.

Now that he has a paying tenant, Kanjian said he's working with the lender to resolve the foreclosure. "We expect it will go away," Kanjian said. A spokeswoman for the lender said it would not comment.

Alexandra Clough writes about the economy, real estate and the law. Contact her at alexandra_clough@pbpost.com.

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