# IN THE UNITED STATES BANKRUPTCY COURT FOR THE DISTRICT OF DELAWARE

In re:

VILLAGE ROADSHOW ENTERTAINMENT GROUP USA INC., et al.,<sup>1</sup>

Debtors.

Chapter 11

Case No. 25-10475 (TMH)

(Jointly Administered)

#### RENEWED OBJECTION TO SALE OF DEBTORS' ASSETS

Clover Ivy Purchaser, LLC ("Clover"), as successor-in-interest to Vine Gaylord Company LP, Vine Rysher Company LP, Vine Entertainment International Corp., Vine Manchester Library Company LP, Vine Eton Library Company LP, Vine Entertainment LP, Vine LSE IV, LP, and Vine SLE International IV, LLC (collectively, the "Vine Entities"), by and through its undersigned counsel, submits this renewed objection (the "Renewed Objection") related to the Notice of (I) Successful Bidder for Derivative Rights and Studio Business and (II) Back-Up Bidder for Derivative Rights [the "Notice"; Doc. No. 44] filed pursuant to the terms of that Amended Order (I) Approving Bid Procedures for the Sale of the Debtors' Assets, (II) Authorizing the Debtors' Entry Into the Stalking Horse APA and Approving Bid Protections Thereunder, (III) Scheduling

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> The Debtors in these cases are: Village Roadshow Entertainment Group USA Inc. (0343); VR Zoo Productions Ltd.; VREG Funding LLC; VREG IP Global LLC; Village Roadshow Distribution USA Inc.; VREG J2 Global LLC; Village Roadshow Films Global Inc.; VREG MM2 IP Global LLC; VRED OP Global LLC; VREG Production Services Inc.; Village Roadshow Films North America Inc.; VRED Television Inc.; VRED Wonka IP Global LLC; Village Roadshow Pictures Entertainment Inc.; VRED WW IP Global LLC; Village Roadshow Pictures North America Inc.; Village Roadshow VS Films LLC; Village Roadshow Productions Inc.; VRE DTE Distribution USA Inc.; VR DTE Productions Limited; VR Funding LLC; VREG Films Ltd.; Village Roadshow Film Administration Management Pty Ltd; Village Roadshow Distribution Pty Ltd.; Village Roadshow Entertainment Group Asia Limited; Crescent Film Holdings Limited; Village Roadshow Distribution UK Limited; Village Roadshow Entertainment Group (BVI) Limited; VR Zoo Distribution USA Inc.; Village Roadshow Distribution (BVI) Limited; Village Roadshow Films (BVI) Limited; VR Films Holdings (BVI) Limited; and Village Roadshow Holdings USA Inc. Due to the large number of debtors in these cases, the last for digits of the non-Village Roadshow Entertainment Group USA, Inc. debtors may be obtained on the website of the Debtors' claims and noticing agent.

an Auction for, and Hearing to Approve, Sale of the Debtors' Assets, (IV) Approving Form and Manner of Notices of Sale, Auction, and Sale Hearings, and (V) Approving Assumption and Assignment Procedures and (VI) Granting Related Relief [Doc. No. 276; the "Sale Procedures Order"] entered by the Court in response to the motions filed by Village Roadshow Entertainment Group USA Inc. ("Village Roadshow") and its related debtor affiliates (collectively, the "Debtors") on March 17, 2025 [Doc. No. 11, 197]. In support of this Renewed Objection, Clover respectfully represents:<sup>2</sup>

#### PRELIMINARY STATEMENT

The Debtors previously commenced a sale and auction process for substantially all of their assets, including the Library Assets, the Derivative Rights and the Studio Business (the "Assets"), and intend to sell those Assets, and in the case of executory contracts and unexpired leases, assume and assign those agreements to the Stalking Horse Bidder and Successful Bidder in accordance with the Bidding Procedures. As stated in the Notice, the Debtors have identified Alcon Media Group, LLC ("Alcon") as the Stalking Horse Bidder and Successful Bidder for the Assets.

Clover files this Renewed Objection with respect to the sale of the Assets in relation to that certain Amended and Restated Option Agreement (the "Option Agreement") executed by and among the Vine Entities and Village Roadshow (as described in further detail herein below). The Option Agreement provides for the license to Village Roadshow by Clover, as successor-in-interest to the Vine Entities, of the Derivative Rights related to nineteen (19) motion picture properties and Projects subject to the terms contained therein and is included in the Studio Business proposed to be sold to Alcon as stated in the Notice. Clover objects to the sale to Alcon of the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Capitalized terms used but not defined herein shall have the meanings ascribed them in the Sale Procedures Order or Option Agreement, as applicable.

Option Agreement as the Option Agreement was validly terminated pre-petition, and Village Roadshow has no rights or obligations under the Option Agreement and the same is not property of Village Roadshow's bankruptcy estate subject to sale or assumption and assignment under Sections 363 and 365 of Title 11 of the United States Code (the "Bankruptcy Code") or applicable state law. Clover reserves all rights and remedies under Sections 363 and 365 of Title 11 of the United States Code (the "Bankruptcy Code") or applicable state law.

#### **BACKGROUND**

- 1. On March 17, 2025 (the "<u>Petition Date</u>"), the Debtors filed voluntary petitions for relief under chapter 11 of the Bankruptcy Code with this Court.
- 2. Prior to the Petition Date, on or about December 1, 2018 (the "Effective Date"), the Vine Entities entered into the Option Agreement with Village Roadshow, as amended by that certain Restated and Amended Option Agreement dated January 1, 2023, a true and accurate copy of which is attached hereto as **Exhibit A**, pursuant to which Village Roadshow was granted the right to exercise an option to market and produce nineteen (19) separate feature film properties and projects. Importantly, Village Roadshow retained its option rights only so long as Village Roadshow was "an active production company in the television and/or feature-length motion picture industry to the same extent [it was] as of the Effective Date." *See e.g.* Option Agreement, Paras. 4, 22.
- 3. Pursuant to Paragraph 22(b) of the Option Agreement, the Option Agreement automatically terminates upon the "Licensee [Village Roadshow] ceasing to be an active production company in the television and/or feature-length motion picture industry to the same [it was] extent as of the Effective Date." Option Agreement, Para. 22. This termination provision is not subject to cure.

- 4. Prior to March 6, 2025, Clover learned that the Option Agreement had automatically terminated since Village Roadshow had ceased to be an active production company in the television and/or feature-length motion picture industry to the same extent it was as of the Effective Date. Accordingly, Clover advised Village Roadshow of the previous automatic termination of the Amended and Restated Option Agreement in a letter dated March 6, 2025 (the "Termination Letter"), a copy of which is attached hereto as **Exhibit B**.
- 5. Prior to the Notice, Clover filed its prior *Objection to Sale of Debtors' Assets* [Doc. No. 304] and its *Objection to Assumption and Assignment of Option Agreement* [Doc. No. 305].
- 6. Pursuant to the terms and procedures outlined in and approved by the Sale Procedures Motion, the Debtors propose to sell substantially all of their Assets to Alcon pursuant to the terms and procedures contained in the Sale Procedures Motion (the "Sale").
- 7. Upon information and belief, the Debtors have included the terminated Option Agreement in the assets subject of the proposed sale to Alcon.
- 8. Pursuant to the Notice, the Debtors will seek approval of the sale of their Assets to Alcon from the Court on June 18, 2025 (the "Sale Hearing").

#### **OBJECTION**

9. Clover objects to the Sale of the Debtors' Assets to the extent it purports to include the Option Agreement in the list of Assets to be sold to Alcon. Prior to the Petition Date, Village Roadshow ceased to be an active production company in the television and/or feature-length motion picture industry to the same extent it was as of the Effective Date, and accordingly, the Option Agreement automatically terminated and is not property of the estate.

- 10. Section 363 of the Bankruptcy Code provides generally that a trustee or debtor in possession may sell, outside the ordinary court of business, "property of the estate." *See generally*, 11 U.S.C. § 363. The Bankruptcy Code defines property of the estate as "all legal or equitable interest of the debtor in property as of the commencement of the case . . . ." 11 U.S.C. § 541(a)(1). In addition, the Bankruptcy Code provides that a trustee or debtor-in-possession "may assume or reject any executory contract or unexpired lease of the debtor." 11 U.S.C. § 365(a). To assume, or assume and assign an executory contract, a debtor must generally cure any default in the executory contract and "provide adequate assurance of future performance under such executory contract . . . ." 11 U.S.C. § 365.
- 11. It is well established that "[c]ontracts terminated prior to the filing of a bankruptcy petition are not property of the debtor's estate, and the court cannot resuscitate previously extinguished contract rights." *In re Southold Dev. Corp.*, 1991 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 18830, at \*14 (Bankr. E.D.N.Y. Dec. 23, 1991). In addition, there is a well-recognized principle that "an executory contract or lease validly terminated prior to the institution of the bankruptcy proceedings is not resurrected by the filing of the petition in bankruptcy and cannot therefore be included among the debtor's assets." *In re Triangle Laboratories, Inc.*, 663 F.2d 463, 467 (3rd Cir. 1981); *see also In re Texscan Corp.*, 107 B.R. 227 (B.A.P. 9th Cir. 1989) ("It is axiomatic that before 11 U.S.C. § 365 can apply a contract must exist."). The filing of a bankruptcy petition does not "expand the debtor's rights against other more than they exist as the commencement of the case." *Moody v. Amoco Oil Co.*, 734 F.2d 1200, 1213 (7th Cir. 1984).
- 12. It is also well-established that courts cannot alter terms of contracts and must instead enforce them as written. *See, e.g., Wilson v. Career Educ. Corp.*, 729 F.3d 665, 679 (7<sup>th</sup> Cir. 2013) ("A court may not rewrite a contract to suit one of the parties but must enforce the terms

as written.") (citation omitted); *In re Coupon Clearing Serv.*, *Inc.*, 113 F.3d 1091, 1099 (9th Cir. 1997) (noting that a debtor's estate has "no greater rights in property than those held by the debtor prior to the bankruptcy"); *Trustmark Ins. Co. v. Transamerica Occidental Life Ins. Co.*, 484 F. Supp. 2d 850, 853 (N.D. Ill. 2007) (stating a "court cannot alter, change or modify the existing terms of a contract or add new terms or conditions to which the parties do not appear to have assented, write into the contract something which the parties have omitted or take away something which the parties have included") (citation omitted).

- 13. As a result of the pre-petition automatic termination of the Option Agreement pursuant to the terms of paragraph 22 thereof, Village Roadshow had no rights or obligations under the terms of the Option Agreement. Consequently, the bankruptcy estate of Village Roadshow has no rights or obligations because it succeeds to only those rights held by the debtor prior to the bankruptcy. The filing of the Debtors' bankruptcy petitions does not operate to revive the Option Agreement, and the Court must enforce the termination provisions of the Option Agreement as written. The terms of the Option Agreement are clear. Once Village Roadshow ceased being a production company, the Option Agreement automatically terminated.
- 14. Therefore, Village Roadshow's rights and obligations thereunder are not property of the bankruptcy estate and cannot be sold pursuant to Section 363 of the Bankruptcy Code or assumed and assigned as party of a sale under Section 365 of the Bankruptcy Code.
- 15. To the extent that the Court determines that the Option Agreement is property of the bankruptcy estate and subject to sale to Alcon, Clover objects to the Sale and assumption and assignment of the Option Agreement to Alcon because, among other things, Village Roadshow has failed to show how it would cure the default resulting Village Roadshow's failure to remain an active production company in the television and/or feature-length motion picture

industry to the same extent it was as of the Effective Date of the Option Agreement.

Consequently, the Sale should be denied as it relates to the Option Agreement.

#### **CONCLUSION**

Accordingly, Clover respectfully objects to the Sale insofar as it purports to include assets that are not property of the Debtors' bankruptcy estates, including the Option Agreement.

Dated: June 3, 2025 Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Jamie L. Edmonson

Jamie L. Edmonson (No. 4247) Rachel Jaffe Mauceri (*pro hac vice*)

**ROBINSON & COLE LLC** 

1201 N. Market Street, Suite 1406 Wilmington, Delaware 19801

Telephone: (302) 516-1705

Fax: (302) 516-1699

Email: jedmonson@rc.com rmauceri@rc.com

- and -

Glenn E. Siegel (pro hac vice)
William D. Curtis (pro hac vice)
MOORE & VAN ALLEN PLLC
100 North Tryon Street
Suite 4700
Charlotte, North Carolina 28202-4003
Telephone: (704) 331-1000

Email: glennsiegel@mvalaw.com williamcurtis@mvalaw.com

Counsel for Clover Ivy Purchaser, LLC

### **CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

I, Jamie L. Edmonson, hereby certify that a true and correct copy of *Clover Ivy Purchaser*, *LLC's Renewed Objection to Sale of Debtor's Assets* was electronically filed on June 3, 2025, with the United States Bankruptcy Court and served through the Court's CM/ECF system upon the Debtor and all registered case participants, served upon the following parties via email notification and First Class mail, and served upon the parties on the attached Notice 2002 Service List via email notification and/or First-Class mail.

/s/ Jamie L. Edmonson
Jamie L. Edmonson (No. 4247)

Alcon Media Group, LLC 10390 Santa Monica Boulevard Suite 250 Los Angeles, CA 90025 Attention: Scott Parish E-mail: <a href="mailto:sparish@alconent.com">sparish@alconent.com</a>	Loeb & Loeb LLP 10100 Santa Monica Blvd., Suite 2200 Los Angeles, CA 90067 Attention: Scott Edel E-mail: sedel@loeb.com
Loeb & Loeb LLP 345 Park Avenue New York, NY 10154 Attention: Vadim J. Rubinstein E-mail: vrubinstein@loeb.com	Village Roadshow Entertainment Group USA Inc. 10100 Santa Monica Boulevard, Suite 200 Los Angeles, California 90067 Attention: Louis Santor and Kevin Berg E-mail: louis.santor@vreg.com kevin.berg@vreg.com
Sheppard Mullin Richter & Hampton LLP 350 South Grand Ave., 40th Floor Los Angeles, California 90071-3460 Attention: Stacey Rosenberg, Esq. E-mail: <a href="mailto:srosenberg@sheppardmullin.com">srosenberg@sheppardmullin.com</a>	Sheppard Mullin Richter & Hampton LLP 321 North Clark Street, 32nd Floor Chicago, IL 60654 Attention: Justin R. Bernbrock E-mail: jbernbrock@sheppardmullin.com

Description	CreditorName	CreditorNoticeName	Address1	Address2	Address3	City	State	Zip	Phone	Fax	Email
Top 20 Creditor and Committee of		Attn: Chase Anderson and Eric	10100 Santa Monica Blvd, Suite						310-552-0705;		chase.anderson@hines.com;
Unsecured Creditors	10100 Santa Monica Blvd.	Lyons, Hines	180			Los Angeles	CA	90067	310-552-3700		eric.lyon@hines.com
Counsel to Sony Pictures Entertainment, Inc., Columbia Pictures			350 South Grand Avenue, 51st								leib.lerner@alston.com;
Industries, Inc. and affiliates	Alston & Bird LLP	Leib M. Lerner, Douglas J. Harris				Los Angeles	CA	90071	213-576-1000	213-576-1100	douglas.harris@alston.com
Counsel to Sony Pictures	Alston & Bird EE	Ecib W. Ecirici, Douglas V. Flams	11001			Los Angeles	O/A	30071	210-070-1000	210-070-1100	dodglas.nams@alston.com
Entertainment, Inc., Columbia Pictures											
Industries, Inc. and affiliates	Alston & Bird LLP	Stephen M. Blank	90 Park Avenue			New York	NY	10016	212-210-9400	212-210-9444	stephen.blank@alston.com
U.S. Bank National Association, as ABS									312-214-4583;		agavant@btlaw.com;
Trustee U.S. Bank National Association, as ABS	Barnes & Thornburg LLP	Aaron Gavant, Kenneth P. Kansa	One N. Wacker Drive Suite 4400			Chicago	IL	60606-2833	312-357-1313	312-759-5646	KKansa@btlaw.com
Trustee	Barnes & Thornburg LLP	Leah O'Farrell	One Marina Park Drive Suite 1530			Boston	MA	02210	781-888-1516	617-316-5311	lofarrell@btlaw.com
Counsel for U.S. Bank National	Barries & Morriburg EEF	Lean OT aireii	One Manna Fank Drive Suite 1930			DOSION	IVIA	02210	701-000-1310	017-510-5511	mark.owens@btlaw.com;
Association, as ABS Trustee	Barnes & Thornburg LLP	Mark R. Owens, Amy E. Tryon	222 Delaware Avenue, Suite 1200	ı		Wilmington	DE	19801	302-300-3434		amy.tryon@btlaw.com
	,	c/o Brechen Feldman Breimer		1875 Century Park East, Suite		Ü					, , ,
Top 20 Creditor	Blackbird Films f/s/o Adam Small	Silver & Thompson, LLP	Attn: Ariela Moskowitz	1770		Los Angeles	CA	90067			ariela@bfbst.com
			801 North Brand Boulevard, Suite								dahdoot@bushgottlieb.com;
Counsel for Union Entities California Attorney General	Bush Gottlieb, a Law Corporation California Attorney General	David E. Ahdoot, Kirk Prestegard	950 1300 I St., Ste. 1740			Glendale Sacramento	CA	91203	818-973-3200 916-445-9555	818-973-3201	kprestegard@bushgottlieb.com
Counsel to Sony Pictures	California Attorney General	Attn Bankruptcy Department	1300 I St., Ste. 1740			Sacramento	CA	95814-2919	910-440-9000		
Entertainment, Inc., Columbia Pictures	Chipman Brown Cicero & Cole,			1313 North Market Street, Suite							
Industries, Inc. and affiliates	LLP	William E. Chipman, Jr.	Hercules Plaza	5400		Wilmington	DE	19801	302-295-0193		chipman@chipmanbrown.com
Top 20 Creditor	Content Cartel LLC	c/o Ryan Powers, Attorney at Law	5807 Fayette Street			Los Angeles	CA	90042	323-693-9173		ryan@ryanpowerslaw.com
Counsel to Vine Alternative Investments	Cooley I I D	Attn - Daniel Shore	EE Hudoop Vorde			New York	NY	10001			d-bb
Group, LLC Delaware Attorney General	Cooley LLP Delaware Attorney General	Attn.: Daniel Shamah Attn Bankruptcy Department	55 Hudson Yards Carvel State Office Bldg.	820 N. French St.		New York Wilmington	DE	10001 19801	302-577-8338		dshamah@cooley.com attorney.general@state.de.us
Delaware Attorney General	Delaware Attorney General	Auti Bankrupicy Department	Carver State Office Bidg.	020 N. I Telicii St.		willington	DL	13001	302-377-0330		attorney.general@state.de.us;
Delaware State AG and DOJ	Delaware Dept of Justice	Attorney General	Attn Bankruptcy Department	Carvel State Building	820 N French St	Wilmington	DE	19801	302-577-8400	302-577-6630	attorney.general@delaware.gov
DE Secretary of State	Delaware Secretary of State	Division of Corporations	Franchise Tax	PO Box 898		Dover	DE	19903	302-739-3073	302-739-5831	dosdoc_bankruptcy@state.de.us
DE State Treasury	Delaware State Treasury		820 Silver Lake Blvd., Suite 100			Dover	DE	19904	302-672-6700	302-739-2274	statetreasurer@state.de.us
			1201 North Market Street, Suite								aaron.applebaum@us.dlapiper.com;
Counsel to Magnum Films SPC Counsel to Magnum Films SPC	DLA Piper LLP (US) DLA Piper LLP (US)	Eastes Dennis O'Donnell	2100 1251 Avenue of the Americas			Wilmington	DE	19801	302-468-5700 212-335-4665	302-394-2341 917-778-8665	roxanne.eastes@us.dlapiper.com dennis.odonnell@us.dlapiper.com
Counsel to Magnum Films SPC  Counsel to Magnum Films SPC	DLA Piper LLP (US)	Tom K. Ara	2000 Avenue of the Stars	Suite 400 North Tower		New York Los Angeles	CA		212-335-4005 310-595-3000	310-595-3300	tom.ara@us.dlapiper.com
Course to Magnum Films SF C	DEA Fiper EEF (03)	c/o Sloane, Offer, Weber, and	2000 Avertue of the Stars	10100 Santa Monica Blvd., Suite		Los Arigeles	CA	30007-4733	310-393-3000	310-333-3300	torri.ara@us.uiapiper.com
Top 20 Creditor	EP Abso LLC	Dern LLP	Attn: Mark Wetzstein	750		Los Angeles	CA	90067	310-248-5100		mark@sowdllp.com
IRS	Internal Revenue Service	Attn Susanne Larson	31 Hopkins Plz Rm 1150			Baltimore	MD	21201	800-913-9358	855-852-4141	SBSE.Insolvency.Balt@irs.gov
IRS	Internal Revenue Service	Centralized Insolvency Operation	PO Box 7346			Philadelphia	PA	19101-7346	800-973-0424	855-235-6787	
IRS	Internal Revenue Service	Centralized Insolvency Operation	2970 Market St			Philadelphia	PA	19104		855-235-6787	
iks	Katzner Pictures f/s/o Oren	Certifalized Insolvericy Operation	2970 Market St			Filladelphia	FA	19104		000-200-0707	
Top 20 Creditor	Moverman	Oren Moverman	16 West 16th Street, Apt. 12AN			New York	NY	10011			rmarcus@mindspring.com
1 1			222 N. Pacific Coast Highway,								0 1 3
Claims and Noticing Agent	KCC dba Verita		Suite 300			El Segundo	CA	90245			vreginfo@veritaglobal.com
Top 20 Creditor	Kirkland & Ellis LLP	Mark C. Holscher, P.C.	555 Flower Street Suite 3700			Los Angeles	CA	90071	213-680-8400		mark.holscher@kirkland.com
Top 20 Creditor	Kubier Entertainment f/s/o Karen Croner	Attn: Jeff Okin	1131 Maple Street			Santa Monica	CA	90405			
Attorneys for Alcon Media Group, LLC	Croner	Kimberly A. Brown, George A.	1131 Maple Street			Santa Monica	CA	90403			brown@lrclaw.com;
and Loompala Pictures, LLC	Landis Rath & Cobb LLP	Williams III	919 Market Street. Suite 1800			Wilmington	DE	19801	302-467-4400	302-467-4450	williams@Irclaw.com
Counsel to Content Partners and for CP			,			3					<u> </u>
Ventura LLC	Latham & Watkins LLP	David Hammerman	1271 Avenue of the Americas			New York	NY	10020	212-906-1398		David.Hammerman@lw.com
Counsel to Content Partners and for CP			355 South Grand Avenue, Suite				l		213-485-1234;	-	Deniz.Irgi@lw.com;
Ventura LLC	Latham & Watkins LLP	Deniz Irgi, Davis A. Klabo	100			Los Angeles	CA	90071	213-891-8023		davis.klabo@lw.com
		Liliana Ranger, Djenab Conde,	10250 Constellation Blvd., Suite								Liliana.Ranger@lw.com; Djenab.Conde@lw.com;
Counsel to Content Partners	Latham & Watkins LLP	Sam Lehman	1100 Constellation Bivd., Suite			Los Angeles	CA	90067			Sam.Lehman@lw.com
S CONTON T GRADIO	Law Office of Susan E. Kaufman,						5,,				
Counsel for Union Entities	LLC		919 N. Market Street, Suite 460			Wilmington	DE	19801	302-472-7420	302-792-7420	skaufman@skaufmanlaw.com
Attorneys for Alcon Media Group, LLC		Vadim J. Rubinstein, Noah									vrubinstein@loeb.com;
and Loompala Pictures, LLC	Loeb & Loeb LLP	Weingarten	345 Park Avenue	10050 0 1 11 11 11 11 11		New York	NY	10154	212-407-4000	212-407-4990	nweingarten@loeb.com
Top 20 Creditor and Committee of	McGuffin Entertainment Media, Inc. c/o UTA		Attn: Douglas Stone and James	10250 Constellation Blvd., 19th		Loc Angeles	CA	00067	210 556 7920		detono@glaconwoil.com
Unsecured Creditors Top 20 Creditor	Milbank		Scura 55 Hudson Yards	Floor		Los Angeles New York	CA NY	90067	310-556-7820 212-530-5803		dstone@glaserweil.com smcmillon@milbank.com
. op 20 Greditor	THE STATE OF THE S	Sour Marinon	oo naadon rarad			TOTAL TOTAL	1	10001-2100	L.L 000-0000		nalmeida@milbank.com;
											smcmillon@milbank.com;
		Nelly Almeida, Sean McMillon,									knesfield@milbank.com;
		Kamal Nesfield, Nicholas					1		212-530-5271, 424-386-		nconnolly@milbank.com;
Counsel to Falcon and Ontario	Milbank LLP	Connolly, Ari Tuchman	55 Hudson Yards			New York	NY	10001-2163	4368, 310-650-8472		VREGMilbank@milbank.com
Top 20 Creditor	Moonshot Entertainment Inc. f/s/o Bryan Cranston	c/o UTA	Attn: Matt Rice	9336 Civic Center Drive		Beverly Hills	CA	90210	310-273-6700		hn/an@moonshot tv
1 OP 20 CIEUIIOI	Di yari Ciansion	WUUIA		2000 CIVIC CEITIEF DIIVE		Deveriy Mills	CA	3UZ IU	J10-21J-01UU		bryan@moonshot.tv glennsiegel@mvalaw.com;
Counsel to Clover Ivy Purchaser, LLC	Moore & Van Allen PLLC	Glenn E. Siegel, William D. Curtis	100 North Tryon Street, Suite 4700			Charlotte	NC	28202-4003	704-331-1000		williamcurtis@mvalaw.com;

Description	CreditorName	CreditorNoticeName	Address1	Address2	Address3	City	State	Zip	Phone	Fax	Email
Counsel to Paramount Global and its Affiliates, Including Paramount Pictures Corporation, Paramount Pictures											
International, and Paramount Pictures International Limited	Morgan, Lewis & Bockius LLP	Jody C. Barillare	1201 N. Market Street, Suite 2201			Wilmington	DE	19801	302-574-3000	302-574-3001	jody.barillare@morganlewis.com
Counsel to Paramount Global and its Affiliates, Including Paramount Pictures Corporation, Paramount Pictures International, and Paramount Pictures											
International Limited Counsel to Wilmington Savings Fund	Morgan, Lewis & Bockius LLP	Stephan E. Hornung	101 Park Avenue			New York	NY	10178-0060	212-309-6000	212-309-6001	stephan.hornung@morganlewis.com
Society, FSB, as collateral agent under that certain Fifth Amended and Restated Note Purchase Agreement, dated January 21, 2025	Morris James LLP	Eric J. Monzo. Jason S. Levin	500 Delaware Avenue. Suite 1500			Wilmington	DE	19801	302-888-6800	302-571-1750	emonzo@morrisjames.com; ilevin@morrisjames.com
Counsel to Warner Bros. Entertainment Inc., and its Affiliates		Curtis S. Miller, Matthew B. Harvey	1201 N. Market Street, 16th Floor			Wilmington	DE		302-658-9200	302-658-3989	cmiller@morrisnichols.com; mharvey@morrisnichols.com
Counsel to DIP Lenders - Falcon and	LLF	,	1201 N. Warket Street, 10th 1100			wiiiiiiigtoii	DL			302-030-3909	jnewton@mofo.com; gpeck@mofo.com;
Ontario, 1397225 Ontario Limited and Falcon Strategic Partners IV, LP	Morrison & Foerster LLP	James Newton, Geoff Peck, Miranda Russell, Will Winsett	250 West 55th Street			New York	NY		212-468-8000; 212-336-4116	212-468-7900	mrussell@mofo.com; wwinsett@mofo.com
Counsel to Warner Bros. Entertainment			1999 Avenue of the Stars								mkline@omm.com;
Inc., and its Affiliates Counsel to Warner Bros. Entertainment	O'Melveny & Myers LLP	Matt Kline and Timothy Heafner	8th Floor 2801 North Hardwood Street,			Los Angeles	CA		310-553-6700		theafner@omm.com
Inc., and its Affiliates Counsel to Warner Bros. Entertainment	O'Melveny & Myers LLP	Scott Drake, Emma Jones	Suite 1600 400 South Hope Street Suite			Dallas	TX	75201	972-360-1900	+	eljones@omm.com
Inc., and its Affiliates	O'Melveny & Myers LLP Office of the United States	Steve Warren	1900			Los Angeles	CA	90071	213-430-6000		swarren@omm.com
US Trustee for District of DE Proposed Counsel to the Official	Trustee Delaware	Attn Rosa Sierra-Fox	844 King St Ste 2207	Lockbox 35		Wilmington	DE	19801	302-573-6491	302-573-6497	rosa.sierra-fox@usdoj.gov
Committee of Unsecured Creditors	Pachulski Stang Ziehl & Jones LLP	Bradford J. Sandler, Peter J. Keane	919 North Market Street, 17th Floor			Wilmington	DE	19801	302-652-4100	302-652-4400	bsandler@pszjlaw.com; pkeane@pszjlaw.com
Proposed Counsel to the Official Committee of Unsecured Creditors	Pachulski Stang Ziehl & Jones LLP	Robert J. Feinstein, Shirley S. Cho	780 Third Avenue, 34th Floor			New York	NY		212-561-7700		rfeinstein@pszjlaw.com; scho@pszjlaw.com
Counsel to the Ad Hoc Group of ABS Noteholders	Pashman Stein Walder Hayden, P.C.	David B. Stratton, Joseph C. Barsalona II. Alexis R. Gambale	824 North Market Street, Suite			Wilmington	DE	19801	302-592-6496	201-488-5556	dstratton@pashmanstein.com; jbarsalona@pashmanstein.com; agambale@pashmanstein.com
Counsel to Vine; Counsel to EastTree Media	Paul Hastings LLP	Susan Williams, Paul Sagan	1999 Avenue of the Stars, 27th Floor			Century City	CA	90067	002 002 0100	201 100 0000	susanwilliams@paulhastings.com; paulsagan@paulhastings.com
Counsel for 1397225 Ontario Limited		Christopher M. Samis, R. Stephen McNeill, Brett M. Haywood,									csamis@potteranderson.com; rmcneill@potteranderson.com; bhaywood@potteranderson.com;
and Falcon Strategic Partners IV, LP	Potter Anderson & Corroon LLP	Shannon A. Forshay	1313 N. Market Street, 6th Floor			Wilmington	DE		302-984-6000	302-658-1192	sforshay@potteranderson.com
Top 20 Creditor  Counsel to CP Ventura LLC	PWGA Pension Fund Richards, Layton & Finger, P.A.	Michael J. Merchant, Amanda R. Steele	Dept. LA 25083 One Rodney Square	920 North King Street		Pasadena Wilmington	CA DE	91185-5085	818-846-1015 302-651-7700	302- 651-7701	kchristovich@wga.org merchant@rlf.com; steele@rlf.com
		Jamie L. Edmonson, Rachel Jaffe	, ·			, and the second					jedmonson@rc.com;
Counsel to Clover Ivy Purchaser, LLC	Robinson & Cole LLP	Mauceri c/o Surpin, Mayersohn & Coghill,	1201 N. Market Street, Suite 1406 1880 Century Park East, Suite			Wilmington	DE		302-516-1700	302-516-1699	rmauceri@rc.com
Top 20 Creditor	SawSee Films, Inc. f/s/o Fax Bahr Securities & Exchange	LLP	404			Los Angeles	CA	90067			faxbahr@gmail.com bankruptcynoticeschr@sec.gov;
SEC Regional Office	Commission Securities & Exchange	NY Regional Office	Regional Director	100 Pearl St., Suite 20-100	1617 JFK Boulevard	New York	NY	10004-2616	212-336-1100	212-336-1320	nyrobankruptcy@sec.gov
SEC Regional Office	Commission Securities & Exchange Securities & Exchange	PA Regional Office	Regional Director	One Penn Center	Ste 520	Philadelphia	PA	19103	215-597-3100	215-597-3194 202-772-9317 or	philadelphia@sec.gov SECBankruptcy-OGC-ADO@SEC.GOV;
SEC Headquarters Counsel to Wilmington Savings Fund	Commission	Secretary of the Treasury	100 F St NE			Washington	DC	20549	202-942-8088	202-772-9317 0	secbankruptcy@sec.gov
Society, FSB, as collateral agent under that certain Fifth Amended and Restated Note Purchase Agreement, dated January 21, 2025	Seward & Kissel LLP	John R. Ashmead, Gregg S. Bateman, Catherine V. LoTempio	One Retteny Park Plaza			New York	NY	10004	212-574-1200		ashmead@sewkis.com; bateman@sewkis.com; lotempio@sewkis.com
Counsel to Collateral Agent for Senior Secured Notes	Seward & Kissel LLP Seward & Kissell LLP	Gregg Bateman, Sagar Patel	One Battery Park Plaza One Battery Park Plaza			New York	NY	10004	212-314-1200		bateman@sewkis.com; patel@sewkis.com
Co-Counsel for the Debtors and Debtors in Possession	Sheppard, Mullin, Richter & Hampton LLP	Alyssa Paddock	30 Rockefeller Plaza, 39th Floor			New York	NY		212-653-8700	212-653-8701	apaddock@sheppardmullin.com
Co-Counsel for the Debtors and Debtors in Possession	Sheppard, Mullin, Richter & Hampton LLP	Jennifer L. Nassiri	1901 Avenue of the Stars, Suite			Los Angeles	CA	90067	310-228-3700	310-228-3701	inassiri@sheppardmullin.com
Co-Counsel for the Debtors and Debtors in Possession	Sheppard, Mullin, Richter & Hampton LLP	Justin Bernbrock	321 North Clark Street, 32nd Floor			Chicago	IL	60654	312-499-6300	312-499-6301	jbernbrock@sheppardmullin.com
Top 20 Creditor	Signpost Up Ahead, Inc. f/s/o Jill Blotevogel	f/s/o Jill Blotevogel	c/o Agency for the Performing Arts	10585 Santa Monica Blvd.		Los Angeles	CA	90025		1.2 100 0001	Ihoward@independentartistgroup.com
Top 20 Creditor	Sony Pictures Television Inc.	Matthew Bickell	10202 West Washington Blvd.	Norman Lear Building, 3rd Floor		Culver City	CA	90232	310-244-6932		
Counsel to Vine Alternative Investments Group, LLC	Stevens & Lee, P.C.	Joseph H. Huston, Jr.	919 North Market Street, Suite 1300			Wilmington	DE	19801	302-425-3310	610-371-7972	joseph.huston@stevenslee.com
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Description	CreditorName	CreditorNoticeName	Address1	Address2	Address3	City	State	Zip	Phone	Fax	Email
	Three Rivers Entertainment f/s/o	c/o Hansen, Jacobson, Teller,	Attn: Adam Kaller and Duncan	450 North Roxbury Drive, Suite							
	David Hollander	Hoberman	Hedges	800		Beverly Hills	CA	90210	310-271-8777		ak@hjth.com
	Upper Press, LLC f/s/o Patrick										
op 20 Creditor		c/o CAA	Attn: Jon Cassir	2000 Avenue of the Stars		Los Angeles	CA	90067	424-288-200		jon.cassir@caa.com
•	US Attorney for District of										
S Attorney for District of Delaware	Delaware	US Attorney for Delaware	1313 N Market Street	Hercules Building		Wilmington	DE	19801	302-573-6277	302-573-6220	usade.ecfbankruptcy@usdoj.gov
		c/o: William Morris Endeavor									
ommittee of Unsecured Creditors		Entertainment, LLC	Attn: Trina Shek Rizzo	9601 Wilshire Blvd.		Beverly Hills	CA	90210	310-859-4365		TRizzo@endeavorco.com
	Village Roadshow Entertainment		750 N. San Vicente Blvd., Suite								
Debtor	Group USA Inc.	Kevin Berg	800 West			West Hollywood	CA	90069			
Counsel to the Ad Hoc Group of ABS	Wachtell, Lipton, Rosen & Katz	Joshua A. Feltman, Michael S. Benn, Joel M. Simwinga, Katherine P. Waldock	51 West 52nd Street			New York	NY	10019	212-403-1000	212-403-2000	JAFeltman@wlrk.com; MSBenn@wlrk.com; JMSimwinga@wlrk.com; KPWaldock@wlrk.com
op 20 Creditor	Warner Bros. Entertainment Inc.	Attn Wayne Smith	4000 Warner Blvd			Burbank	CA	91522			wayne.smith@warnerbros.com
pp 20 Creditor	Weil Gotshal & Manges LLP		767 Fifth Avenue			New York	NY	10153	212-310-8000		frank.nocco@weil.com
	WGA Health Fund Contribtuion		Dept. LA 25102			Pasadena	CA	91185-5102	818-846-1015		kchristovich@wga.org
	Wilmer Cutler Pickering Hale and	Andrew N. Goldman, Benjamin									andrew.goldman@wilmerhale.com;
ounsel to 20th Century Studios, Inc.	Dorr LLP	W. Loveland	7 World Trade Center	250 Greenwich Street		New York	NY	10007	212-230-8800	212-230-8888	benjamin.loveland@wilmerhale.com
Top 20 Creditor	Writers Guild of America West	Kristy Christovich	7000 West Third Street			Los Angeles	CA	90048	323-951-4000	323-782-4800	kchristovich@wga.org
o-Counsel for the Debtors and ebtors in Possession	Young, Conaway, Stargatt & Taylor LLP	Joseph M. Mulvihill, Rebecca L. Lamb and Lauren McCrery	Rodney Square	1000 North King Street		Wilmington	DE	19801	302-571-6600	302-571-1253	jmulvihill@ycst.com; sborovinskaya@ycst.com; kmcelroy@ycst.com