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Childhood Cover-up

Attorney puts stock in a very young inventor

BY CHRISTINE L. MOBLEY

In a forward-thinking move, intellectual property attorney Robert Kelly took on what some may consider an unusual client: a toddler.

Kelly, a Bloomfield Hills attorney, represented Julian Pavone in filing a patent application when the youngster was only 3 years old.

And though they don't print ages on patent applications, it does appear that Julian is, in fact, the youngest inventor ever to be awarded a patent. The patent was granted this year just prior to the boy's 5th birthday.

Kelly gained national recognition as lead counsel in the successful representation of a home remedy inventor as depicted in the movie "Lorenzo's Oil." He also has represented clients such as DJ Orthopedics, Dow Chemical, Federal-Mogul, and Disney along with other *Fortune* 500 firms.

Over the years, Kelly has known and worked with Bernadino Pavone, Julian's father, on various projects. When Bernadino approached him about Julian's invention, Kelly was initially a bit skeptical.

Julian's invention was born out of necessity. After making a mark on his father's white shirt, Julian felt bad and wanted to "fix it."

Three-year-old Julian climbed up, grabbed some white-out to correct his mistake, and applied it to his father's

Photos by Daniel Lippitt

shirt. After applying the correction fluid, the stain was no longer visible and Julian waved his arms and declared, "Abracadabra."

Kelly, whose youngest client up until that point had been 18 or 19 years old, decided indeed it was time to sit down and discuss the invention with Julian.

"He is a prodigy," Kelly says of the boy. "He's just a brilliant little kid and he's so talented and very creative."

However, Julian had more up his sleeve than merely covering up a stain on a white shirt. Julian decided to use it on his drum set among other items. He also wanted to use other colors, so a variety of stains or marks could be covered up.

But what type of container would a 3-year-old want this liquid to be in? What type of applicator would he use? According to Kelly, Julian had a plan.

"When he first came in, he had this little sketch of this bottle," Kelly says.

The design Julian came up with was a bass drum for the bottle with a drumstick applicator.

"Everything was drums for Julian," Bernadino notes.

And why wouldn't it be? Julian is not only the "World's Youngest Inventor," he's also the "World's Youngest Drummer."

Upon researching Julian's idea of using correction fluid to cover-up stains on clothes and other surfaces, Kelly discovered it had been suggested in some obscure publication and in order for an idea to be patentable, it has to be "new" and it has to be "non-obvious." So, it would seem, that was that.

But the bottle and applicator also were Julian's invention and Kelly realized that a toddler's drawing wasn't going to pass muster with the U.S. Patent & Trademark Office.

He sent Julian to a patent draftsman to "clean up" the sketches. Together, Julian and the patent designer created the final drawings that were submitted with the application.

Voila! Julian's invention consisted of the base drum bottle containing the color and drumstick applicator aptly named "Abracadabra."

"I tried it one time," Kelly admits. "I had an ink mark on my shirt and I thought, 'I'm going to try it.' It worked. It's just very unique."

The inventor/patent attorney duo of Julian Pavone (left) and Robert Kelly dazzle with Julian's invention, aptly named Abracadabra.



Julian is currently working with Sherwin-Williams for guidance on color and technical issues in the development of the cover-up formula.

After Julian chooses which colors he wants to use, his father says they plan to

start test marketing the products early next year.

Kelly credits Julian's parents for encouraging the creativity of their son.

"I've got to compliment Julian's parents for recognizing that he has this talent and helping him realize his dream," says Kelly.

As for Kelly, Julian gives him the ultimate thumbs-up from a child's point of view.

"Mr. Kelly?" says Julian. "Oh yeah, he's nice."

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*"He is a prodigy.
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ROBERT KELLY

‘World’s Youngest Drummer’ marches to his own beat

BY CHRISTINE L. MOBLEY

At first glance, even talking to the lad, Julian Pavone seems like an average, everyday 5-year-old.

He’s cute, energetic, and says his favorite television show is “Phineas and Ferb.”

Yet, Julian plays the drums like no other 5-year-old — and he’s been displaying his musical talent since he was practically a newborn.

Julian first grabbed the sticks at a mere 3 months old. He served his musical apprenticeship while on the lap of his father, Bernadino Pavone, when the family patriarch played the drums.

Julian plays a 22-piece custom drum set with 17 cymbals and a double kick. He jams to rock, funk, fusion, and jazz beats. His mom, Dr. Lisa Pavone, says Julian even displayed rhythmic kicking while in the womb and “kept the beat” while Bernadino put headphones on her stomach.

With parents who nurtured and encouraged his talents, Julian not only reportedly became “The World’s Youngest Drummer,” banging out beats with a pacifier in his mouth, but he also landed the title of “The World’s Youngest Inventor” at age 3, obtaining a patent for his invention at the precocious age of 4 (see related story).

At the tender age of 15 months, Julian was offered a contract with William Winfield, III’s United Drumline, immediately becoming the youngest member to play with the group by some 16 years. At 20 months of age, Julian recorded his first CD, “Go Baby,” with legendary bassist Ralphe Armstrong.

Julian has been featured on more than 100 television and news shows including such staples as “The Oprah Winfrey Show,” “Good Morning America,” “Maury,” “Martha Stewart,” “Inside Edition,” “Fox News Dayside,” and MSNBC.

As for his invention, Julian had come home after spending the day in a Pre-3 class at the University of Liggett School, enjoying watercolors and in a particularly



A drummer of note, young Julian Pavone has displayed a musical bent since he had a pacifier in his mouth. For more on Julian, visit his Web site at www.julianpavone.com.

artistic mood. As Bernadino read to him, Julian drew on his father’s shirt.

Feeling bad, Julian wanted to remove the mark he made. His idea was to cover up the stain with correction fluid. He even went so far as to design the container and applicator for his magical product.

“The white stuff is made out of goo... maybe,” Julian says. Of the container, Julian just wanted something to put the “goo” in, so he drew a drum-shaped bottle with a drumstick applicator.

“How I made (the bottle) was first I had to draw the stuff so we knew how to make it,” Julian explains. “If we didn’t know how to make it, how could we make it? Then they manufactured it.”

The desire to help secure their son’s future was one of the forces that led the Pavones to contact Bloomfield Hills attorney Robert Kelly.

“As a parent, I think it’s our obligation to give your children every opportunity,” Bernadino says. “I wanted Rob (Kelly) to let me know if Julian was onto something (with his invention). As time went on, he might not remember a lot of the story and I knew I had to move on it quickly because kids forget.”

And even though Julian may not remember all of the particulars of how he came up with the design and stain cover-up idea, he quickly demonstrated the creativity and ingenuity expected of a young inventor. In fact, his father still has Julian’s original drawings from which he gained a design patent.

“Most parents never know what their child has,” Bernadino says. “The child that’s drawing circles or doodling and you never know what they’re drawing...that child could be the next Monet or Picasso. You never know.”

And while recognizing the creativity of his child, Bernadino feels others deserve recognition as well.

“You’ve got to give credit to the attorney,” Bernadino says of Kelly. “Most attorneys would say no to this. ‘What are you talking about, he’s only 3 years old.’ I think about Robert Kelly and I think about Dickinson Wright and I really appreciate what they’ve done for my son — and that’s listen to him.”

For young Julian, the knack for ingenuity can be defined in equally simple terms.

“It’s fun inventing stuff,” Julian says with a smile. **M**