

Soap alum claims Lee Daniels stole *Empire* idea from him

by [Kambra Clifford](#)

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Another World alum Clayton Prince (ex-Reuben Lawrence) is making headlines with the claim that

the idea for *Empire* originally belonged to him -- and Lee Daniels allegedly stole it.

Some super soapy drama has hit the entertainment world this week. Former *Another World* star Clayton Prince (ex-Reuben Lawrence) has filed a lawsuit against *Empire* producer Lee Daniels that alleges the premise for Fox's successful primetime dramas was actually his idea and that Daniels stole it.

Prince, who's legal name is Clayton Prince Tanksley, filed the suit in federal court on Friday, also naming *Empire* co-creator Danny Strong, Fox, and the Greater Philadelphia Film Office and its executive director, Sharon Pinkenson.

"This will be a David vs. Goliath kind of situation, but I want people to know what happened," Prince says of the lawsuit, which claims Daniels stole the concept for *Empire* from Prince after he pitched his show to Daniels at the Greater Philadelphia Film Office's 'Philly Pitch' in April 2008. "I want people to know the truth."

Prince's attorney, Mary Elizabeth Bogan, has known Prince for eleven years and says she was aware of his show, which he called *Cream*, years before *Empire* premiered.

"I'm very familiar with Clayton's work and when the *Empire* promo first came out, my original thought was, 'Clayton must have landed that deal. Good for him,'" Bogan says. "So I didn't even need to get the rest of the [evidence], but when I did . . . it proves that *Empire* is strikingly and compellingly substantially similar to *Cream*."

As for what gave Prince the idea for his project, he says that after appearing on *The Cosby Show* as Denise's "reggae-singing" boyfriend, musicians would give him their work, hoping he could break them into the music business.

"I also had friends in the music industry who would tell me stories, and I thought, 'This sounds like a soap opera,'" Prince recalls.

To read the full story, check out Philly.com.