

Class Calls Barbizon School 'Worthless'

Bridget Freeland June 25, 2010



CHICAGO (CN) – The Barbizon School dupes aspiring models for thousands of dollars in tuition by falsely promising “print, television, commercials and film” work at \$50 to \$150 per hour or more through “Barbizon’s placement agency,” Royal Model & Talent Management, a class action claims in Cook County Court. But in truth, Barbizon reported in 2009 that “of the 172 students who completed its course in the previous year, none were employed,” according to the complaint.

The class members claim the Barbizon School of Schaumburg charged them each at least \$2,145 in tuition for “totally worthless” training. They claim Barbizon and its co-defendant concealed that “only 1 percent or less” of its graduates actually get modeling jobs through the company.

Named as defendants are Instruction and Education Enterprises dba Barbizon School of Schaumburg, Royal Model & Talent Management, Royal Model Management, Barbizon Model Center, and Charles R. Nemes, whom the complaint described as the “owner, president and operator” of Barbizon.

The class claims Barbizon does not even mention its “training” program when it recruits victims, but says it is searching for “new faces to model for their agency, doing part-time local modeling and acting.”

It claims Barbizon persuades people to “audition” by holding “invitation-only” meetings where it shows “projection videos of models walking up and down runways to upbeat music,” while claiming that they will make \$50 to \$150 per hour or more.

Barbizon then sets up a meeting between a “Barbizon ‘director’ and the potential enrollee (and her/his parents if necessary) to determine if Barbizon will ‘accept’ them,” according to the complaint. (Parentheses in complaint.)

The “director” then delivers the news that candidates will have to go through the company’s training program, which “costs \$2,395 or \$2,145 if paid immediately.”

Candidates then get a brochure titled, “Why Barbizon?” which states: “Graduates of Barbizon’s programs receive lifetime representation by Royal Model Management, Barbizon’s placement agency,” according to the complaint.

The “director” claims that a Barbizon representative will call at a set time, and warns that “the call might be late, because others need to be called as well and sometimes people cry when they are told they have not been accepted by the agency,” the complaint states.

The class claims that as part of the deception, Barbizon delivers the acceptance call “well after the scheduled time,” apologizing because “she had to give a lot of people bad news ...” She says that Barbizon would like the applicant to start right away and that Barbizon is holding a space in the next class, the class claims.

But upon completing Barbizon’s training program, Barbizon and Royal Talent make no attempt whatsoever to represent the students or place them in jobs, according to the complaint.

“Barbizon is well aware of and fails to disclose the fact that its graduates rarely, if ever, achieve careers in print, television, commercials, film, etc.,” according to the complaint. “For example, Barbizon reported to the Wisconsin Directory of Private Postsecondary Schools in May 2009 that of the 172 students who completed its course in the previous year, none were employed.”

The class claims Barbizon’s principal site is Schaumburg, with branches in Peoria, Champaign, Normal, and Belvedere, Ill.

The class demands damages for violations of the Private Business and Vocational Schools Act, and consumer fraud.

Lead counsel is Peter Lubin with DiTommaso Lubin of Oakbrook Terrace.

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