

Dream Turns into Nightmare

By Emily Smith

March 17, 2011

A nightlife war has exploded over **Vikram Chatwal's** hotly anticipated Downtown Dream Hotel, Page Six has learned.

Emm Group, owners of Meatpacking hotspots Abe & Arthur's and SL, are suing Chatwal for \$30 million, claiming they agreed on a huge deal to run hospitality operations for the new venue opening this summer -- but were then ditched after the hotel's owners secretly made a deal with rival Strategic Group, the impresarios behind hot Chelsea lounge Avenue and club Marquee.

Emm's **Eugene Remm**, **Mark Birnbaum** and **Michael Hirtenstein** yesterday filed the suit in Manhattan Supreme Court against Vikram Chatwal Hotels and **Sant Singh Chatwal**, owner of Hampshire Hotels & Resorts, of which Chatwal Hotels is a division.

The suit claims Emm Group was contacted in June 2010 to exclusively manage and operate the restaurant, nightlife, room service, pool deck, roof bar and basement at the new Dream at 355 W. 16th St., abutting the Maritime Hotel. At an Oct. 6 meeting, Sant Chatwal "shook the Emm Group

partners' hands and unambiguously stated a deal had been reached," the suit claims.

"Sant Chatwal then stated that although the paperwork would be drafted shortly, such paperwork would be a 'mere formality.' " That was allegedly followed by an e-mail from a Chatwal honcho saying "the deal is yours," but asking Emm not to tell rival nightlife entrepreneurs including **Noah Tepperberg**, co-owner of Strategic.

The Emm partners claim they completed designs and hired architects to work on the pool deck, rooftop lounge or a 12th-floor bar. Emm's lawyer, **Richard Roth** told us, "They assured us we had the deal, but they were secretly negotiating with Strategic the entire time. Chatwal suddenly went silent, and then we learned through sources we didn't have a deal. We had an entire cast of people working on plans, and in the meantime, unbeknownst to Emm, their knees were cut off. It's our belief [Chatwal] took everything we did and used it."

A rep for Chatwal said, "We have not been served a legal notice so cannot comment." Strategic Group also declined to comment.

This is an attorney advertisement

The Roth Law Firm, PLLC
295 Madison Avenue, Floor 22
New York, NY (212) 542-8882
www.rrothlaw.com