

Chris Pine Sued By Former Agents; 'This Means War,' 'Star Trek 2' Salary Revealed (Exclusive)

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Boutique agency SDB Partners claims it took the actor from nobody to superstar over nine years but was fired via email and is being stiffed on commissions.



Chris Pine

Chris Pine has been sued by his former talent agency, which claims it represented the *This Means War* and *Star Trek* actor for nine years but was dropped abruptly via email in November and is being denied millions of dollars in commissions.

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According to the lawsuit, SDB agreed to represent the actor in 2002 when he had no experience and "nobody was willing to touch Pine," and the agency then helped him land film parts that led to the coveted Captain Kirk role in the *Star Trek* reboot and Paramount's planned reimagining of the Jack Ryan franchise. Pine allegedly has stopped paying the standard 10 percent commission on *Trek* and other projects and has not responded to a request by the agency to acknowledge his financial obligations.

"Through this lawsuit, SDB seeks to not only recover its commissions on millions of dollars that Pine has already earned, but also the millions of dollars that Pine will continue to earn as a result of SDB's prior hard work and dedication to Pine's career," the lawsuit states.

We've reached out to Pine manager **John Carrabino** for comment and will update when he responds.

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Movie stars leave small agencies all the time, but it was something of a surprise when Pine departed SDB in November after a nine-year stint. After all, he'd been courted for years by every top agency and had chose to stick it out with the boutique, which guided his career with Carrabino. In fact, after *Trek* became a big hit in 2009 and critics praised Pine's star-making performance, the actor said, according to the complaint:

"I'm a firm believer in loyalty. At the end of the day, this is a business, and you are a business, and I have felt in my career it has served me to stay with the people who started with me because I believe they're as passionate and as dedicated as they've ever been."

Nonetheless, SDB alleges, "on November 11, 2011, Pine discharged SDB by email [full email is included in the complaint and reproduced below]. Pine did not even have the courtesy of picking up the telephone to tell SDB that he was ending their relationship of nine years."

PHOTOS: 'This Means War' Film Stills

The suit goes on to list details of Pine's alleged compensation on projects the agency helped him land. From the complaint:

- Pine's *Trek* deal gives Paramount an option on him for three films. His pay for the first *Trek* isn't listed but the deal allegedly gives him \$1.5 million plus up to \$500,000 in backend compensation for the second film (which is currently in pre-production) and \$3 million plus the \$500,000 in backend for a third film, if it happens. He also gets 5 percent of net merchandising revenue from the exploitation of his name and likeness. (The complaint doesn't address whether this or other deals might have been renegotiated up, as is common when movies become big hits.)
- Pine allegedly was paid a \$3 million up front fee for starring opposite **Denzel Washington** in 2010's action thriller *Unstoppable*.
- Pine's deal with Paramount for the Jack Ryan franchise (based on the **Tom Clancy** books) also locked him in for three movies — but with a big raise from *Star Trek*. According to the complaint, the deal would pay him \$4 million for the first film, \$8 million for the second and \$12 million for a third, plus backend. That project is still in development.
- Pine allegedly was paid \$5 million to star opposite **Reese Witherspoon** and **Tom Hardy** in *This Means War*, plus up to \$1 million in deferred compensation based on box office. The agency claims Pine allegedly has paid partial commissions on that fee but still owes \$107,560.12.
- Pine allegedly is making \$750,000 up front to star in the small-budget DreamWorks movie *Welcome to People*, plus up to \$4.25 million in bonuses if it does well. Pine allegedly hasn't paid any commissions on that movie.

PHOTOS: 'This Means War' Premiere Red Carpet Arrivals

The complaint then lists about 25 projects that SDB claims are "commissionable," meaning they were generated for Pine while he was represented by the agency.

The suit, filed by attorneys **Bryan Freedman** and **Jesse Kaplan** of L.A.'s Freedman & Taitelman, alleges causes of action for breach of implied contract, declaratory relief and accounting. Exact damages aren't specified.

Here's Pine's full email dismissing his agents, as quoted in the lawsuit:

After much thought and consideration, I have decided that it is best for me to leave. I hope that you will understand that this decision was very difficult for me to make because I owe much of the success in my career to all of you. At our last group meeting I explained that I was frustrated and needed more than what I was getting from the agency. I thought that with some time, perhaps, my feelings might change but unfortunately they have not. Please know that I recognize what great advocates you have been for me and that you have invested your time and energy into building my career. None of this do I take lightly or for granted. That is why this has been so agonizing for me. I hope that you can respect my decision and accept it as final.

I wish you, Steven, Ro and Susie nothing but the best. Have a wonderful holiday season and a happy new year. If you need to discuss anything further please contact, John.

With [sic] much appreciation and gratitude,

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