

# Judge Judy Says She'll Eat Contract "On National TV" If It Can Be Produced In New Suit Over CBS' \$95M Purchase Of Syndicated Series' Library – Update



By **Dominic Patten**  
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COMMENTS



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**UPDATED with statement from Judge Judy Sheindlin:** *Judge Judy* is heading back to court, but not in the way the fans of the soon-to-end syndicated series probably assume, and it looks to partially be [Les Moonves'](#) fault.

Less than six months after [CBS](#) and [Rebel Entertainment Partners](#) settled their long-running legal battle over big bucks in missed contractually obliged payments from the show that has aired for more than two decades, a new lawsuit is in the docket. Rebel is now suing former Manhattan family court judge Judy Sheindlin and a [ViacomCBS](#) division for more than \$5 million over a seemingly sleight-of-hand \$95 million sale of the show's rich library.

"Disgraced media mogul Les Moonves may have been shown the door at CBS in 2018, but not before he conspired with other CBS executives, including former CBS programming chief Armando Nuñez, to avoid embarrassment over his colossal mismanagement of the sale and repurchase of the back-episode catalog for the *Judge Judy* television program," claims the breach of contract complaint filed Tuesday morning ([READ IT HERE](#)).

"In 2015, Moonves and his loyal lieutenant Nuñez seriously underestimated the value of the episode library and sold the rights to these episodes to series star Judith Sheindlin for a song," the filing adds. The \$47 million-a-year Judy Sheidlin herself, CBS division Big Ticket Entertainment and CBS Corporation itself are among the defendants.

You may already having a nagging feeling you've heard this case before – and you would be correct, kind of. [In early 2018](#), *Judge Judy* co-creators Kaye Switzer and the trust of the late Sandi Spreckman filed their own suit claiming they were owed \$4.75 million from the \$95 million sale of the show to the then House of Moonves [in the summer of 2017](#).

In this matter, as was made apparent in their now resolved suit [that was first filed in 2016](#), Rebel, under its long-acknowledged profit participation as the "successor in interest" to *Judge Judy* original packager talent agent Richard Lawrence and his Abrams, Rubaloff & Lawrence firm (which reps Switzer and Spreckman), is entitled to 5% of any profits from the 25 seasons of the show. Ergo, Rebel claims it also gets a part of corresponding enrichments like a certain \$95 million sale of the library. Now Rebel wants the money it says it is owed.

Still in the courts, the Switzer and Spreckman estate case is scheduled to go to trial in 2021, which might see some overlap with this new one and its BTS unveiling.

"Moonves knew that he would look like an incompetent buffoon if he had to explain to the CBS Board of Directors that he had essentially sold the *Judge Judy* back catalog for a pittance less than two years prior, but was now proposing to buy it back for tens of millions of dollars," the jury trial-seeking suit put in the court docket today continues.

Then, things get into territory that could have substantial implications in the boardroom of now-remerged ViacomCBS.

"Moonves and Nuñez then realized that they could pull a fast one on the CBS Board," Rebel and its big-swinging Freedman + Taitelman lawyers state. "They would require Board approval for any purchase of \$100 million or more," the filing details of the corporate move. "Moonves and Nuñez's solution: pay Sheindlin just under \$100 million so they could evade Board scrutiny. CBS thus paid Sheindlin between \$95 and \$99.99 million for the rights to the Judge Judy episode library that Moonves had sold for virtually nothing."

"But through all of this industry intrigue and deception, both CBS and Sheindlin lost sight of one important group of people: the *Judge Judy* profit participants," the attorneys bluntly note in what is obviously not their first time at this rodeo.

"Now that Viacom is in a position to oversee the behavior of CBS leadership, it is time for the new leadership it installed to make a sincere effort to right the wrongful conduct that has been a systemic problem at CBS," attorney Bryan Freedman told Deadline today of the filing his firm made. "Just treat people better whether that is employees or profit participants, it is not that difficult to do the right thing."

Or, as Judge Judy herself likes to say: "I'm the boss, Applesauce."

To that end, the lady usually on the bench was all about the edibles in her reaction to today's lawsuit.

"I have not seen the complaint and can therefore only comment on what I have read which suggests that I am being sued for 'breach of contract,'" Sheindlin told Deadline. "If that is the basis of Mr. Lawrence's lawsuit, here is my challenge: If Mr. Lawrence can produce a contract, signed by me and Mr. Lawrence on the same page, at any time in history from the beginning of time, I will toast that contract, smear it with cream cheese and eat it on national television."

Deadline also contacted representatives for CBS for comment also about this latest lawsuit. We will update if and when we hear back.

Now, amidst all this time in the courts for the Emmy-winning court show, Sheindlin is also pulling the plug on *Judge Judy* next year after its long and profitable run. The end of what has been the top-rated daytime syndicated program since the 2011 exit of *The Oprah Winfrey Show* doesn't seem to bother Sheindlin, who is already poised to take flight with a new series called *Judy Justice*. "If you're not tired you're not supposed to stop," Sheindlin told Ellen DeGeneres on her talk show [earlier this year](#).

Tell that to the lawyers.

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