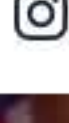


TELEVISION

Judge Judy Lawsuit Is Getting Downright 'Nasty' Behind The Scenes

NICK VENABLE | PUBLISHED: NOV. 16, 2020 6:24 PM



While the **millions-making TV personality Judy Sheindlin** is currently in the process of bringing **her new TV show *Judy Justice*** to life for streaming audiences, the former *Judge Judy* still has some litigious matters of her own to worry about behind the scenes. Sheindlin and the talent agency Rebel Entertainment Partners became courtroom rivals thanks to a pair of lawsuits that were filed over the summer, and while it doesn't appear as if any conclusions are imminent, the situation got a *lot* more heated thanks to a recent update in the filings.

Freedman + Taitelman attorney Bryan Freedman, who is representing Rebel Entertainment and its agent Richard Lawrence, filed a demurrer on November 5 that serves as a no-holds-barred response to Judy Sheindlin's initial countersuit. **The filing** (via **Deadline**), starts off with a host of legal cases cited therein, and then jumps into an introduction that immediately paints its picture of Sheindlin's character with the words below:

“Judith Sheindlin has not been a real judge for a long time. Now she just plays one on television. Sheindlin has been away from an actual courtroom for so long that she’s clearly forgotten the most bedrock legal principles. For one, she forgot that she needs an actual case to get past the starting gate. Sheindlin doesn’t have one. For another, Sheindlin forgot that a lawsuit is not a license to engage in the tactics of personal destruction by maliciously and falsely disparaging innocent people. By filing this frivolous action, ‘Judge Judy’ Sheindlin has shown her true colors: she is a cruel, petty, and vindictive person, without an ounce of empathy, decency, or tact. This isn’t a lawsuit. It is an insult.”

Those definitely fall into the "fightin' words" category more so than the "let's agree calmly and quickly words" category. The demurrer's intro goes on to allege that Judy Sheindlin's main motivation for her countersuit was to "engage in the baseless character assassination" of Rebel Entertainment's Richard Lawrence.

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To be expected, Judy Sheindlin wasn't exactly close-lipped when it came to her response to the demurrer, though she chose not to go on the attack. Here's how she worded things—note her use of "nasty":

“This is supposed to be the era of transparency. The misdeeds of the past confronted and corrected. If I fail to produce at trial evidence that Mr. Lawrence represented no one, not me, not the clients he was supposed to represent and who we claim in my lawsuit sold down the river for the sake of a lucrative package deal for himself, then I am all the nasty names he so gratuitously calls me. Please remember that for all the vicious and condescending names he ascribes to me, my work has supported him to the tune of over 22 million dollars. I neither need nor want Mr. Lawrence’s money. A trial is the search for the truth. I look forward to looking behind his settlements and NDAs and exposing it.”

It was only a few years ago when the **most recent *Judge Judy* syndication deal** went through, marking a whopper of a deal for most parties involved, but even before that, Sheindlin was known to be one of the highest-paid TV personalities on a yearly basis, and her popularity among viewers is impossible to deny. So from that perspective, her suit against Rebel Entertainment Partners wouldn't seem to signify financial greed or self-glorification, but it's impossible to know what's really going on, and it's not our place to assume.

In February 2020, Rebel Entertainment and CBS came to a settlement nearly four years after the talent agency first went after CBS for failing to supply contractually obligated payments. Then in August, Rebel filed a \$5 million suit against Judy Sheindlin & Co. for holding out on profit sharing after the \$95 million sale of the show's back catalog, saying it is contractually owed 5% of any profits made from the show's 25 seasons. That suit is very similar to the one filed by co-creator Kaye Switzer and the late co-creator Sandi Spreckman's trust in early 2018, which was for \$4.75 million and is set to go to trial in 2021.

Two weeks after that suit was filed, Judge Judy struck back with a countersuit for \$22 million, with claims of unlawful and unfair business practices on the part of Rebel Entertainment and Richard Lawrence, among other accusations. Sheindlin also added into that filing that if she wins the case, she plans to take the \$4 million that her lawyers wager she has lost to Rebel in profit participation, and will donate the money to the Stand Up To Cancer charity. Unless some pretty rapid agreements come to pass in the next two months, it looks like Sheindlin and Rebel's legal battle will go to trial at some point next year.

At this time, it's still not quite clear when Sheindlin will make her eventual return to the TV courtroom for *Judy Justice* on IMDbTV, but stay tuned to CinemaBlend for updates as they become available.

While waiting for more news, head to our **Fall TV 2020 premiere schedule** and our **2021 Winter and Spring schedule** to see what new and returning shows are on the way.