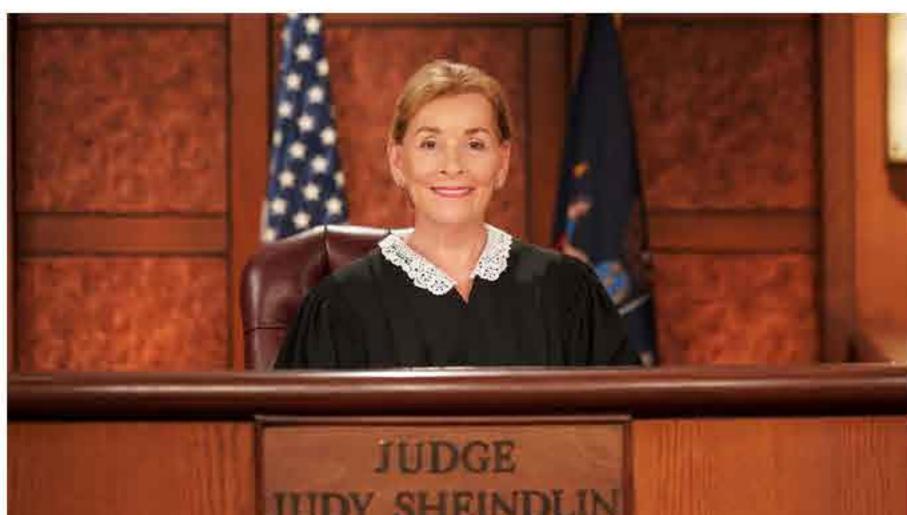
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Judge Judy Dealt Setback in Packaging Fees Suit







The legal fights over Judge Judy Sheindlin's

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Judy Sheindlin has 30 days to amend her suit against Richard Lawrence, who she claims isn't entitled to the fees he's collected for packaging the series.

lucrative eponymous courtroom show are beginning to put the drama shown on the long-running series to shame, and the latest decision is a blow to the famous jurist.

Lawrence — who had previously sued and settled with CBS' Big Ticket Entertainment in a dispute over series profits and then

Sheindlin in August sued Richard

again sued the company, and the judge personally, over library sale profits - calling him "an unethical and self-dealing talent agent, and one of the luckiest men in the world." Lawrence's Rebel Entertainment Partners is successor-in-interest to the agency that

originally packaged Judge Judy (Abrams Rubaloff & Lawrence). Sheindlin argues he didn't really package the series because he didn't represent her in the deal and therefore isn't entitled to the \$22 million in fees he's collected from the show. He repped the two nonwriting producers, Kaye Switzer and Sandi Spreckman, who originally suggested Sheindlin consider a TV career. (Switzer and Spreckman are also suing Big Ticket, and Sheindlin's complaint says the women had sued Lawrence and they quietly settled.)

lacked standing to challenge the validity of a contract to which she wasn't a party and that her suit is well outside the statute of limitations.

L.A. County Superior Court judge Richard J. Burdge Jr. on Wednesday sustained the

The agent filed a demurrer to the complaint arguing, among other things, that Sheindlin

demurrer with leave to amend, finding that because Sheindlin wasn't a party to or a thirdparty beneficiary of the agreement between ARL and Big Ticket she lacked standing to seek a declaration that the contract is wrongful.

Burdge, in a tentative ruling that was later adopted as final, also found Sheindlin's causes

of action for unfair competition and unjust enrichment aren't sufficiently pled. She has 30

days to file an amended complaint. Lawrence's attorneys, Bryan Freedman and Sean Hardy, sent The Hollywood Reporter a statement Wednesday in response to the decision. "This lawsuit has absolutely no legal

merit and the court stated as much today," says Freedman. "The court should not be used

solely as a vehicle for people to disparage others. We are pleased the court saw this matter for what it truly is: a pack of lies, with no legal significance that amounts to nothing more than a waste of judicial resources." Sheindlin's attorneys, Todd Eagan and Marty Singer, also sent THR a statement Wednesday.

"This is simply a procedural issue with the Court to clarify our claims by allowing us to file

an amended Complaint," says Eagan. "The Court declined to dismiss the claims, and in

making its ruling today the Court assumed that all of the facts pled in the Complaint are true — and they are true. It is not disputed that Richard Lawrence received over \$20 Million in packaging fees even though he did not represent a package and has caused significant damage to Judy Sheindlin by his wrongful conduct. In fact, the WGA itself has confirmed that packaging fees are unlawful and has sought repayment of illegal profits."

