



Judith "Judge Judy" Sheindlin in 2020 (Photo by Eva Marie Uzcategui/AFP via Getty Images)

ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY LAWSUITS

Is Judge Judy's Multimillion-Dollar Courtroom Battle Doomed?

TV's most famous jurist is countersuing talent agent Richard Lawrence over millions in packaging fees

By Ian Spiegelman - March 1, 2021



A Los Angeles Superior Court judge dealt TV's "Judge Judy" Sheindlin a major blow in her \$22 million countersuit against talent agent Richard Lawrence and his company, Rebel Entertainment Partners, last week—essentially throwing out her case, but giving her 30 days to amend her complaint.

As [Deadline reports](#), Sheindlin sued Lawrence and Rebel in August for unfair competition and unjust enrichment, claiming the agent had no right to the \$22 million in packaging fees he collected from the decades-long *Judge Judy* program because he represented two non-writing producers of the hit series, not Sheindlin herself.

Sheindlin brought the countersuit against Lawrence two weeks [after he sued CBS's Big Ticket Entertainment and Sheindlin personally](#) for \$5 million over profits from the \$95 million sale of the *Judge Judy* library.

"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," Judge Judy said when she first learned of the suit, "I will toast that contract, smear it with cream cheese and eat it on national television."

Attorneys for Lawrence—whose Rebel Entertainment is the successor-in-interest to the original packaging agency, Abrams Rubaloff & Lawrence—argued in a demurrer that Sheindlin has no standing to sue him over a contract she's not a party to, and that her suit is beyond the statute of limitations.

Judge Richard J. Burdge agreed Wednesday, sustaining the demurrer and granting Sheindlin 30 days to amend her complaint, which he ruled was not sufficiently pled.

"On August 19th, on behalf of Mr Lawrence, we stated that Judy had no legal standing and her case would be dismissed," Lawrence's attorney, Bryan Freedman, told [Deadline](#). "As the court made very clear today, that was a true statement. If Judy tries to continue with this case our client will seek sanctions and sue her for malicious prosecution. This was never a real lawsuit, only an attempt to insult an honorable man, and Judy knows that."

Freedman's demurrer, [filed in November](#), was less restrained, stating, "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. Sheindlin filed her hit-and-run Complaint for seemingly no other reason than to engage in the baseless character assassination of Richard Lawrence."

Returning fire, the former Manhattan family court jurist said at the time, "Please remember that for all the vicious and condescending names [Lawrence] 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."

Sheindlin's lawyer, Todd Eagan, framed Wednesday's ruling as merely a prelude to victory.

"This is simply a procedural issue with the Court to clarify our claims by allowing us to file an amended Complaint," he said. "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 addition to dining on Lawrence's lawsuit, [Sheindlin promised](#) to donate the \$4 million her lawyers estimate Rebel cost her in profit participation to the charity Stand Up to Cancer if she wins the case.

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