

Judge Judy Shuttters \$22M Profits Countersuit Out Of Loyalty To CBS



By **Dominic Patten**
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AP

EXCLUSIVE: Judge Judy has brought down the gavel on her own \$22 million countersuit against talent agent Richard Lawrence and Rebel Entertainment Partners, and it’s because of CBS.

“We decline to file an amended complaint as Mr. Lawrence has insisted that I join Big Ticket (CBS) as a defendant,” Judy Sheindlin told Deadline this morning in the battle over profits from the long running syndicated series. “The court has declined to rule that CBS is not a necessary party,” the small screen jurist added.”

“Mr. Lawrence is the culprit in this fiasco of a packaging deal which has netted him \$22,000000,” the Lavery & Singer represented Sheindlin went on to say on the nuanced and long boiling matter. “CBS inherited this deal. I have been in business with CBS for 20 years. I’m not suing them when they are not the wrongdoer.”

“Sometimes justice gets lost in the weeds of legalese gobbledygook. This is one of those times. Sad.”

Such sadness and rare Hollywood loyalty aside, Sheindlin’s attorneys are expected to file dismissal paperwork at LA Superior Court within the hour, I hear.

While a dramatic move in a dispute that has already been to court in other forms several times over the years (including an early 2020 settlement with CBS), the dropping of the countersuit isn’t entirely unexpected given the narrow options the fierce Sheindlin actually found herself with in recent weeks.

Last month, LASC Judge Richard Burdge kneecapped the vast majority of Sheindlin’s August 19, 2020 filed big bucks retort to Lawrence and Rebel’s initial action. At the time, Judge Burdge gave Judge Judy 30 days to put an amended complaint in the LASC docket – which clearly isn’t happening now.

The now spiked countersuit came just over two weeks after the Freedman + Taitelman represented Rebel Entertainment Partners filed a \$5 million breach of contract complaint against the former Manhattan family court judge and a division of conglomerate ViacomCBS for more than \$5 million. The suit was birthed out of the seemingly sleight-of-hand \$95 million sale of Judge Judy’s long and rich library to the then Les Moonves-led CBS four years ago.

Judge Judy herself was seeking declaratory relief and claiming unlawful/unfair business practices and unjust enrichment in the reply to packager Lawrence and successor-in-interest Rebel. She also promised to donate the around \$4 million she would personally pocket to a cancer charity if the countersuit was successful.

Back in November, lawyer Bryan Freedman and colleague Sean Hardy had placed their clients’ demurrer before the court, with a hearing set for late February. Successful there and moving forward with the \$5 million case for Lawrence and Rebel, Freedman was feeling like a prize fighter today.

“Judy maliciously prosecuted this case,” the high-octant attorney said Friday morning. “She knew all too well that her claims were unsupportable even prior to the court ruling against her. It’s about time she ran away from her misguided, implausible, unconscionable, specious and unwarranted lawsuit against Richard Lawrence.”

Where that will all go is a whole other set of filings.

However, *Judge Judy*, the series in question, won’t likely be around for the next round. *Judge Judy* is concluding its hugely successful syndicated run after 25 seasons.

Not that Judge Judy herself will be gone.

Back in October, Sheindlin made public her successor series, *Judy Justice*, which will debut on Amazon Studios and IMDb TV.

So, either way, see you in court.

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