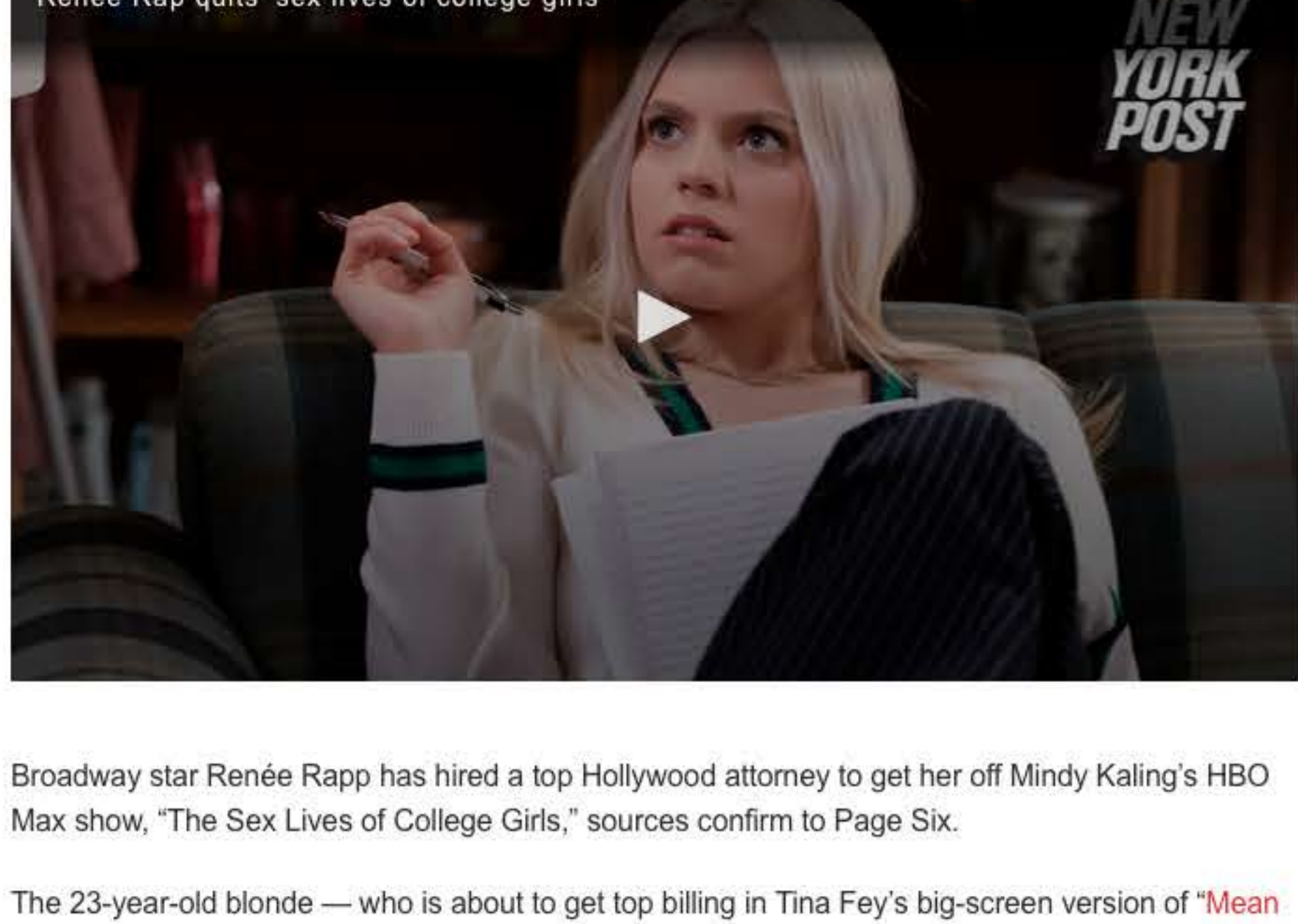


TV EXCLUSIVE



Renée Rapp quits Mindy Kaling's 'Sex Lives of College Girls,' hires lawyer: 'A lot of egos at play'

By Sara Nathan
Published July 10, 2023, 2:34 p.m. ET



Broadway star Renée Rapp has hired a top Hollywood attorney to get her off Mindy Kaling's HBO Max show, "The Sex Lives of College Girls," sources confirm to Page Six.

The 23-year-old blonde — who is about to get top billing in Tina Fey's big-screen version of "Mean Girls" the musical — got lawyer Bryan Freedman on the case, we're told.

A source in the know tells us: "Both sides have been working to resolve things. There are a lot of egos at play."

Another insider insisted there were no issues — ego-driven or otherwise — between Rapp and Kaling themselves, but confirmed that Rapp, who plays openly gay student Leighton Murray on the hit series, announced a big music tour without getting permission from her show bosses.

The tour starts in September and takes Rapp —who told the "Call Her Daddy" podcast she "hated" filming the first season — through the US to Europe, the UK and Ireland.



Renée Rapp is a fan favorite on "The Sex Lives of College Girls" — but has unexpectedly quit the show. Photograph by Katrina Marcinowski/HBO Max



Renée Rapp (second from right, with co-stars Pauline Chalamet, Alyah Chanelle Scott and Amrit Kaur, plus Mindy Kaling) has hired top Hollywood attorney Bryan Freedman to get her off Kaling's show "The Sex Lives of College Girls."

"Renée wanted to leave the show to tour and they're currently working out the best creative solution for her departure, but she announced the tour without having clearance from the show," says the insider.

"Mindy is a multi-hyphenate and is supportive of people who want to do different things and play to their talents, but she has to figure out what happens to Renée's character. This is not the way anyone would have wanted [Rapp's exit] to happen."

Rapp posted a statement to her Instagram Monday afternoon, reading in part: "thank u mindy ... and everyone at Max for believing in me. a lot of queer work gets belittled — but playing Leighton has changed my life. i love who i am 10x more than i did before knowing her ... i love that bitch more than you know."

A show source adds that Rapp, 23, will not be a series regular and will likely finish her episodes early on in Season 3.



Rapp plays Leighton in the Max show, who comes out to her college pals. HBO Max

Page Six has reached out to Kaling, HBO Max and reps for Rapp.

Rapp played Queen Bee Regina George in the Broadway musical "Mean Girls" four years ago, and will reprise her role in the upcoming movie.

Back in April, she [told Us Weekly](#) her life was hectic, admitting, "I'm trying to find a work/life balance. I don't [have one] at present, and I probably won't for a while. But I'm trying to be an EGOT, so I'm tired — but it's all good."



Rapp will next be seen playing Regina George in Tina Fey's big-screen musical version of "Mean Girls." NBCU Photo Bank/NBCUniversal via Getty Images

She added that her parents had raised her to be "a very strong individual" when it comes to people who don't treat her with respect.

"It's no bad blood, but I'm always gonna look out for myself. So I actually don't really talk to people that hurt my feelings."

Rapp has made it clear that she "hated" filming the first season of "SLOCG."



Rapp already played Regina George on Broadway. Joan Marcus

"The first year doing 'College Girls' was terrible. It was terrible," she told "Call Her Daddy" podcast host Alex Cooper. "It sucked so bad, because at the time, I was in a heteronormative relationship."

She added: "I hated going to work, because I was like, 'I don't think I'm like good enough to be here. I don't think I can be here. I don't think I can be doing this.' I was like, 'Maybe I'm just trying too hard.' And then I would come home and I would psych myself out, literally."

Rapp, who recently [came out as bisexual](#), told Cooper she would "panic constantly" over her sexuality and "people laughing at me."



Kaling runs a few shows, including the Netflix hit "Never Have I Ever." Instagram/@mindykaling

The set insider told Page Six: "With the writers' strike inevitably delaying the next season of 'SLOCG,' Renée felt like it was a good moment to explore her options for leaving the show."

Kaling, 44, who currently has another hit on her hands with the huge success of Netflix teen show "Never Have I Ever," doesn't want Rapp to leave, according to sources, as it will break up the core four characters, played by Pauline Chalamet (actor Timothée's sister), Amrit Kaur and Alyah Chanelle Scott.

We're told that Rapp has said she's willing to film scenes to make her exit seamless as opposed to just vanishing, but Kaling is trying to get her to stay more permanently.



Rapp is said to have organized her concert tour without asking permission from her show bosses. Getty Images

Kaling [posted to Instagram](#) on Monday: "We love @Reneerapp so much and of course will be so sad to say goodbye Leighton Murray! But we can't wait to see our friend on tour!!"

One source told Page Six: "It's all love. Mindy and everyone are letting Renee work on her first passion, which is music."

Rapp's powerhouse lawyer, Freedman, represented Megyn Kelly in her [exit from NBC](#), as well as ensured that Gabrielle Union got a [multimillion-dollar settlement](#) from the network after alleging she was subjected to racism on "America's Got Talent."

He has also worked with Don Lemon following the anchor's recent [ousting from CNN](#).

FILED UNDER [HBO](#), [HBO MAX](#), [MEAN GIRLS](#), [MINDY KALING](#), 7/10/23

