

'Judge Judy' Sheindlin Slams 'Hilarious' Lawsuit Over Her Salary

Talent agency Rebel Entertainment Partners claims it has not received contractually obligated payments from CBS since 2010

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Judge Judy Sheindlin has fired back against a lawsuit claiming that her outside salary has driven her CBS-syndicated courtroom show into the red.

Talent agency Rebel Entertainment Partners said in a suit filed Monday that it has not received contractually obligated payments for "Judge Judy" since 2010, because the show is losing money due to Sheindlin's annual salary of as much as \$47 million.

"The fact that Richard Lawrence is complaining about my salary is actually hilarious," Sheindlin said in a statement Monday. "I met Mr. Lawrence for 2 hours some 21 years ago. Neither I nor anyone involved in the day-to-day production of my program has heard from him in 20 years. Not a card, not a gift, not a flower, not a congratulations. Yet he has somehow received over \$17,000,000 from my program. My rudimentary math translates that into \$8,500,000 an hour for Mr. Lawrence. Not a bad payday. Now complaining about not getting enough money, that's real chutzpah!"

Sheindlin renewed her deal with CBS in 2013 and signed an extension in 2015. Rebel Entertainment Partners' successor-in-interest claims in the suit, filed in Los Angeles Superior Court, that in "the six-month accounting period after Scheindlin's pay raise ... defendants reported net profits of negative \$3,195,217." The suit also claims that "in the six-month accounting period prior to Scheindlin's pay raise, the show reported net profits of \$3,572,195, of which 5% (\$178,609) was paid to Rebel."

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The suit calls Sheindlin's salary "grossly inconsistent with customary practice in the television industry."

Sheindlin is not named as a plaintiff in the suit, which also claims that CBS Studios, CBS Corp., and CBS-owned Big Ticket Entertainment cut Rebel out of potential profits "by licensing the show to CBS's corporate affiliates — television stations owned or operated by CBS — for below-market fees in transactions that were not negotiated at arms-length."

The lawsuit also asserts that CBS was obligated to discuss a packaging fee with Rebel for any "Judge Judy" spinoffs, but did not do so before the launch of "Hot Bench," a syndicated show created by Sheindlin. In her statement, Sheindlin added, "Since I have not spoken with Mr. Lawrence in over 20 years to suggest that he had any involvement in my creating Hot Bench is equally

laughable."

Rebel, which is seeking undisclosed damages, claims that "Judge Judy" has grossed \$1.7 billion since it premiered in 1996, and that Rebel received regular payments for the show until 2010.

Attorneys Bryan Freedman and Jordan Sussman are representing Rebel. Freedman has represented Variety's parent company PMC in multiple legal matters.