

UTA Sues 'Tori & Dean' Producer Over Profits

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The **United Talent Agency** has filed an aggressive lawsuit against the production company behind the Oxygen hit reality series *Tori & Dean: Home Sweet Hollywood*, accusing **World of Wonder Prods** of stiffing its agents on commissions.

UTA, which packaged *Tori & Dean*, claims that WOW's "deceitful accounting and underpayment of profits to UTA" in connection with the series has shortchanged the agency by an unspecified amount, according to the lawsuit, filed Friday in Los Angeles Superior Court.

Specifically, the agency says its deal entitles it to 5% of the show's license fee, plus an additional 5% of gross license fees capped at 50% of net profits, plus 10% of adjusted gross receipts from the series. *Tori & Dean*, which chronicles the exploits of **Tori Spelling** and husband **Dean McDermott**, has been a hit on Oxygen for five seasons, with additional shows on the way.

Under its deal with UTA, WOW is said to be required to submit profit statements to the agency every six months. But for the period ending Sept 2010, UTA claims the participation paid dropped significantly from comparable periods, despite the show enjoying some of its greatest success. The caused the agency to question all of its profits statements, and it now alleges WOW is refusing to turn over its books for an audit.

Commission disputes aren't new but talent agencies usually try to avoid suing clients, fearful that the talent community won't want to be represented by agents who might turn against them. So this suit is an especially aggressive move by the agency.

An executive at World of Wonder, a prolific producer of such shows as *Design School* and *RuPaul's Drag U*, was not available for comment. **UPDATE: Loeb & Loeb**, which is representing WOW, sends us this comment: "World of Wonder is confident it will prevail in defending these unfounded claims."

The complaint, filed by attorneys **Bryan Freedman** and **Steven Stiglitz** at Freedman & Taitelman, alleges causes of action for breach of contract, fraud, accounting, negligent misrepresentation, breach of fiduciary duty and quantum meruit.