

## UTA Hits Back At CAA Over Agent Poaching Lawsuits



by Dominic Patten  
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Over a month and a half after [CAA](#) went after [UTA](#) in the courts for what it called “a lawless, midnight raid” of several of the former’s agents [on March 31](#), the latter has struck back. “CAA’s Complaint is nothing more than a thinly-veiled attempt to illegally restrict competition through the court system and stands in direct contravention of California’s strong public policy favoring free and open competition, and employee mobility,” bluntly says a filing by UTA in LA Superior Court today ([read it here](#)). “Despite what CAA would like to believe, its front doors are not a one-way turnstile.” Also calling CAA’s legal reaction over the departing comedy agents “a flailing and desperate attempt to save face,” UTA has asked for a hearings on December 11 and December 18 on the motion to strike and various demurrers that it filed Wednesday in this far far from over legal battle over their newly minted partners.

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#### CAA Adds Arbitration To Legal Arsenal Against UTA Over

If that wasn’t clear enough that the Jeremy Zimmer run agency wants to slap away CAA’s April 2 legal action over the surprise snatching of Gregory McKnight, Greg Cavic plus Jason Heyman, Martin Lesak, Nick Nuciforo and others, the rest of one of the filings goes straight for the heart of the matter and evoking California’s 7-Year Rule, which prohibits any personal contract lasting longer than that time span. “In its Complaint, CAA alleges that Defendants Gregory Cavic and Gregory McKnight (collectively, “Defendants”) interfered with, and conspired to interfere with, the employment contracts of agents Martin Lesak and Jason Heyman.,” says the notice of demurrer filed by attorneys Bryan Freedman, Brian Turnauer and Sean Hardy today. “As CAA is well aware, those employment contracts have collectively long exceeded the seven-year rule.”

“Heyman and Lesak’s contracts are therefore unenforceable, rendering CAA’s causes of action for interference with those contracts legally unsustainable,” notes the 13-page motion filing. “With no way around this fatal flaw, CAA instead deliberately misleads the Court by alleging that Lesak and Heyman began their employment with CAA in 2009. CAA entirely suppresses the fact that it first entered into a written employment agreement with both Lesak and Heyman on July 8, 2005.” The filing then adds as a kicker – “This omission was no honest mistake or simple oversight.”

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Better Call Saul

12 hours

Then no company should ever expect any employee to remain after seven years.

RBBrittain

14 hours

Ain't gonna happen. The "Seven Year Rule" is also known in acting as the "De

seven year itch

18 hours

Yes the old "seven year itch" tactic. It could work unless the judge decides to

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Seeking to turn the bruised CAA’s own words against them, one of UTA’s filings notes that in its demand for Arbitration in the case of comedy agents Lesak and Heyman, the former itself “conceding” that the duo were hired a decade ago. “This transparent attempt to deceive the Court violates the truthful pleading and sham pleading doctrines,” said UTA’s lawyers, clearly trying to put CAA on the defensive with the courts. And they also bring up some history between the two agencies over the two agents from a decade ago too. “In 2005, CAA poached Heyman and Lesak from UTA and induced them to join CAA,” they note. “CAA even went so far as to indemnify Heyman and Lesak in 2005 for their breach of the UTA agreements and for their anticipated solicitation of UTA’s clients. In other words, CAA induced these very agents to terminate their employment with UTA in 2005, yet now allege that UTA’s hiring back of those agents is somehow actionable.”

### Related

#### Will Ferrell Leaves CAA, Follows Agents To UTA

As all these legal knives have been being sharpened on both sides, other CAA agents have whip a little bit east to UTA and big name clients, such as [Chris Pratt](#), [Will Ferrell](#) (who had followed Lesak and Heyman from UTA to CAA back in 2005) and [Zach Galifianakis](#) have shifted to be with their reps at their new home. Whether or not, the exodus has ceased, the parting of the legal seas is a long long way off in this one.