

# 'New Girl's' Zooey Deschanel, in war with ex-manager, says 'Hello Giggles' lawsuit is 'absurd'



Actress Zooey Deschanel attends Fox's "New Girl" 100th Episode Cake Cutting" at Fox Studio Lot on Dec. 2, 2015 in Century City. (Mark Davis / Getty Images)



By **Scott Collins** · Contact Reporter

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**G**oodbye, giggles. There are frowny faces galore in the war between "New Girl" star Zooey Deschanel and her ex-managers.

Deschanel was sued in Los Angeles Superior Court on Wednesday by her former representatives, Seven Summits Pictures & Management. Seven Summits claimed that the singer/comedy star stiffed them not just on commissions for the Fox sitcom but also for a cut from the recent \$30 million sale of her beauty and culture website, Hello Giggles, to Time Inc.

Deschanel didn't waste much time in responding. Her attorney Martin Singer, a favorite legal pitbull for Hollywood heavyweights (including Bill Cosby, until the pair had a falling-out), put out a characteristically tough statement on Thursday.

"The lawsuit filed by Seven Summits is completely absurd and meritless and was filed in retaliation by a disgruntled ex-manager," Singer wrote in the statement. Well, officially, the statement was attributed to his client, but you don't read sentiments like that and think, "Wow, that sounds like the goofy Zooey whom fans love."

Of course, dustups between stars and their representatives are as old as Hollywood itself. Typically, after much posturing and bluster on both sides, they are ultimately resolved quietly, out of court.

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to the court papers Jackson discovered the then-16-year-old Deschanel performing in a school version of "Into the Woods" at Crossroads, the tony private academy in Santa Monica (Deschanel's father is a well-known cinematographer and her sister is "Bones" star Emily Deschanel). That led to a formal management contract in 1999, according to the lawsuit.

"Sixteen years ago, no one knew anything about Zooey," Seven Summits lawyer Bryan Freedman wrote in an email.

Singer claims that the manager lawsuit amounted to retaliation, because Deschanel had filed a claim with the California Labor Commissioner about a month ago arguing that Seven Summits was operating as unlicensed talent agency. (Fans might not see much difference between talent agents and managers, but the law does.)

The attorney also argues that "Hello Giggles," which Deschanel cofounded, is "completely unrelated" to her entertainment career and was a "purely entrepreneurial activity" that "does not involve Zooey Deschanel's activities or career as an artist in the entertainment industry." Therefore, Singer concluded, the ex-managers aren't entitled to a cut from the sale.

To the public, of course, Deschanel is far better known for her TV and musical career than her digital prospecting. But the sale of the Hello Giggles website seems a real sticking point. Seven Summits lawyer Bryan Freedman said in an email Thursday that after Sarah Jackson, Deschanel's point person at Seven Summits, asked for a piece of the pie from the Time sale, Deschanel stopped making payments altogether, including commission checks for "New Girl."

Freedman took a dig not only at opposing counsel but also at the star herself.

"Choosing to hire Bill Cosby's lawyer Marty Singer after getting a letter requesting payment says a lot about the true nature of the actress that was built into a favorite good girl amongs the entertainment fans," Freedman wrote.

A star whose reality doesn't match the image? Impossible!

What do you think of Deschanel and her new battle?

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