

# Zooey Deschanel Says Suit By Ex-Manager Over ‘New Girl’ Commissions Is ‘Meritless’

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[Zooey Deschanel](#) is calling a lawsuit filed by her ex-manager “absurd and completely meritless,” after being sued for allegedly failing to pay commissions on her show “[New Girl](#)” and her website [Hello Giggles](#).

Her former management firm, Seven Summits, filed suit against the actress in Los Angeles Superior Court on Wednesday, with breach of contract and other claims.

In their complaint, they contend that after Deschanel severed ties in 2013, after 17 years with the firm, she continued to pay commissions on “New Girl,” in keeping with the terms of their agreement. But those commissions ended when Seven Summits requested commissions on her income from Hello Giggles. Seven Summits contends that she “retaliated” against them by ceasing to pay commissions altogether.

“As an excuse, Deschanel is claiming that the signature on the agreement is not hers, an allegation that is false, as indicated by the fact that Deschanel actually paid commissions pursuant to that agreement for many years,” the lawsuit states.

“In sum, this lawsuit arises from an entertainer’s position that the very people who helped her achieve a level of success higher than her wildest dreams are not entitled to their rightful, contractually provided share of the entertainer’s proceeds,” the lawsuit states.

But Deschanel’s attorney, Martin Singer, contends in a statement that the lawsuit was in retaliation for a petition that Deschanel filed with the California Labor Commissioner last month, alleging that Seven Summits and its principal Sarah Jackson acted as unlicensed talent agents. In their lawsuit, Seven Summits called the claim “false.” The Talent Agencies Act prohibits managers from procuring employment.

Seven Summits, in their lawsuit, says that “whereas most actors would be thrilled to have a manager put them on a successful career trajectory, Deschanel is now making a claim against Seven Summits for supposedly doing too much to make her successful and supposedly doing too much to help her earn a giant fortune.”

The lawsuit describes Jackson’s first meeting Deschanel in 1996, when she was performing in a remake of “Into the Woods.” She agreed to represent her through her management company, Seven Summits, and entered into a written agreement in 1999. The firm, the suit states, helped her choose other representation, including her agents at CAA and UTA.

According to Seven Summits’ lawsuit, the dispute stems in part from the reported sale of Hello Giggles to Time Inc. earlier this year, with the Wall Street Journal reporting that the sale prices was in the range of \$20 million.

“To the best of Seven Summits’ knowledge, Deschanel never received any income from Hello Giggles until the sale of the company last month,” the lawsuit states. They first requested commissions on Nov. 16.

The lawsuit also claims unpaid commissions from a Tommy Hilfiger advertising campaign.

Deschanel said, in a statement released through Singer’s office, that Seven Summits has “no right to seek commissions from Zooey Deschanel’s completely unrelated sale of her investment in a purely entrepreneurial activity, Hello Giggles, which does not involve Zooey Deschanel’s activities or career as an artist in the entertainment industry.”

“I fully expect that the claims will be adjudicated before the California Labor Commissioner, and my client will prevail in this matter,” Singer said.

Attorney Bryan Freedman, representing Seven Summits, challenged that Deschanel’s work on Hello Giggles was not covered, and said that the contract includes commissions for “any entertainment activity” she engaged in. He said that Jackson worked extensively on the website, and that its purchase was for its entertainment value.

“I’m not surprised at all that Marty Singer would take a position much like he did with his client Bill Cosby, of attacking the victim,” Freedman said, referring to Singer’s representation of Cosby, which ended last fall.

“We’re really confident, whether it is through the labor commissioner or the Superior Court, that they will determine that when someone signs a written agreement, they have to abide by it,” Freedman said.