

UTA Hints At Future Run On Additional CAA Agents in Legal Filing

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COURTESY OF UTA/CAA

More than a year after a "midnight raid" in which it took 10 agents from CAA, rival UTA appears as if it may be preparing to again try to lure more agents away from the formidable super-agency.

UTA says in a new court filing in its ongoing litigation with CAA that it believes some agents at its bigger rival are being bound under contracts of more than seven years — longer than the threshold permissible under law.

"UTA also wishes to compete for the services of other CAA agents who have executed documents that, alone or in combination, purport to bind them to employment with CAA for continuous periods in excess of seven years," says a filing by Bryan Freedman, the attorney representing UTA in the dispute. "UTA contends that it may do so without interfering with an enforceable contract because the Seven-Year-Rule renders any part of such a document unenforceable against the agent for the period extending beyond seven years."

A hearing in the case was held Friday morning in Superior Court in Santa Monica, but the judge issued no ruling on UTA's query into hiring away additional employees or any other matter.

Over the course of a month in the spring of 2015, UTA hired away a dozen agents from the CAA, the powerhouse agency that has at times been depicted as an invincible force in Hollywood. The defectors centered on the agency's comedy unit and took with them big name clients including Chris Pratt and Will Ferrell.

CAA struck back with a lawsuit, accusing its rival of "a lawless, midnight raid" that it said snatched away employees who were working under binding contracts. The bigger agency said that the flight of its agents had been plotted for months, calling it an "illegal and unethical conspiracy" that unfairly pulled away key clients.

UTA responded that CAA was criticizing hiring practices that it had used multiple times itself. In the amended complaints filed earlier this month it said that some current CAA employees are being held under contracts that extend beyond the permitted time frame.

CAA did not immediately respond to UTA's latest accusations.

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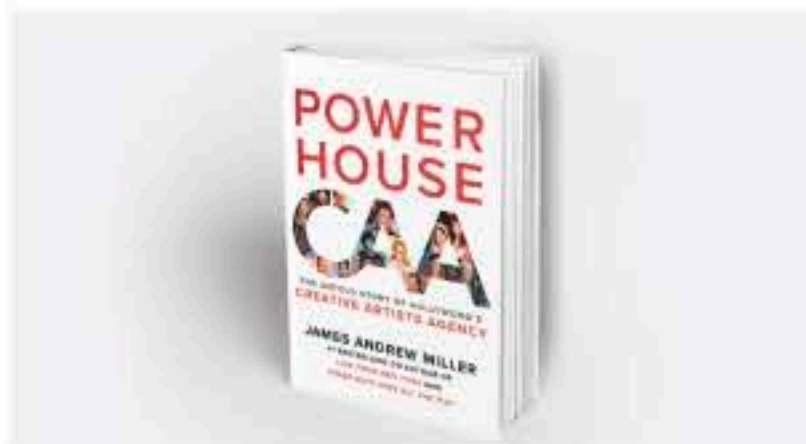
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