

# Charlie Sheen's 'Anger Management' Hit With \$50 Million Lawsuit (Exclusive)

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**UPDATED:** Producer Joe Roth is alleged to have developed the show with the aid of Jason Shuman and his company but cut the producer out when Sheen signed on to star in the FX series. The case "has no merit," Roth tells THR.



(Left to right) Charlie Sheen, Joe Roth, and Jason Shuman

**Joe Roth**, the heavyweight producer behind the upcoming **Charlie Sheen** comeback series *Anger Management*, has been sued by a producer who says he spent two years developing the property for television but was pushed out when Sheen signed on and is owed more than \$50 million in lost compensation.

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## Read the Complaint Here

At the time, Shuman says he had been working for more than a year and a half trying to turn *Anger Management*, the 2003 **Adam Sandler-Jack Nicholson** film produced by Revolution, into a television series. That included developing the characters, meeting with actors and writers and pitching agents and cable executives on the TV syndication structure known as the "Tyler Perry Model," wherein 10 episodes of a show are produced and given to a network for free, but if they generate good ratings, the buyer agrees to purchase another 90 episodes. Shuman says he and colleague **William Sherak** (who is not a plaintiff) signed written producer deals in May 2010 that acknowledged their role in the project.

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"Then, in June 2011, without warning or justification, Roth went silent and refused to answer any of Shuman's e-mails or take any of his telephone calls," according to the complaint. Shuman says he soon discovered through the media that Roth was in negotiations with Sheen to develop and star in *Anger Management* for studio Lionsgate.

When he contacted Roth, Shuman says he again was told Roth would "make things right," but, according to the complaint, "this statement was a complete and utter lie. Revolution refuses to honor the written producer agreement" with Shuman, who says he and his company are owed more than \$50 million to make up for the compensation and credit he would have received on the show, which is set to launch on FX in June.

Roth tells *THR* the claim has no merit. "We haven't received the complaint but we are aware of the issue," he says. "We reviewed this issue months ago with our lawyers, our lawyers determined it has no merit, and we thought the issue had been dropped."

The complaint, filed by **Bryan Freedman** and **Brian Turnauer** at the L.A. firm Freedman & Taitelman, alleges causes of action for breach of contract, fraud and declaratory relief.

Freedman has provided *THR* with the following statement:

"Power and greed are legally inadequate justifications for Joe Roth intentionally failing to honor his contractual obligations. Our clients selected and developed the idea for a television series based on the motion picture *Anger Management* and worked for over two years on the production relying on a fully executed legally binding written agreement. When Roth realized he would be giving up a significant amount of his ownership interest to bring in Charlie Sheen, he suddenly suffered a self-induced state of amnesia with respect to his moral, ethical and legal duties. Make no mistake, this lawsuit will serve as a wakeup call."

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