

## Joe Roth Settles Lawsuit Over Charlie Sheen's 'Anger Management' (Exclusive)

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**Jason Shuman claimed he was robbed of tens of millions of dollars in backend compensation when the actor's financial demands needed to be satisfied.**

**Joe Roth**, the heavyweight producer behind **Charlie Sheen's** FX comedy, *Anger Management*, has settled a \$50 million lawsuit that alleged he cut out producer **Jason Shuman** from the series.

In April, 2012, Shuman and his Blue Star Entertainment **alleged in a lawsuit** they developed the property "under the false promise of receiving significant backend ownership in, and producer credit and fees on, the show" but Roth's Revolution Studios has "refused to honor its written producer agreement" with Shuman and his company. The motivation, according to amended claims, was to satisfy Sheen's significant backend ownership demands.

According to papers filed on Friday in L.A. Superior Court, the parties have reached a conditional settlement to resolve the dispute. No terms were released, and the attorneys weren't immediately available to comment. According to a source, the parties have been in discussion for months over how much ownership to give Shuman and what to do about the credit situation. If the settlement holds, it will cut short a trial that was scheduled for next April.

Shuman had worked with Roth since 2008 after signing a consulting deal. The plaintiff said he had worked with the former Disney and Fox studio chief to analyze the company's film library for properties that could be developed into remakes and sequels and TV shows.

Together, they identified *Anger Management*, the 2003 film produced by Revolution that starred **Adam Sandler** and **Jack Nicholson**.

**STORY: 'Anger Management' Lawsuit Claims Joe Roth Committed Fraud to Satisfy Charlie Sheen**

Shuman was interested in playing a big role in adapting *Anger Management* for television. Previously, he had helped Roth's company develop the film *Are We There Yet?* into a successful syndicated series for TBS, but had become upset over his compensation. Roth allegedly said he would "make it up to" Shuman by giving him significant backend compensation on the next property he helped develop into a series.

*Anger Management* was to be that vehicle, said the plaintiff.

Schuman says his work included developing the characters, meeting with potential actors like **Cedric the Entertainer**, 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.

Then, Roth stopped communicating with Shuman.

As detailed in a **counterclaim** brought by Roth, Shuman was later provided notice that his consulting agreement was being terminated.

Shuman, though, said he and colleague **William Sherak** signed written producer deals in May 2010 that acknowledged their role in the project and that Revolution had breached a contract by sidelining him.

Roth also defended himself by arguing that the *Anger Management* series that would have starred Cedric the Entertainer was different from the realized *Anger Management* series starring Charlie Sheen. Roth was assisted by the colorful star who submitted **a declaration** about influencing the shape of the series. Sheen spoke about "the irony of my portraying an anger management therapist" and stated, "At no time during any of these meetings do I recall anyone mentioning the names Jason Shuman, William Sherak or Blue Star."

In an **amended complaint**, Shuman added fraud charges that said that Roth's company had purposely hid Sheen's involvement.

"Knowing they would lose significant backend ownership to Sheen, Defendants kept Plaintiffs from knowing anything about Sheen's involvement," said Shuman's papers. "If the Defendants lost backend ownership in the *Anger Management* television series to Sheen and his producing team, they had to make up for the loss by not honoring their contractual obligations to Plaintiffs. Indeed, once Charlie Sheen came onboard and the Defendants lost a significant portion of their backend ownership in the *Anger Management* television series, Defendants informed Plaintiffs that they were not honoring their contractual obligations to them."

That charge took a hit this summer, when **Patricia Guerrero** said that Shuman hadn't sufficiently supported claims of negligent misrepresentation and fraud. But the judge granted the plaintiff leave to amend, and the ruling is unlikely to have played a big role in the settlement. The parties have been in mediation for months, and any settlement was further complicated by the need to get other third parties like Lionsgate (another producer on the show) on board.

The parties are to follow up on the obligations of the settlement in the next 45 days and make a request for dismissal no later than Sept. 23.

Shuman was represented by **Bryan Freedman** and **Brian Turnauer** at Freedman & Taitelman. Roth was represented by **Louis Petrich** at Leopold, Petrich & Smith.

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