

Sumner Redstone Legal Turmoil: Fighting Women, Lie-Detector Tests, Stolen Laptop With 'Private' Photos

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The personal life of the Viacom and CBS executive chairman is probed in litigation between his "jealous" live-in companion and an MTV star who claims her close relationship with Redstone was sabotaged.



Sydney Holland with Sumner Redstone

AP Images

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Sumner Redstone's business decisions and private life have been dragged into a heated legal war that pits his live-in companion against the star of a controversial MTV reality series. Now the star's lawyer is probing highly personal details about the Viacom and CBS executive chairman.

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Sydney Holland, the 43-year-old girlfriend of the 91-year-old mogul, has been waging litigation for 10 months against Heather Naylor, a singer who starred on the short-lived MTV series *The Electric Barbarellas*, which was steered to the Viacom-owned network by Redstone after he befriended her.

Court documents obtained by *THR* reveal that in August, Holland sued Naylor for \$1 million, claiming the performer had stolen Holland's computer containing "private and confidential" photographs from the Beverly Park home she shares with Redstone.

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Naylor has fired back in a June 18 cross-complaint alleging that Holland has wrested control of Redstone's life, firing many of his longtime staff, changing his phone number to filter the information he receives and persuading him to pull support for the MTV series, which was canceled in 2013 and led to the implosion of Naylor's career, she claims.

Barbarellas, a docuseries about Naylor and her all-girl band, drew scrutiny when it debuted in 2011 because some believed it was ordered to air by Redstone against the advice of network execs and after he had struck up a personal relationship with Naylor. (Redstone further fueled the controversy by [leaving a lengthy voicemail](#) for Daily Beast reporter Peter Lauria demanding to know his source for a story on Redstone's ties to Naylor and the *Barbarellas*.) The show averaged a soft 858,000 viewers during its first season but was renewed and retitled *The Alectrix* for a short second season, which drew only 197,000 viewers a week.

Despite the low ratings, Naylor accuses Holland, who has been close to Redstone for years, of using her influence to kill the show. "Holland grew jealous of Naylor's relationship with Redstone and made efforts to cut off all ties between Redstone and Naylor so that Holland could control Redstone for her own economic advantage," states the cross-complaint alleging tortious interference.

In June 2013, Naylor and Redstone are said to have had lunch, after which Holland allegedly took steps to isolate Redstone, including attempting to limit access to him and firing loyal staff. (Some employees, including longtime Redstone helper Carlos Martinez, are being targeted by Holland for allegedly aiding in the computer theft.) "Holland wanted to prevent Redstone from spending time and money on another free-thinking individual like Naylor, who was not under Holland's control and not a sycophant," alleges Naylor.

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Holland's efforts hit the mark, according to Naylor: MTV reduced an eight-episode order for *The Alectrix* to six; Redstone didn't show up for an important meeting he had helped set up for Naylor with record executives; and "Naylor's relationship with MTV and Viacom came to a halt," she claims. Her relationship with Redstone also "disintegrated."

Viacom and a rep for Redstone, who is not a party to the litigation, declined comment. But Holland attorney Patty Glaser denies her client had anything to do with *Barbarellas*' demise. "Viacom is a public company that makes its programming decisions irrespective of Sumner Redstone's personal relationships," she says. She declined comment on the contents of the missing computer, but two sources say they include "highly personal" photos.

Perhaps most troubling for Redstone and Viacom, Naylor's lawyer Neville Johnson has begun to probe those potentially scandalous materials, along with details of Holland's relationship with Redstone and communication with Viacom employees.

Holland was asked in a recent filing to admit she had met Redstone on a "millionaire matchmaker" dating site and acknowledge a past sexual relationship with Grammy-winning producer John Shanks. The court documents suggest Holland has been added as a beneficiary in Redstone's will. And Johnson is threatening to dig deeper during Holland's planned deposition.

Glaser calls the investigation into Holland's sexual history and relationship with Redstone inappropriate and harassing, and she has asked Judge Ernest Hiroshige to prevent a line of questioning she fears is "titillating" but not relevant to who stole the laptop.

Meanwhile, Holland is scheduled to face off in a mediation this summer against Martinez, a 13-year Redstone employee until he was let go and sued by Holland. (Naylor alleges Holland ordered a lie detector be administered to several employees, including Martinez, when the laptop went missing.)

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"Sydney Holland's decision to sue Mr. Martinez is the biggest mistake she has ever made," says Martinez's lawyer Bryan Freedman, adding that he plans to file a separate cross-complaint for his client that will include claims against Viacom. "It indicates a complete lack of understanding of the ramifications of her own behavior. I am certain that after the presentation of my client's claims in front of a jury, she will realize the severity of the mistake it was to sue Mr Martinez."

If the case makes it to trial, Viacom will be forced to endure awkward questions about how much influence Holland maintains over one of the most powerful men in media who is worth an estimated \$6.2 billion, according to *Forbes*. (Viacom has a market capitalization of \$36.8 billion, and CBS' is \$33.5 billion.) And could the evidence include the private materials from Holland's laptop? The lawyers won't say, but Glaser hopes the case can be resolved before a trial: "The computer and whatever is on it should be returned to Sydney Holland."

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