

Winning! Duh!

By Reg P. Wydeven
March 19, 2011

One of my favorite sports movies of all time is 'Major League.' Not only is it a great story about an underdog baseball team, it was filmed in Milwaukee County Stadium and stars Bob Uecker, the voice of the Brewers.

Charlie Sheen also stars as Indian pitcher Rick Vaughn. Ironically, Vaughn's nickname is the "Wild Thing." While he's a huge talent, he's also a partier, womanizer and has problems with control. It's funny how life can imitate art.

Sheen's real-life antics over the last month have been the stuff of Hollywood legend. He set a Guinness world record by attracting one million followers on Twitter 25 hours after creating his account; he now has over 2 million.

The drama began when the comedy ended. Sheen's hit sitcom 'Two and a Half Men' was put on hiatus for the second time in two years because he had to enter rehab. While Sheen's train-wreck behavior that followed is guiltily intriguing, it has also resulted in numerous fascinating legal issues.

After Sheen made disparaging remarks about CBS, Warner Bros., and the show's co-creator and executive producer, Chuck Lorre, CBS pulled the plug on the remainder of the 8th season of 'Two and a Half Men'. Sheen's lawyer, Marty Singer, issued a letter to Warner Bros. demanding that Sheen be paid in full for the eight unproduced episodes.

Warner Bros.' lawyers fired back a letter to Singer, indicating they were firing Sheen from the show. The letter claimed, "Your client has been engaged in a dangerously self-destructive conduct and appears to be very ill." It also stated Sheen violated his deal with Warner Bros. by failing to continue rehab treatments.

The letter went on to say that Sheen's addiction problems led to "his inability to perform the essential duties of his position, (including) his physical appearance, inability to deliver lines, inability to collaborate creatively with staff and crew, inability to work with the executive producers," which subsequently escalated to "inflammatory comments poisoning key working relationships, and frustration of the show's creative environment by the public spectacle of his self-inflicted disintegration."

Ultimately, Sheen was fired for violating a clause in his contract by committing "a felony offense involving moral turpitude." Warner Bros. is also considering legal action against Sheen to recoup lost revenues from the unproduced episodes because of his personal problems.

Sheen responded by suing Lorre and Warner Bros. for \$100 million plus punitive damages. According to Sheen's suit, Lorre "believes himself to be so wealthy and powerful that he can unilaterally decide to take money away from the dedicated cast and crew of the popular television series, 'Two and a Half Men,' in order to serve his own ego and self-interest, and make the star of the Series the scapegoat for Lorre's own conduct." Under his most recent contract, Sheen commanded \$1.5 million-\$2 million an episode.

Although Sheen was fired, CBS has yet to cancel the show and is considering replacing Sheen. The show is under contract for one more season. Interestingly, if the show goes on, Sheen is arguing he should still get paid. He has what's known as a "Michael J. Fox Clause" in his contract, providing he gets paid as long as the show is in production, even if he's not on it. Fox had the same clause in his deal with 'Spin City,' which kicked in after he left the show and was replaced by who else? Charlie Sheen.

Obviously Warner Bros. asserts they fired Sheen for cause, voiding his contract.

Winning? We'll have to wait and see.

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