

Mark Burnett Settles \$70 Million Entertainment Lawsuit

by Anthony Caruso on April 10, 2012

Producer Mark Burnet, who is behind several popular television programs including *Survivor* and the *Apprentice*, recently settled an entertainment lawsuit brought by his former business partner. The \$70 million settlement ended a nearly four year legal battle that had become an increasingly contentious.

As detailed by the Hollywood Reporter, Conrad Riggs claimed he was owed more than \$70 million for his work with Burnett, which included pitching many of his successful shows to the networks. Riggs contends that their partnership agreement called for Burnett to pay him 10 percent of revenue from his company Mark Burnett Productions over the course of their nine-year relationship. Riggs contends that Burnett stopped making payments in 2007, when Riggs refused to sign a formal contract containing terms that deviated from what he expected.

The Message for the Entertainment Industry

As this case highlights, partnerships and other business arrangements should always be formalized through a written agreement, in consultation with an experienced entertainment lawyer. While most business partners do not enter these deals with the mindset that it will eventually go sour, the reality is that many of them do. That's why it is imperative to hope for the best, but plan for the worst.