

\$430k settlement reached in Love Twitter lawsuit

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In this Sept. 20, 2010 file photo, musician Courtney Love attends the premiere of 'Wall Street: Money Never Sleeps' at the Ziegfeld Theatre in New York. (AP Photo/Evan Agostini, File)

(AP) -- Courtney Love's 140 character Twitter rants against a fashion designer are costing her more than \$430,000, an attorney says.

The singer has settled a lawsuit filed by Dawn Simorangkir, who sued the Hole frontwoman in March 2009 accusing her of making false statements about the designer and her past in a series of postings on the microblogging site Twitter and Love's [MySpace](#) blog.

The settlement was confirmed by Simorangkir's attorney, Bryan J. Freedman. The designer's label is called Boudoir Queen, and according to her lawsuit, she first came in contact with Love in 2008 and they met in February 2009 in Los Angeles to discuss some custom clothing.

The lawsuit contained several postings written under Love's former Twitter account, courtneylover79, that accused Simorangkir of theft and of having a criminal background.

The widow of grunge rocker Kurt Cobain, Love has gained a reputation on the microblogging service Twitter, posting occasionally profane and sometimes nonsensical messages on a variety of topics. Several posts have lashed out at attorneys and other individuals who have drawn the musician's ire, with her [Tweets](#) coming in rapid succession and using every bit of the site's 140 character maximum per post.

The case had been scheduled to go to trial in February, and was expected to be the first trial in which a jury decided whether a celebrity's Twitter posts could be considered libel.

Freedman confirmed that a settlement had been reached, and said Love's attorneys had hoped to keep it confidential.

"In order to show the world the comments were derogatory and completely illegal, it was imperative to my client to have the settlement be public," Freedman said.

The attorney said a public statement will be issued next week, but the nearly \$430,000, plus interest, that Love is required to pay, reflects the seriousness of the case.

"Personally I think \$430,000 is an appropriate way to say she's sorry," Freedman said.

The settlement was first reported by The Hollywood Reporter.

Love's attorney, Michael Niborski, did not immediately return an after-hours phone message.

Douglas Mirell, a First Amendment attorney and partner at the firm Loeb and Loeb, said it was not surprising that the case settled before reaching trial.

Earlier rulings in the case had established that Simorangkir only had to prove that Love was negligent in her postings, not that she knowingly knew them to be false. That increased the designer's likelihood of winning at trial, Mirell said.

He said despite many of the statements in question being posted on Twitter, the case wasn't unique.

"The laws controlling what is and isn't libelous are the same regardless of the medium in which the statements appear," Mirell said.

The libel laws that would govern similar cases have been established for decades, Mirell said. Although Love lost an early motion to dismiss the case, he said there was also the possibility she could win on appeal.

Love's attorneys had denied wrongdoing, saying it couldn't be proven that some of the statements were false, and that others were protected speech.

Freedman said Love had hoped to keep the terms of the settlement private and that a public statement will be issued next week.

Simorangkir's lawsuit claimed Love became angry with her after she completed five outfits for the singer and sent her a bill.

"Love mounted a malicious campaign to not only terrorize Simorangkir, but to ruin and destroy her reputation and livelihood," Freedman wrote in a May 2009 filing.

Some of the statements directed toward Simorangkir were posted on Love's blog on MySpace and in comments on the designer's merchandise on online stores.

The designer's lawsuit does not state how much she was seeking to recoup from Love, but states her postings damaged her business relationship with several clients.

Love's attorney disagrees, stating in a filing that Simorangkir's profile actually improved as a result of Love's rants.

"She simply did not suffer any financial harm due to any alleged actions undertaken by Ms. Love - in fact, her relationship with Ms. Love greatly enhanced her business image and profits," Niborski wrote in a brief filed in December.

Mirell said that if Love lost at trial, it might cause celebrities to become more cautious about how they tweet, but probably wouldn't have much impact legally.

Freedman predicted that will happen anyway once people see the amount Love is paying.

"People are getting in trouble for [Twitter](#) postings on an almost daily basis," he said.

He said stars do need to be cautious about how and what they post online, especially when they're talking about other. "When you start talking about someone other than yourself, you are beginning to get into

dangerous territory," Mirell said.

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