

Blake Lively drops 'emotional distress' claim in lawsuit against Justin Baldoni

Justin Baldoni is suing Blake Lively and husband Ryan Reynolds for \$400 million.

7 News: By Caleb Taylor



Blake Lively at the World Premiere of Warner Bros.

Justin Baldoni at the CBS TV Studios Summer Soiree TCA Party.

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Celebrity lawyer Christopher Melcher has said Blake Lively has “gutted,” her lawsuit against *It Ends With Us* co-star Justin Baldoni, after she dropped the “emotional distress” component of the legal action.

Lively claims she was sexually harassed by Baldoni and producer Jamey Heath on the set of the film before being subjected to a smear campaign. Baldoni has always denied these claims.

Baldoni launched a defamation lawsuit for \$US 400 million against Lively and husband Ryan Reynolds, claiming she attempted to extort him and defame him.

Lively withdrew her claims against Justin Baldoni after his lawyers requested the actress sign a HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act) release, forcing her to disclose therapy notes on her mental health.



Celebrity lawyer Christopher Melcher appeared on Sunrise to speak about the latest in the Justin Baldoni and Blake Lively saga. Credit: Seven

On Wednesday, Melcher said the claims were central to Lively's overall claim.

"Blake has withdrawn her emotional distress claims because Justin wanted access to her therapy records to see if she was really that distraught, as she claimed in her lawsuit," Melcher told Natalie Barr and Matt Shirvington on Sunrise.

"So, she clearly placed that at as an issue, made it fair game, he wanted to see the records. In response, she dropped the claim."

Melcher was pressed on what it would do to her claim.

"It's really gutting it because that was one of the hallmarks to it," Melcher replied.

"She was saying that all these things that allegedly happened to her made her extremely distraught, and, sure, she wants to keep that stuff private, but she can't also sue for damages in court while doing so.

“So, she had to make that difficult choice. Now, that it’s dropped, there’s other parts of her claim, but really the center piece of it was the embarrassment and humiliation and distress that she claims she suffered.”

Melcher explained Lively was probably advised this would happen by her lawyers.

“This is something us as lawyers talk to the client about (before the case),” she said.

“Any kind of litigation, (we ask) do you really want to go through this? This is very difficult for anyone to do. You put yourself out there in public court. So, it is surprising that she’s just realizing this now.”

Despite the controversy, the 2024 domestic violence drama, which became a box-office hit, earned \$351 million at the box office worldwide from a budget of \$25 million.

According to Variety, Lively is attempting to withdraw without prejudice, which Baldoni’s lawyers have argued against.

A withdrawal without prejudice would mean Lively could refile the claims at a later date.

Melcher gave his legal opinion.

“I think that it’s very easy to type up a complaint and file it in court, but it is difficult to establish it,” he said.

“She came out as the victim and a lot of people supported her at the beginning, but then the information that we’re seeing is that she might have actually been the bully in this story.

“(But) of course, only a jury will tell.”