

# Kevin Costner divorce: Christine cries on the stand at child support hearing, lawyer denies she has a boyfriend — here's the latest

"I think Christine's legal strategy is terrible," celebrity divorce attorney, Chris Melcher, tells Yahoo.

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Christine and Kevin Costner, seen here in happier times, are duking it out in court on Aug. 31, 2023 over child-support issues. (Getty Images)

[Kevin Costner](#) and Christine Costner attended an evidentiary hearing at a Santa Barbara courthouse on Thursday [amid their contentious divorce](#) — and it was an emotional day for the former

handbag designer as they are at odds over the amount of child support she's owed.

Christine, 49, broke down in tears on the stand, Yahoo Entertainment has confirmed, while discussing the lavish lifestyle she and Kevin used to share. According to an insider, Christine got emotional when talking about the waterfront Carpinteria, Calif., compound she and Kevin raised their three children: Cayden, 16, Hayes, 14, and Grace, 13. Christine had to vacate the property, which is estimated to be worth about \$100 million, per the terms of their 2004 prenup. As Christine tries to persuade the judge to award her more money, her attorney argued that luxury is in the children's "DNA at this point."

Kevin, 68, was in attendance at the hearing — "a sign of respect," says celebrity divorce attorney [Chris Melcher](#) — and an eyewitness tells Yahoo Entertainment that the Oscar winner remained for the duration and was "definitely attentive."

In court documents filed in advance of the hearing, his lawyers accused Christine of a "relentless 'jihad'" attack.

Meanwhile, during Thursday's hours-long proceedings, Christine denied having a boyfriend, something Kevin had insinuated in legal documents. Her lawyer said financier Josh Connor — whom Christine and the kids were photographed vacationing with in Hawaii over the summer — is only a friend. (Connor is also reportedly Kevin's friend.) In court, Christine's attorney admitted Connor loaned her \$20,000, but said that should have no bearing on child support.

Christine's attorneys argue that she needs \$161,592 in monthly child support to maintain the lifestyle they're accustomed to. Although she was initially seeking close to \$175,000, in court on Thursday, Christine's lawyers dropped that number by about \$14,000. However, the sum is more than the [\\$129,755](#) she was awarded in July for temporary child support. In documents obtained by Yahoo Entertainment, Christine's lawyers said she just wants to give their kids "the benefit of the lifestyle that has been made possible by Kevin's substantial earnings and wealth." The *Yellowstone* star is estimated to be worth \$400 million.

"I think Christine's legal strategy is terrible," says Melcher, noting she's made "bad moves that make her look greedy when it was unnecessary for her to go to this extreme."

Christine's attorneys landed at the \$161,592 figure given Kevin's income over the past two years. They estimate he has made more than \$19 million annually from *Yellowstone*, or more than \$1.6 million per month. Christine claims in documents she is, and has been, the children's "primary caretaker" for the past 16 years and has not worked outside the home since Cayden was born.

Melcher explains that Christine got to the "eye-watering" figure given a formulaic guideline for child support.

"That works for almost everyone, but we have no cap on the formula. You can put in a billion dollars a month in income and it will produce a huge amount of child support," he shares. "So when you get to these levels we're seeing here, the formula no longer works."

Kevin's legal team is trying to convince the judge to award Christine a much lower number. (He initially proposed roughly \$60,000 a month.) Melcher notes the actor is going with "a budget approach" as he has laid out numbers for what the kids reasonably need for things like housing, travel, food and clothing.

"The court is clearly going to use that approach," says Melcher.

Kevin has argued his income is taking a hit this year as he's decided to leave *Yellowstone*, opting to fund and star in his own western passion project instead (*Horizon*). At a deposition, the actor purportedly "refused to answer questions" about whether he was given the chance to star in the sixth season of *Yellowstone* or chose to walk away, according to Christine's documents.

Regardless, Christine claims he will still make a significant amount of money from the hit series "irrespective of his participation."

"Kevin is obviously very wealthy and they had a fantastic lifestyle so child support will be high," Melcher says. "My estimation is that the court order will range \$75,000 a month."

If the judge significantly lowers the number, Christine may be on the hook for the difference as it's retroactive from July 1.

"She'd have to refund that potentially \$50,000 a month," Melcher says. "I think she overplayed her hand. She's really asking for identical lifestyles when the law doesn't require that."

In a brief filed ahead of Thursday's hearing, Christine laid out several reasons she needs more money — and it can really only be classified as #RichPeopleProblems.

After vacating the beachfront compound, Christine's agreed to a month-to-month rental in ritzy Montecito — home to Gwyneth Paltrow, Oprah and Meghan Markle and Prince Harry — which costs \$40,000 per month.

"Unlike Kevin's Beach Club Compound, [the rental] is on the mountain side of the freeway. It does not have beachfront access, nor is it walking distance to the beach, and has no scenic view," her lawyers stated in a court filing, arguing the kids should live in a "comparable house when they are with Christine."

Christine also wants the kids to travel well while they're in her care, meaning she should be able to afford a private plane.

"Likewise, because the children fly on private aircraft to go on luxury vacations when they are with their father, [the California family code] dictates that Kevin should pay sufficient child support to Christine so that the children can go on comparable vacations when they are with her. This is true even if the child support payments also improve Christine's lifestyle," the court documents state.

The Costners are back in court on Friday as the evidentiary hearing continues. Melcher believes the judge will likely award a figure "on the spot" at its conclusion.

Christine wants Kevin to pay her legal fees, which now exceed \$800,000. That's why Melcher thinks the actor tried to bring up money she borrowed from Connor.

"I think Kevin's trying to make her access to other funds relevant. I don't think it makes a bit of difference to this judge if she has a boyfriend or not, [who cheated](#), or if someone lent her \$20,000,"

Melcher says. "It seems like it was just done to retaliate against Christine for some of the nasty things she had to say about Kevin early on in the paperwork."

The rhetoric from both sides has been heated. In a filing [ahead](#) of Thursday's hearing, Kevin's attorneys reportedly stated in documents: "Christine's relentless 'jihad' against Kevin's character adds a level of animosity to this proceeding that is wholly unnecessary, and meant to distract from the intellectual exercise at hand."

Kevin and Christine wed in 2004 with a prenup in place; however, she's contesting its validity. A trial has been set for November.