

Will Jesse James Walk Away With Sandra Bullock's Money?

By [Jo Piazza](#) Posted Mar 31st 2010 05:15PM

The breakup of a celebrity marriage is a bit like the dissolution of a business partnership, as lots of cash and property go up for grabs. We're used to seeing famous and wealthy men split from their less famous and wealthy wives, who typically receive a hearty sum as they exit the marriage. In the case of Sandra Bullock and Jesse James, Sandy is the family's cash cow, and as divorce looks more and more likely, it's time for the Academy Award winner to figure out how to protect her assets from her scoundrel hubby.

"No matter how much of a dog he is, Jesse James is going to end up an even wealthier man from this divorce," says trial and divorce attorney Stacy Schneider, author of ['He Had it Coming: How to Outsmart Your Husband and Win Your Divorce.'](#) "Judges don't punish cheating husbands by denying them a money award, unless they squander the marital assets on their mistresses, such as paying for another woman's hotels, vacations or clothing allowances. Since Jesse allegedly squired his dates on his office couch, Sandra won't have much recourse in keeping her money out of Jesse's pockets."

Sources tell us that Sandra was very practical when she married James in 2005 and made sure to have a prenuptial agreement that protected her considerable assets from before the marriage. The couple has also been diligent about keeping their finances separate over the past five years. In theory, if the pair choose to divorce, James shouldn't be able to fleece Sandra out of what is rightfully hers. And if he decides to go quietly into that good night like a gentlemen, that is what will happen.

But if James decides to play rough, Sandy had better put on her fighting shoes to protect her reported \$85 million net worth. Both California and Texas, between which the couple split their time, are community property states.

"Any of their assets became joint property when they were married, unless otherwise stated in the prenup. Any property acquired during the marriage and not contemplated in the prenup will be divided per state law. Courts in California and Texas view marriage as an economic partnership, therefore it's a 50/50 split, unless the prenup states otherwise," explains attorney Tom Petrelli of [Petrelli Law, P.C.](#)

The prenup would protect Bullock's earnings from before her marriage, but her earnings post-marriage could enter into a legal gray area.

Sandra's income streams come from a variety of places besides her work in movies. She was an executive producer on George Lopez's sitcom and reportedly pulled in around \$10 million alone when that show went into syndication in 2006. She is the owner of a successful restaurant in Austin, TX, Bess Bistro, also bought in 2006.

If he is particularly slimy, James can also try to make the legal argument that he is entitled to Sandra's increased earnings over the course of their marriage because, during the marriage, she catapulted from beloved mid-level star to a whole other level of fame after winning that Academy Award. Jesse can claim that it was through his love and support (gag!) that Sandy was able to achieve such stratospheric success. And if that happens, Sandy really needs to put the gloves on and fight dirt with dirt.

"If Jesse, presumably from 'rehab,' does go after her assets, it is time for Sandra to go to the

press and go through each allegation publicly and in detail. I am sure we have not heard everything in this case," says divorce attorney Sue Moss of Chemtob, Forman, Moss & Talbert.

Sandra has already won in the court of public opinion, but if and when it comes to it, the jury is out on whether she will win in divorce court.