

Ed McMahon story

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Ed McMahon: Death Mold Killed My Dog

Sues Insurer for \$20 Million Over Botched Plumbing Repair Job

April 11 Johnny Carson's sidekick has found little to laugh at lately. His dog died, his family has been sick and he's blaming the insurance company.

Ed McMahon, 79, claims the insurance company botched a simple repair on a broken pipe. As a result, he says, a black toxic mold spread through his 8,000-square-foot, six-bedroom Beverly Hills mansion.

In a lawsuit filed this week, the entertainer is seeking \$20 million from American Equity Insurance Co., two insurance adjusters and several environmental cleanup contractors.

Mold Abatement expert, Steve Slepcevic of Paramount, Inc. says he has seen dozens of cases like the McMahons. "If the water sat for a day or two, there is a very good probable cause that if it has touched the walls or got under flooring, that you are going to have a mold problem," Slepcevic said.

Paramount's client, Melody Zeigler, didn't have to file a lawsuit when her home became mold infested after a water line broke last November. But Zeigler says her insurance company led her to believe the damage was minimal.

"I pulled out suitcases and they were covered with white mold and they looked like large bunny rabbits," Zeigler said. Zeigler's home had to be gutted and treated with special cleaning agents.

Experts say the lesson here is to always get a second opinion.

"Don't necessarily go with the contractor the insurance company brings out that is working for them and their interest in minimizing the claim, rather do some research yourself, contact experts in this field," Slepcevic said.

"It started with a broken water pipe, which is not a big deal," said McMahon's lawyer, Allan Browne. "It turned into a horrific nightmare that only Stephen King could write about."

A spokeswoman for the insurance company declined to comment.

Den Flooded in July

McMahon says the pipe exploded last July in his home, flooding his den. The company arranged to clean up the mess, but McMahon's lawsuit says the contractors simply painted over the mold known in the germ community as *stachybotrus chartarum* and didn't give McMahon any reports about the infestation.

Soon after the incident, McMahon says he and his wife became seriously ill, and their sheepdog, Muffin, developed respiratory problems and died.

"This is a death mold," Brown said. "It can cause respiratory illness or even death."

The McMahons moved out in September under doctor's orders after experts found a high concentration of the mold in the master bedroom.

Making matters even worse, McMahon says he is still waiting for personal memorabilia that he stored to be returned to him from another insurance company.

The McMahons have moved into temporary digs, at \$23,000 a month. They're suing for physical injuries, emotional distress, and expenses they've incurred.

Their home will need considerable work before it's habitable again, their lawyer says.

"It looks like a mob descended upon the house, tore it apart and left," Brown said.

Well, Ed McMahon apparently failed to get a second opinion of his home and will now let the courts decide who is to blame for this black mold that just won't seem to go away.

ABCNEWS Radio's David Alpert reporting from Los Angeles and Buck Wolf in New York contributed to this report.

<http://www.paramountinc.com/index.cfm/FuseAction/news.Detail/ID/14.htm>

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Did Mold Cause Ed McMahon's Life-Threatening Cancer?

Did mold in Ed McMahon's home cause the bone cancer that has the TV legend fighting for his life?

McMahon's longtime friend, TV producer, George Schlatter says, "In my opinion, mold most certainly had something to do with his illness."

Schlatter says McMahon believes the mold growing in his [Beverly Hills](#) mansion caused his cancer. "Ed was healthy. Ed did not smoke...you don't just catch cancer."

McMahon and his wife Pamela took photos in 2002 of the mold which began growing in the walls and floors after a pipe burst. A shot of the clean-up crew shows them in protective Hazmat suits. The McMahons, who were still living there, say they had no protection.

But, Schlatter is hopeful. "If anybody can come through this, he can."

<http://www.insideedition.com/news.aspx?storyID=2685>