

Basketball legend Julius "Dr. J" Erving was facing legal action Saturday for allegedly cheating a wealthy Manhattan woman out of more than \$420,000 in a deal with crooked money manager Kenneth Starr.

Mary Gilbert's suit -- which charges Erving with breach of contract and fiduciary duty -- seeks payment of all her lost profits, along with "prejudgment interest" and punitive damages.

Gilbert, 71, said she met the Hall of Fame star in 1990 through Starr, who hooked her while amassing a roster of clients that included film stars Uma Thurman, Sylvester Stallone and director Martin Scorsese.

Gilbert claims Erving, 60, and Starr convinced her to invest in a "lucrative" limited partnership called Commonwealth Investors, in which the formerly high-flying forward was a partner.

Are they worthy?

The fans got most of their All-Star picks right. But they missed a few.

They also told her "that Erving was facing a capital call from the partnership and that if Gilbert would finance a portion of this capital call, Erving would assign to her a percentage of his interest in the partnership," her Manhattan federal court filing said.

In exchange for nearly \$257,000 in cash, Erving allegedly promised Gilbert 33 percent of all his Commonwealth distributions until she was paid back and 30 percent of his returns after that.

The deal turned out to be another slam dunk for Erving, who raked in more than \$2.9 million from Commonwealth between 1995 and 2010, court papers said.

But Gilbert claimed Erving, who starred with the New York Nets and Philadelphia 76ers in the 1970s and 1980s, and Starr "concealed the true amount of distributions that Erving received ... and falsely reported to Gilbert the share of partnership distributions to which she was entitled."

In addition, "Erving, with the assistance of Starr, converted a share of the partnership distributions that should have been paid over to Gilbert," her suit alleged.

Court papers said Gilbert uncovered the alleged scam after hiring experts to review her finances following Starr's arrest last year. He is currently awaiting sentencing March 2 for running a \$50 million Ponzi scheme.

Erving's lawyer Dorna Taylor declined to comment.