

CALL ME ERIN BROKE-OVICH!

EXCLUSIVE REPORT



Real-life heroine of Julia Roberts film blows fortune on 'sick' house

REAL-LIFE crusader Erin Brockovich, who was the inspiration for the Julia Roberts movie of the same name, has blown her fortune after spending thousands to remove toxic mold from her home.

Brockovich, 40, claims that a household fungus has ruined her health and eaten through the \$2 million bonus she earned when she helped the residents of the California town of Hinkley sue the electric company for polluting their water supply.

The shapely legal expert had already spent \$250,000 of her bonus on a down payment for her house. She spent some \$250,000 on renovations and thousands more on taxes.

"What I have left, \$80,000, I just spent redoing my roof," she says.

Now, Brockovich is suing the builders, developers and contractors who worked on her house in Agoura Hills, Calif. — and she's asking California lawmakers to take up the issue.

"Thanks to mold, you lose your house and your health," the advocate known for her micro-mini skirts and cleavage-baring blouses declares.

"I'm not looking for a new cause. I wasn't looking for mold — mold found me. I've waited my whole life to own a home," she adds.

Brockovich says her dream house became a nightmare shortly after she bought it from actor Tom Selleck's brother Robert four years ago. Around December 1999, Brockovich

came down with what she thought was a lingering case of the flu.

"I had sinus infections, ear infections, chronic fatigue. Then I started getting this really funny bloating," she told a California State health committee. "I was certain it was ovarian cancer."

But a lightbulb went off in her head one morning when she stubbed her toe against a warped floorboard in her kitchen.

"Water! Mold! Mold in my blood! Sick! OK, I get it," she reasoned.

In recent years, there have been several studies showing that toxic mold can make homeowners sick. And the only option is extensive repairs or demolishing the home.

On top of all her house costs, she's also reportedly spent \$250,000 on drug rehab for the two oldest of her three children by her first husband, restaurant manager Shawn Brown.

"Erin sent her kids to treatment centers and boarding schools so they could get healthy and get good educations at the same time," says the pal.

"She knows she may not have been around enough for them when they were growing up, so she's doing everything she can to make up for that."

Friends say they're not surprised

that the battling Brockovich didn't manage her money better.

"Just like the movie showed, Erin never had much. So when she got her big bonus, she spent it a little too fast," says one pal.

As STAR reported back in February, Brockovich is still so close to Julia Roberts that she's tipped to be the maid of honor when Julia marries her actor beau, Benjamin Bratt.

The activist is hoping her court case doesn't clash with Julia's plans, say sources.

But Julia has told her not to worry about it.

"Julia supports Erin's fight 100 percent and just wants to see her friend get her health back and get justice," an insider reveals.

Her real-life boss, Ed Masry, who was played by Albert Finney in the movie, tells STAR that he's hopeful Brockovich will win her case.

"Extensive tests were taken on the house and show that toxic mold is definitely growing," Masry says.

"Even worse, her blood tests show clear signs of the toxic mold in her bloodstream."

Despite her poor health, Brockovich is showing the same fighting spirit she used to take on California polluters.

"I'm not going to roll over," she says. "I'm going to stand up to these developers."

— ROBIN MIZRAHI
and CLIF H. DUNN ★