

Hollywood Attorneys Guide the Biz

Defending high-profile clients in court, cutting deals for corporate mergers, and shaping multimillion-dollar pre-nups is all in a day's work for these pros



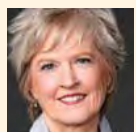
ON A HANDSHAKE
Tom Hanks, right, plays a principled lawyer in "Bridge of Spies."

CORPORATE: INHOUSE ATTORNEYS

KERRY BROCKHAGE

Senior VP; chief counsel, content distribution, NBCUniversal Media

UC HASTINGS COLLEGE OF THE LAW, 1984



Brockhage crafts the agreements for NBCU's broadcast TV stations to be retransmitted by cable TV, satellite and telco platforms, where battles over pricing have intensified in recent years. "The good news is you're usually able to find an agreement that works for both sides," she says. "So the incentive's there, and the market's working." In addition to retrans for broadcast, Brockhage negotiates cable network carriage transactions, TV Everywhere deals for Rio Olympics coverage and compliance with consent decrees/FCC orders approving earlier Comcast acquisitions.

GABRIEL BRAKIN

Exec VP, business and legal affairs, Participant Media

UCLA, 2005

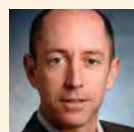


Brakin is responsible for developing and executing industry strategies for Participant, the socially conscious producer behind this year's best picture Oscar nominees "Bridge of Spies" and "Spotlight" (the latter won). However his biggest deal was not for a project, but for a company: Amblin Partners, co-founded by Steven Spielberg and Participant founder Jeff Skoll, along with Reliance Entertainment and Entertainment One. "At a firm, you deal with some really large transactions for multiple clients," says Brakin, who began his career doing transactional work for O'Melveny & Myers. "But once you're inhouse, you take ownership of everything, from the big to the small."

PETER BRODSKY

Exec VP, business & legal affairs, Sony/ATV Music Publishing

BROOKLYN LAW SCHOOL, 1990



Sony/ATV leads a music-publishing industry drive to convince the Justice Department to allow publishers to negotiate music deals directly while also assigning other transactions to outside performing rights organizations. "The market will set the price in a fair way through direct negotiations," says Brodsky. Sony/ATV did direct deals until an internet music service won a court decision. Brodsky notes that PROs are hamstrung by government consent decrees, so they're not suitable to handle all transactions. His duties include new-media initiatives, content agreements and legislative advocacy. He played a lead role in Sony's EMI Music Publishing acquisition.

SETH KRAUSS

Chief legal officer, WME | IMG

WASHINGTON U. SCHOOL OF LAW, 1995



With WME | IMG mushrooming through acquisitions, the company now has employees in over 25 countries and operates in even more. "The complexities only grow as you get bigger," says Krauss, citing his general counsel duties touching cross-border transactions, achieving tax efficiencies, employment matters, litigation, privacy regulations, and protecting IP across a sprawl of jurisdictions. He focuses on spotting issues, and then marshals legal assets to resolve. Based in New York, Krauss oversees legal affairs, business affairs and risk management as the talent agency diversifies into ownership businesses. He joined in 2014 from vidgamer Take-Two Interactive.

BONNIE E. ESKENAZI

Partner, Greenberg Glusker

STANFORD, 1985



Eskenazi's recent case load has included the Marley Natural cannabis branding deal for the Bob Marley estate and

the estate of author J.R.R. Tolkien in a rights dispute with Warner Bros. and the Saul Zaentz Co. But her most interesting litigation is an ongoing case regarding whether a competitor can remain anonymous in a court battle over defamatory remarks made about an industry rival anonymously via email. "It pits our longstanding unfair competition laws in the state against the new technologies that allow people to engage in anonymous banter," Eskenazi says.

BRYAN J. FREEDMAN

Founding partner, Freedman+Taitelman

U. OF THE PACIFIC'S MCGEORGE SCHOOL OF LAW, 1990



Personal managers, talent agents and promoters can violate rules imposed by government, unions/

guilds and sports leagues if they stray by providing unauthorized services. Such middlemen "have to be careful to stay on their own side of the street," Freedman says. "If they are not carefully schooled in each particular area, the result can be devastating." The risks are that their client talent may legally void contracts and also sanctions imposed by oversight industry groups and government. Freedman reps UTA over departing agents, Rebel Entertainment's Richard Lawrence seeking packaging fees from syndication's "Judge Judy," and *Variety* owner Penske Media Corp.

PATRICIA (PATTY) GLASER

Litigation department chair and partner, Glaser Weil Fink Howard Avchen & Shapiro

RUTGERS SCHOOL OF LAW, 1973



Glaser's work this year includes serving as lead trial counsel for Morgan Creek Prods. in a dispute concerning a biopic of

rapper and actor Tupac Shakur, advising Boulevard Management in defense of a suit by NBA star Gilbert Arenas, and repping Rysher Entertainment and 2929 Entertainment in a contract-related case against Cox Media Group. "Contracts are conceptually one of the most difficult areas to deal with," says Glaser, whose clients also include WME, New Regency, Roar, El Rey Network, Intrepid Pictures, Bold Films, CBS Entertainment, Disney and Sony. "It's fun and it's a challenge."

THE BENCH *Bryan Freedman took on "Judge Judy" on behalf of Rebel Entertainment.*



DAVID HALBERSTADTER

Partner, Katten Muchin Rosenman

GEORGETOWN U. LAW CENTER, 1982



In February, Halberstadter helped achieve a victory for client Summit Entertainment in a

precedent-setting case in which an Iraq War veteran claimed the 2009 Oscar-winning film "The Hurt Locker" was based on his experience as a bomb disposal expert. "The result has been a fairly strong statement that creators of works like this absolutely have a First Amendment right to tell these stories," he

notes. His other cases this year include defending Cumulus Media in a putative class action and defending director Terry Gilliam in a copyright infringement suit.

NEAL RAYMOND HERSH

Partner, Hersh, Mannis & Bogen

SOUTHWESTERN LAW SCHOOL, 1976

JOSEPH MANNIS

Partner, Hersh, Mannis & Bogen

LOYOLA LAW SCHOOL, 1971



When working at distant locations such as film shoots, a divorced parent faces revising visitation for his or her children and has to deal once again with lawyers of former spouses. "It's becoming a more and more prevalent issue with the world of young celebrities with children," says Hersh. Arrangements can be expensive with logistics, educational tutors and sometimes even paying travel costs for an ex-spouse. Mannis says judges usually accept whatever the parents agree to, but "when you can't get a deal in place, then you end up in court." Hersh and Mannis represent executives, talent and athletes in family law for divorce, pre-nups, child support-visitation-custody and privacy.