



Entertainment and Media Litigation

At Robins Kaplan LLP, our entertainment and media litigation attorneys have a strong track record representing film, television, advertising, and music industry clients in California, New York, and around the world. Our extensive experience includes litigating matters in federal and state courts as well as in arbitrations and proceedings before the entertainment guilds, the California Labor Commissioner, and the International Film and Television Alliance.

Experience

Actors, Writers, Directors, Producers, Musicians and Athletes

Our attorneys have an extensive background representing many high-profile actors, writers, directors, producers, musicians, athletes, authors, and their heirs in claims regarding:

- Breach of contract
- Profit participation
- Violation of the rights of privacy and publicity defamation
- Breach of implied contracts
- Copyright and trademark infringement
- Disputes with entertainment guilds, including the Screen Actors Guild, the Directors Guild, and the Writers Guild West
- Copyright termination issues
- Violations of the Talent Agencies Act relating to disputes between talent and personal managers

Talent Agents, Personal Managers, and Individual Managers

We represent talent agencies in disputes with members of the Screen Actors Guild, AFTRA, the Directors Guild, the Writers Guild West, and Actor's Equity. We have been involved in proceedings before the American Arbitration Association and before the California Labor Commissioner.

Motion Picture and Television Production

We represent independent motion picture and television production and distribution company clients involved in:

- Employment disputes
- Contract disputes regarding producing, licensing, financing, and distributing motion pictures and television programming

- Profit participations and other accounting disputes
- Intellectual property disputes, including trademark, copyright, idea submission, Lanham Act, and credit claims

Additionally, we have represented producers and independent film distributors in arbitrations before the Independent Film and Television Alliance, including arbitrations relating to film financing and delivery issues.

Music Video Production

Our attorneys provide representation to commercial and music video production companies and individual commercial and music video directors and producers in matters including unfair competition claims, solicitation of directors and producers by competing companies, and disputes with major record labels regarding payment. We represent several post-production and special-effects companies in employment disputes, solicitation of key personnel by competing companies, contractual disputes, and unfair competition and intellectual property claims.

Advertising Agencies

We represent advertising agencies and marketing companies for the products marketed by these companies and in the commercials they produce in matters involving:

- Advertising Compliance
- Copyright Infringement
- Guild Issues
- Licensing Disputes
- Rights of Publicity
- Trade Dress
- Trademark
- Unfair Competition

Other Intellectual Property Owners

Our attorneys also represent other individuals and businesses that are not technically in the entertainment industry with respect to their intellectual property matters. Representative clients include an energy drink manufacturer, a retail clothing store chain, and an electronic goods manufacturer.

Clients and Industries:

- Actors
- Advertising Agencies and Marketing Companies

- Commercial and Music Video Production Companies
- Directors
- Entertainment Executives
- Musicians
- Other Owners of Copyrights, Trademarks, Publicity Rights, and Intellectual Property
- Personal Managers
- Post Production and Special-Effects Companies
- Producers
- Writers

Selected Case Results*

- *Simmons v. Stanberry*: Successfully represented Curtis Jackson, aka 50 Cent, in defense of a copyright case related to his 2007 hit "I Get Money."
- *Ace Arts LLC v. Sony/ATV Music Publishing LLC et al.*: \$100 million Sherman Antitrust Act claims dismissed against Apple Corps, Limited. Claims alleged conspiracy to prevent distribution of film showing The Beatles' first American concert in Washington, D.C., in 1964.
- *Celador International, Ltd. v. The Walt Disney Company*: Represent Celador International, Ltd. in a dispute over profits from the highly successful television show "Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?" A federal jury awarded Celador, the creator of the show, \$270 million in damages after finding that Disney's subsidiaries, ABC Television, Buena Vista Television, and Valleycrest Productions had breached their profit sharing contract with Celador and their duty to deal fairly and in good faith with Celador. On September 27, 2010, the U.S. District Court for the Central District of California awarded \$50 million in prejudgment interest to Celador, bringing the total to \$320 million in damages. On December 3, 2012, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals affirmed the entire verdict and awarded the plaintiff its costs on appeal. On February 26, 2013, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals unanimously denied Disney's petition for rehearing and review of the \$320 million jury verdict and judgment in favor of Celador.
- *The Ray Charles Foundation v. Ray Charles Legacy Corp.*: Obtained judgment and permanent injunction prohibiting the unauthorized use of the Ray Charles name and likeness.
- Represented Cher in an action against a major record company.
- Represented the group Poison in a royalty audit case against Capitol Records.
- Represented producer Kane Beatz in defense of copyright infringement action involving the song "Bottom's Up."
- Represented former *America's Got Talent* writer in dispute with former talent agent.

- Defended television company in copyright infringement action brought by major television network.
- Defended advertising agency in case by illustrator for copyright infringement.
- Defended advertising agency in case involving breach of contract, rights of publicity, and violations of Lanham Act brought by recording group.

* Past results are reported to provide the reader with an indication of the type of litigation we practice. They do not and should not be construed to create an expectation of result in any other case, as all cases are dependent upon their own unique fact situation and applicable law.

Experience

Defeated Disney's Summary Judgment Motion Before Settling Copyright Case Relating to "Pirates of the Caribbean"
September 2022

Ace Arts LLC v. Sony/ATV Music Publishing LLC et al.

Obtained \$320 Million Jury Verdict on Behalf of Celador in Profit Sharing Dispute Against Disney

Cher

Poison

Price v. Atlantic Records, Kane Beatz, et al.

Simmons v. Stanberry

The Ray Charles Foundation v. Ray Charles Legacy Corp.

Professionals

Patrick M. Arenz

Carrie M. Lambert

David Martinez

Roman M. Silberfeld

Laura Lee

Navin Ramalingam

Daniel Allender

Jennifer W. Leland

Gabriel Ulman

News & Insights

IN THE NEWS

February 5, 2025 | Recognition

Roman Silberfeld Named to *Daily Journal's* Leading Commercial Litigators

September 27, 2024 | Recognition

Robins Kaplan Attorneys Named 2024 Massachusetts Super Lawyers and Rising Stars

August 15, 2024 | News

Robins Kaplan Attorneys Named to 2025 Best Lawyers in America

September 6, 2019 | News

Jennifer Leland Named 2019-2020 President of the Women Lawyers Association of Los Angeles

May 26, 2017 | Recognition

Robins Kaplan LLP Ranked Extensively in Chambers USA 2017 Guide

Firm Recognized as Leader across Numerous Practices, including Antitrust, Commercial Litigation, Bankruptcy, and Intellectual Property

May 27, 2016 | Recognition

Robins Kaplan LLP Achieves Top Rankings in Chambers USA 2016

Firm Recognized as Leader in Antitrust, Bankruptcy & Restructuring, Commercial Litigation, Intellectual Property, and Media & Entertainment

August 25, 2015 | Recognition

Thirty-Eight Robins Kaplan Attorneys Recognized as Best Lawyers in America© 2016

May 19, 2015 | Recognition

Robins Kaplan Achieves Top Rankings in Chambers USA 2015

May 2014 | Recognition

Firm Ranks High for Antitrust, Intellectual Property, Commercial Litigation, and Media & Entertainment in Chambers USA 2014

February 26, 2013 | News

Court of Appeals Denies Disney's Request For Further Review of Celador's \$320 Million Judgment Against Disney in "Who Wants to Be a Millionaire" Case

December 4, 2012 | News

Court Affirms Celador \$320 Million Verdict Against Disney in "Who Wants To Be A Millionaire?" Case
On December 3, 2012, a three judge panel of the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit issued a Memorandum of Disposition affirming the jury verdict in favor of Celador International, Ltd. against Disney for \$320 million.

September 27, 2011 | News | *Los Angeles Daily Journal*

Top 100 Lawyers in California

Verdicts, such as Celador, have sent a message to artists to look more closely at profit statements to see if they're getting fair accountings, Silberfeld said.

September 21, 2011 | News | *Los Angeles Daily Journal*

Studios Adjust After Losing Profit-Sharing Cases to Talent

The closely followed trials shed new light on accounting methods studios have used when calculating, reporting and paying out profits to producers, directors and lead actors.

July 2011 | Recognition

Roman Silberfeld Named to Hollywood Power Lawyer List

We are pleased to announce that Roman M. Silberfeld has been named to The Hollywood Reporter's annual "Power Lawyers 2011" list.

March 7, 2011 | News | *The Recorder*

Attorneys of the Year - Roman Silberfeld

Read more about the largest jury verdict ever in a so-called "Hollywood accounting" case, according to The Hollywood Reporter.

February 17, 2011 | Recognition

California Lawyer Names Two Robins, Kaplan, Miller & Ciresi L.L.P. Partners as "Attorneys of the Year"

January 31, 2011 | News | *Los Angeles Daily Journal*

Star Turn That Almost Didn't Happen Pays Off

January 19, 2011 | News | *Daily Journal*

Top Verdicts of 2010

Celador International Ltd. v. The Walt Disney Co. / \$319.4 million, one of the top plaintiff's verdicts in California in 2010.

December 21, 2010 | News

Firm Announces Judge's Order to Deny Disney's Request for a New Trial in "Millionaire" Case

Robins, Kaplan, Miller & Ciresi L.L.P. is pleased to announce the Court's Order issued on December 21, 2010 in favor of its client Celador International.

September 2010 | News

Celador Awarded \$50 Million in Prejudgment Interest on Disney Verdict

On September 27, 2010, Judge Virginia A. Phillips of the United States District Court for the Central District of California awarded \$50 million in prejudgment interest to Celador International, Ltd.

July 2010 | News

Jury Decides Disney Must Pay \$270 Million to "Who Wants To Be A Millionaire?" Creator Celador International, Ltd.

The jury unanimously found that Disney subsidiaries, ABC Television, Buena Vista Television, and Valleycrest Productions, Ltd. had breached their contract with Celador to share profits from the enormously successful game show "Who Wants To Be A Millionaire?".

July 9, 2010 | News | *The National Law Journal*

Who Wants To Take Millions From Disney?

Wednesday's verdict involving profits from the game show Who Wants to Be a Millionaire sent shockwaves throughout the entertainment industry, and not just for its \$270 million damages award.

July 8, 2010 | News | *The Wall Street Journal (Law Blog)*

Final Answer? Disney Must Cough Up \$270 Million, Says Jury

A federal jury in California ruled against Walt Disney Co. in a lawsuit brought by our client, Celador, over royalties for the hit game show "Who Wants to Be a Millionaire."

July 8, 2010 | News | *The American Lawyer*

Litigator of the Week: Roman Silberfeld of Robins, Kaplan, Miller & Ciresi L.L.P.

Following a five-week trial in Riverside, Calif., Roman Silberfeld, a Los Angeles-based Robins, Kaplan, Miller & Ciresi partner, won a \$269.2 million verdict against Walt Disney Co. in a case over profits from the quiz show *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?*

EVENTS

March 26, 2021 | Speaking Engagement

War Stories with Roman Silberfeld

Presented by Beverly Hills Bar Association Litigation Section

LEGAL INSIGHTS

November 27, 2023 | Publication | *Patrick Arenz, Michael Geibelson - IPWatchdog*

A New Era of Copyright Litigation in Hollywood

Revisiting *Pirates of the Caribbean* One Year Later

December 18, 2014 | Publication | *InsideCounsel*

How Game Developers Can Avoid Getting 'PWN3D' by a Right-of-Publicity Claim

Legal tips and guidance for video game developers to avoid right-of-publicity claim issues when developing games that use celebrity likeness.

January 31, 2012 | Publication | *Los Angeles Daily Journal*

Striking Back Against Online Impersonation

For a public figure, detrimental Twitter, Facebook or other social media impersonation could cause substantial damages, particularly where his or her social media presence is tied to their work.

September 17, 2011 | Publication | *Landslide Volume 4, Number 1*

Transformative Use Comes of Age in Right of Publicity Litigation

June 13, 2011 | Publication | *The National Law Journal*

Winning - Successful Litigators, Powerful Strategies

How can a phenomenal show make no money?

September 1, 2010 | Publication | *Los Angeles Daily Journal*

Music Industry Changes Its Ringtone Suits

Related Services

Business Litigation

Construction Litigation

Corporate Finance and Securities

Financial Markets Litigation

FINRA Broker-Dealer

Fire, Explosion, and Burn Lawyers

Government and Internal Investigations

Mergers and Acquisitions

Privacy and Cybersecurity Litigation

Real Estate Litigation