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Entertainment Litigation

Since the firm's inception, Pryor Cashman's litigators have been at the forefront of entertainment litigation, acting as counsel to a wide variety of clients on high profile and precedent-setting cases in all venues. We are nationally known to industry professionals and in the legal community as having one of the premier entertainment litigation practices in the country. We have represented nearly every major motion picture studio (as well as many independents), television and cable networks, music and book publishers, production companies, record companies, industry associations, producers and distributors, performers, entertainment industry executives, authors, personal managers and talent agencies.

Our litigators have obtained significant victories in every type of dispute that can arise in both the entertainment and media industries. Those victories have been achieved at trial in both state and federal courts as well as at arbitrations throughout the nation. Our record in the appellate courts is equally impressive as we have won some of the more significant entertainment appeals over the past few decades.

Pryor Cashman's intellectual property litigators are widely recognized and have handled some of the most high-profile and, in many instances, landmark cases involving copyrights, trademarks, trade dress, trade secrets, unfair competition, theft of ideas, rights of privacy and publicity, and the Internet, as well as the related areas of antitrust and technology. In the digital arena, our litigators are on the cutting edge, handling cases and investigations involving the intersection of digital media and the protection and monetization of intellectual property.

Pryor Cashman's litigators have represented numerous clients and have significant experience in representing production companies, studios and talent in resolving disputes involving profit participation, finance agreements and film delivery. We have also successfully litigated and arbitrated numerous cases throughout the country involving the licensing and distribution of motion picture, television and video rights and the scope of rights granted in connection therewith.

We have represented artists, managers, talent agencies and production companies in litigations and other disputes involving employment, personal services, management and agency contracts. Similarly, we have provided counsel to our entertainment clients in the areas of real estate, class actions and securities. During the past five years, our attorneys have also successfully represented several major music industry clients in a series of investigations initiated by the N.Y.S. Attorney General.

- Mona Simonian
- Elizabeth S. Warner

Pryor Cashman's litigators, as well as other attorneys at our firm experienced in the fields of publishing and entertainment, regularly provide counseling to our entertainment clients on how to avoid litigation and other potential problems which might arise during the course of a production. We regularly review scripts and other creative material for our clients with a view to spotting potential issues and suggesting ways in which they can be avoided. In general, we are called upon regularly to analyze potential and complex legal issues and to evaluate litigation risks.

Some of our recent entertainment cases include:

- Defended major animation studio against claim by major movie studio of alleged contractual interest in worldwide distribution rights to feature-length animated film and, by moving aggressively before litigation was commenced, resolved the conflict before financing and production of the film were impaired
- Represented major television personality in action brought against her by DVD producer claiming she had breached agreement to participate in making of video
- Obtained judgment at trial (affirmed on appeal) that sale by motion picture producer of videocassettes of television movie produced by it exceeded the rights granted to it by authors of the book upon which movie was based
- Obtained dismissal of case brought against major record companies, major music publishing company and others claiming producer royalties on album by major artist
- Obtained summary judgment dismissing idea misappropriation, breach of fiduciary duty and contract claims brought against producers and writers of successful comedy show relating to episode of show and plaintiff's alleged disclosure of idea to one of its writers
- Obtained dismissal with prejudice of copyright infringement lawsuit against singer/songwriter and publishing company involving popular country and western song after single deposition
- Obtained summary judgment for owner of famous show business establishment that defendants infringed and diluted its trademark by operating competing establishment with similar name
- Obtained temporary restraining order against N.J. Attorney General's allegedly unconstitutional enforcement of New Jersey's newly enacted "Truth in Music Act" that had the effect of nullifying unregistered trademark rights of Pryor Cashman clients who had three music groups operating under unregistered trademarks; although 17 other states had recently enacted similar statutes, Pryor Cashman's successful motion was the first legal challenge to such laws