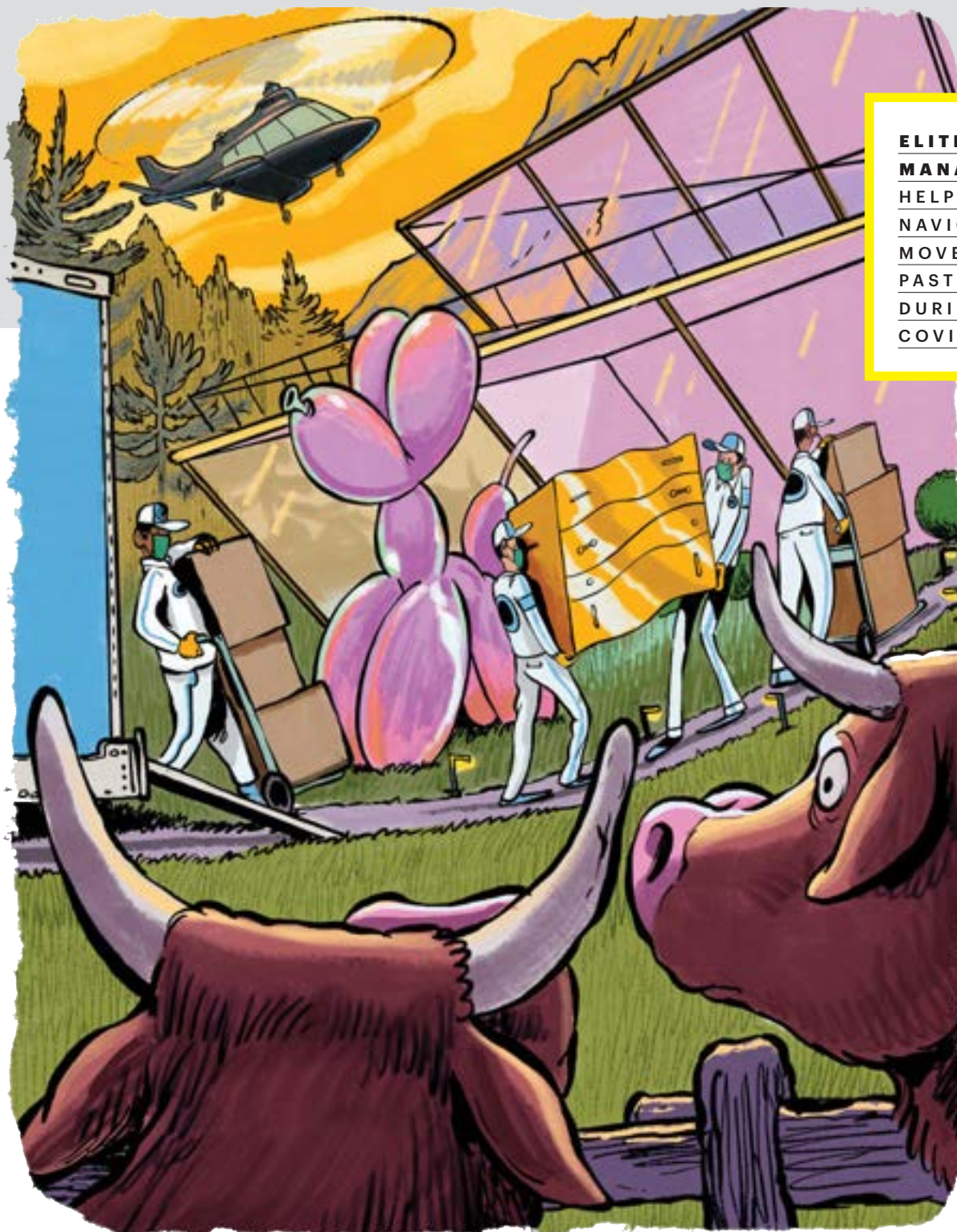


# FOCUS

**ELITE BUSINESS  
MANAGERS**  
HELP CLIENTS  
NAVIGATE  
MOVES TO SAFER  
PASTURES  
DURING THE  
COVID PANDEMIC

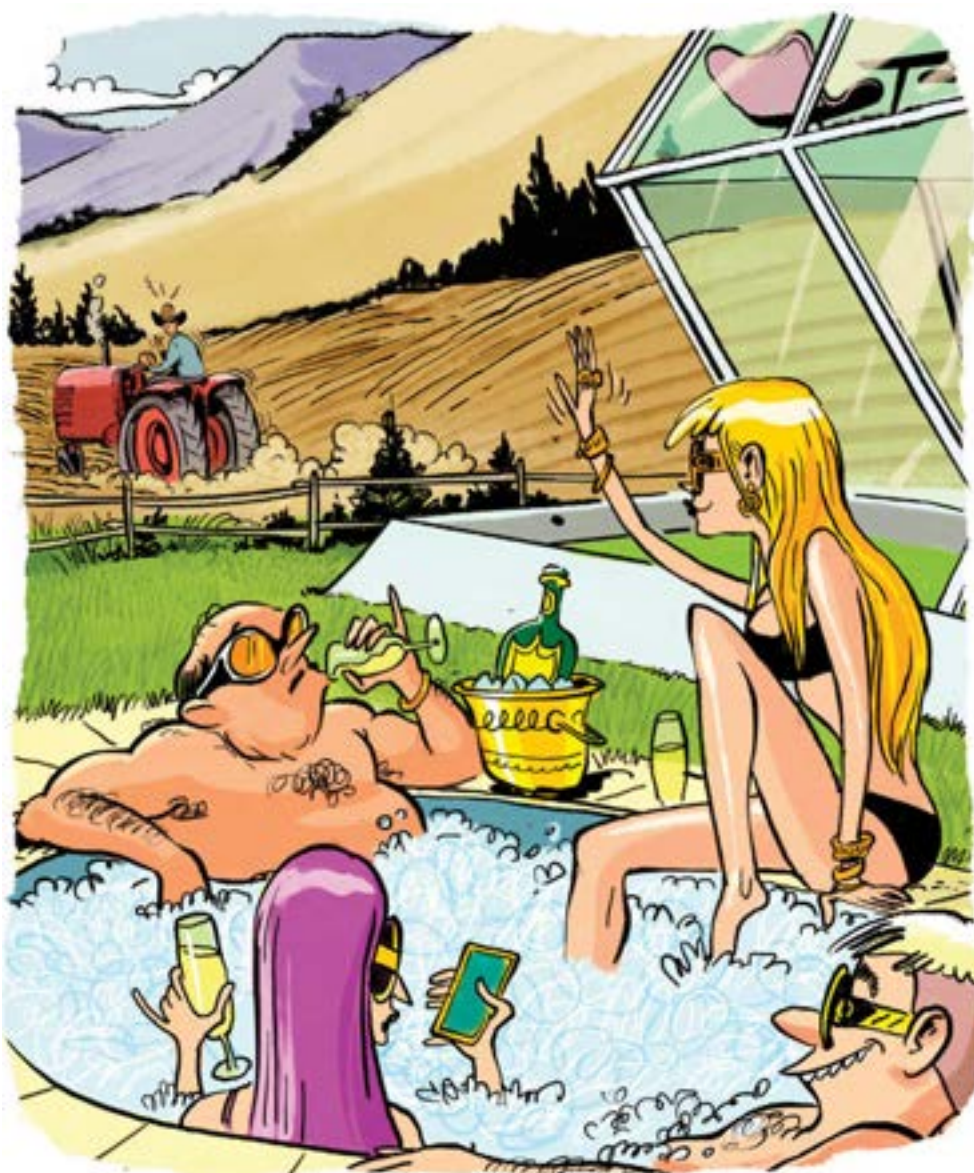


■ Illustration  
by Zohar Lazar



# RICH AND FAMOUS PONDER EXODUS

THE PANDEMIC HAS FORCED MANY STARS AND CELEBS  
TO RECONSIDER WHERE THEY LIVE ■ By Robert Marich



**LEAVING CALIFORNIA** or New York and settling in a more financially advantageous place has long been a mantra of those with the means to carry out that plan. Drivers include spiraling local taxation, high cost of living and declining quality of life.

And now, with the pandemic spreading rapidly in crowded urban centers such as

Los Angeles and New York City, and their surroundings, many affluent individuals and families are thinking about vacating their city abodes and fleeing to more bucolic settings, where the risk of contracting coronavirus is lower.

Business managers and bankers whose clients include showbiz royalty have seen this up close.

And it's a trend that can snowball. "When you see some big-name celebrities being very public about leaving whatever states they're in, that's triggering more people to at least think about it," says David B. Schachter, a senior VP who handles wealth management at financial services giant UBS, based in Century City.

Celebs citing local taxation as factors for actually moving residences include rock star Gene Simmons, who recently listed his Beverly Hills estate, which he's owned since 1984, following a move to Washington state. And President Trump, who moved his legal residence to Florida from New York. Those two destination states are among nine with no state income tax. Others include celeb-magnets Nevada, Tennessee and Texas.

Meanwhile, California's top marginal personal tax rate peaks at 13.3%, elected officials suggest tax hikes are coming and it all is piled on top of federal income tax burden.

New York-based business manager Evan Bell, managing partner of Bell & Associates, says when entertainment/media clients realize that their combined state, local and, where applicable, city income taxes pass 50% "that's when I starting getting calls." Even that 50% psychological threshold is now under threat of being breached.

Escaping taxes is a long-term motivator. Fleeing the pandemic is more urgent — and the pandemic has also demonstrated the feasibility, even the ease, of working remotely.

"People are spending more time in their homes than ever before, which makes them think about what works and what doesn't," says Tony Peyrot, managing partner at business management firm Dunn Pariser & Peyrot. "In some cases, they just want different spaces."

"We have clients that realize that they want more than city living," says Bell of some of his New York City clients. "Those mostly have young families with kids" who are trading densely populated concrete canyons for larger homes in leafy, pastoral settings.

## “Neither California nor New York take kindly to losing the tax revenue.”

CARRIE MALCOLM

In the past six months, several of Bell’s clients have relocated to the adjacent Hudson Valley so they stay in state, but are relieved of a New York City income tax that is above 3%.

There are different opinions, however. “Energy, attitude and personality cannot be ‘remoted’ through even the best fiber optic lines,” counters comedian Jerry Seinfeld in an August opinion article taking exception to the escape-from-New York zeitgeist. “Real, live, inspiring human energy exists when we coagulate together in crazy places like New York City.”

Business managers also point out that it’s hard to pull up roots, so for many it’s simply an exploratory topic.

“More people are talking about it than doing it,” says Harley J. Neuman, partner at Encino-based business management firm Neuman + Associates. “It’s more difficult to execute than imagined.”

For California, the tax bite on a percentage basis is pronounced for high earners, though it narrows considerably for middle-income residents. As a result, business managers say that California taxpayers in mid-range don’t have a taxation-based incentive to leave the state.

Even for high earners, moving to another state doesn’t always translate to escaping taxes from California. A closely watched 2019 California tax appeal court ruling held that an Arizona-based screenwriter owes California taxes as an out-of-state resident because work performed was for California-based companies.

A California tax representative explained of the ruling: “Under the ‘market-based sourcing’ rules that went into effect Jan. 1, 2013, a nonresident independent contractor’s income is sourced to the location where the customer received the ‘benefit of the services.’ ”

“Simply changing their domicile outside of California may not necessarily change their California tax liability as much as some would like,” says Beverly Hills-based business manager Andrew Meyer. He is founding partner of Freemark Financial, which now models taxation outcomes in routine year-end reports because curious clients have increasingly asked for comparisons.

“If you’re considering switching residencies, you have to make sure are in it for the long haul,” adds business manager Carrie Malcolm, partner at NKSFB and based in Manhattan. “Neither California nor New York take kindly to losing the tax revenue. You can expect your taxes will ultimately be examined by those jurisdictions” if you’re constantly moving residency and crossing state borders.

The pull to move residences is

expected to not be just a passing fad because local and state governments facing financial crises seem determined to squeeze higher revenue, and show little inclination to reigning in spending to keep a lid on taxes.

New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo joked in an August press conference: “I literally talk to [wealthy] people all day long ... and I say, ‘You got to come back [to New York City]! We’ll go to dinner! I’ll buy you a drink! Come over, I’ll cook!’”



### STAY, PLEASE

Gov. Andrew Cuomo (top) and comedian Jerry Seinfeld are both, in different ways, promoting New York residencies.

CUOMO: FRANK FRANKLIN/IAAP; SEINFELD: JEFFERY NEIRA/NETFLIX

# GUDVI GIVES BACK

VARIETY HONORS THE  
LEGENDARY ENTERTAINMENT  
ADVISER WITH BUSINESS  
MANAGERS ELITE AWARD

■ By Todd Longwell

■ Photograph by  
Michael Buckner



**OVER THE COURSE** of a career that dates back to 1977, legendary business manager Bernie Gudvi has handled the wealth and finances of some of the world's top musical acts — including current clients Katy Perry, Michael McDonald, Richard Marx, Counting Crows and George Thorogood.

But in addition to counseling his clients through triumphs and failures — and more recently guiding them through the consequences and bureaucracy of the disruptive COVID-19 crisis — Gudvi has given back to his community through his charitable work. For these endeavors, and for his brilliant career, Gudvi will receive this year's *Variety* Business Managers Elite honoree award at a virtual breakfast celebration on Nov. 13.

Throughout that career, Gudvi has entwined his life with that of his clients, experiencing their generosity and their excesses; he has driven miles to personally deliver their vintage Corvettes, ridden on their tour buses, as well as seen and heard many things he cannot repeat.

But nothing could have prepared Gudvi for the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, which brought the live concert business to a screeching halt in March. Although streaming revenue has increased substantially in recent years, touring is still the lifeblood for most established music artists in the post-compact disc world, supporting not only them, but also a large contingent of musicians, roadies, stylists and personal assistants.

When the pandemic hit, Gudvi and his team sprang into action, working virtually around the clock to review client cash flow and expenses, and sort through government red tape to secure Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loans to keep as many of their support staff employed as possible.

"Most of my clients did not lay anybody off initially, because they didn't know where this was going, and getting some of the government's assistance was helpful in maintaining the staff," Gudvi says. "But as more time has gone on, and we say that we're not going back to touring any time soon, then we've had to take a hard look at the retainers and the staff and reduce them or cut them out pretty much completely."



Gudvi's early years prepared him for challenging times. He was born in 1947 to Polish Holocaust survivors living in a displaced persons' camp in Germany. A few months later, the family moved to Paris, where his father had relatives, and spent the next decade rebuilding their lives. When he was 10, the family moved again, this time to Los Angeles.

Gudvi got his first taste of his future career as a 17-year-old student at Fairfax High School, when he got a part-time job working for a Beverly Hills business management firm, Julius Lefkowitz & Co., which shared many clients with the William Morris Agency.

"I was the office boy running errands ... going to celebrities' homes and going to studios to get signatures, to drop packages off [and] that sort of thing," he says. "I found that really interesting."

But before Gudvi could pursue his newfound passion, he had to contend with the Vietnam War. To avoid being

drafted by the Army, he signed up for the U.S. Air Force. That didn't keep Gudvi away from the action, however: he wound up doing a 12-month stint at Pleiku Air Base in Central Vietnam in '67 and '68, as the war went into high gear with the Tet Offensive. Returning to Los Angeles at the conclusion of his four-year hitch, he earned a B.S. in accounting from Cal State Long Beach, then landed a job with Big Eight accounting firm Touche Ross (now known as Deloitte). After earning his CPA certificate, Gudvi — by now in his mid 20s — joined a business management firm with a high concentration of music clients and became attuned to their unique needs.

"I found that my clients who are musicians and songwriters have very deep souls, so to speak, [but] they're not overly tuned to the world of business," says Gudvi, whose first major client was the band Styx, at the time a hard-working touring act without a major hit.

"Musicians, when they become successful, or even in the process of becoming successful, initiate a business right off the bat," Gudvi explains. "They've got road crew, they've got workers' comp insurance, they've got travel insurance.

[Whereas] an actor, an athlete, they're primarily getting a paycheck to do a movie or to do a TV show or to go to play a ballgame."

Gudvi has also been active in non-profit organizations, serving on the boards of the National Veterans Foundation and Media Arts in Public Schools. His involvement in the NFV began when a client, the late drummer Keith Knudsen, put together a benefit show for the org at the Hollywood Bowl in 1987, reuniting his band the Doobie Brothers. Gudvi continues to serve as a consultant to the NVF, handling their accounting and bookkeeping pro bono.

As the years have progressed, Gudvi's business has gone through some changes. After Tom Petty died in 2017, he went from handling him as a client to handling his estate. The next year, Gudvi's firm GSO, which he co-founded in 1989, was absorbed by NKSFB.

"They're a good bunch of guys," says Gudvi of his corporate partners. "I think we do very well. It's like any big corporation and big business: as long as everybody produces what they're supposed to be producing, they leave you alone." 12

#### PAYING THE PIPER

Clockwise from bottom left: Bernie Gudvi's longstanding clients Katy Perry, George Thorogood and Michael McDonald.



**"My clients who are musicians and songwriters have very deep souls, but they're not overly tuned to the world of business."**

BERNIE GUDVI



# MONEY MANAGERS TRIUMPHANT IN TOUGH TIMES

UNDAUNTED BY THE PANDEMIC, THESE  
GUARDIANS OF WEALTH HELPED THEIR CLIENTS  
PROSPER THROUGH THE CRISIS

■ Profiles by Peter Caranicas,  
Todd Longwell and Robert Marich



**Belva Anakwenze**  
PRINCIPAL AND BUSINESS MANAGER  
Abacus Financial Business Management

Rather than feeling pessimistic about the shutdown of Hollywood, Anakwenze says talent will carry over newly learned survival skills, becoming more nimble and multi-hyphenated. As for her own coping, "there were a couple of days where we set up a table in my driveway and clients came over wearing gloves and masks" to sign documents. Notaries public also stopped by. Clients of her Los Angeles-based firm include Jay Ellis ("Top Gun: Maverick") and "ET" host Kevin Frazier. Anakwenze is sole owner of her firm. **Synchronization:** She sums up the pandemic fallout as "every client has had the same problems at the same time."

**David Altman**  
PARTNER  
Altman Greenfield & Selvaggi

Altman works in the L.A. office of the 34-year-old, bicoastal firm co-founded by his father, Abe. It became part of Focus Financial Partners in December 2018. His client list includes actors, writers, directors, musicians and multi-hyphenate talent. Much of this year has been spent coaching them to stay calm and make rational decisions. **Investing in a Time of Plague:** "In general, there's always risk, and now there's that X-factor, where nobody knows what's going to happen," he says. "Months from now, if everything's back to normal, are our lives going to be completely different?"

**"Every client has had the same problems at the same time."**

Belva Anakwenze

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**Tyson Beem, Grady Brown, Andrew Crow, Mark Goodman, Adriane Hibbert, David Lloyd, Melissa Morton, Anton Pamer**  
MANAGING DIRECTORS  
Gelfand, Rennert & Feldman/Next Gen

The pandemic gutted some areas of the entertainment industry, such as live performances and touring, and temporarily shuttered others, including film and TV production. But it helped spur growth at Gelfand Rennert & Feldman, according to Beem, "because people are looking for great advice, consistency and comfort in numbers." The firm certainly has the numbers. A division of wealth management behemoth Focus Financial Partners since 2017, it merged with WG&S in January 2019, adding 70 employees to a staff that already numbered in the hundreds. Then the following May, it acquired London-based music business managers Skeet Kaye Hopkins. The combined workforce has a wealth of next-gen business managers such as WG&S alums Lloyd, whose clients include Josh Groban and film financier Kimberly Steward and her production company K Period Media ("Manchester by the Sea"), and Crow, whose clients include multi-hyphenate Jordan Peele, teen actor Storm Reid ("The Suicide Squad") and Norwegian songwriting and music production team Stargate. From the GRF heritage side, Beem, Goodman, Grady, Hibbert and Morton in the L.A. office focus on touring musicians and singer-songwriters, actors, writers, directors, entrepreneurs and YouTube and social media influencers, while New York-based Pamer handles clients in music, fashion, film and television.

**Savings Made Easy:** Once the pandemic took hold, "there wasn't anything to spend on," Beem says. "Nobody can travel, and there are no events, so the wardrobe and all the styling went to zero. And it affected some of the general spend, like eating out and entertainment. It didn't compensate for the loss of income completely, but it certainly helped the situation."



**Evan R. Bell**  
MANAGING PARTNER  
**Liza de Leon**  
BUSINESS MANAGEMENT PARTNER  
Bell & Co.

The New York-based firm serves high-net-worth individuals and high earners globally, with a well-established client base in entertainment that includes writer-director Robert Eggers; agent Craig Keste; directors Baz Luhrmann, Dee Rees ("Mudbound") and Steven Soderbergh; and manager-producer Phillip Sun. Bell and de Leon cover television, film, literary talent, and podcasters. During shelter-in-place, Bell says, staff constantly phoned clients to make sure everyone stayed in touch "so we don't lose contact."

**Doors Stayed Open:** Bell and de Leon continued working in their offices during shelter-in-place. After Memorial Day, staff gradually came back "one person at a time ... wearing masks when you are outside your office," Bell says. Plus, there was regular testing. Through all that, nobody got the virus.



**Steve Bills, Peter Stoll, Julie Krimstein**  
PARTNERS  
Bills & Stoll

Partners Bills and Stoll started their company in 2016. This year they promoted one of their associates, Krimstein, to be a partner. Bills & Stoll boasts clients in Hollywood's film and TV talent community. A team of 25 looks after their interests in good times and bad. Working from home has not been a much of an issue for Bills & Stoll. "We have been pleasantly surprised by how well we've been able to work remotely," says Stoll. "Our historical investment in technology, as well as already having some staff work remotely prior to the pandemic, has allowed us to seamlessly provide our services to our clients over the last many months."

**Weathering the Storm:** "We let our clients know that eventually the TV and film business will return to normal," says Stoll. "In the interim, we reminded many of them that because they have been fiscally conservative they will be able to weather the economic stress well."

CROW: BRIAN DAVIS; BILLS, STOLL: ROB GREER (2)



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ANDREW K. MEYER, CPA

STEVES A. RODRIGUEZ, CPA





**David Bolno**  
PARTNER  
NKSFB

Bolno's clients include Scooter Braun/Ithaca Holdings; and music's Justin Bieber, Drake, Post Malone, Pharrell Williams and Will.i.am. Others are in TV/film and media/entertainment. For pandemic uncertainty, Westwood-based Bolno took his usual approach of "instead of running away, you put your head down and push forward. Things will fall back into the 'new normal' if you adapt and stay positive." NKSFB is a Focus Financial Partners company.

**Tuned In:** While tours have been curtailed, Bolno notes that on other fronts "music continues to thrive." Across Hollywood businesses, the audience still "wants to lose and immerse themselves in great content."



**Anthony Bonsignore**  
PARTNER  
Altman Greenfield & Selvaggi

Bonsignore still has his impressive client list, which includes writer-directors Noah Baumbach and Greta Gerwig, actors David Harbour and Dakota Johnson, tennis legend John McEnroe, Oscar-winning screenwriter Chris Terrio ("Argo") and artist George Condo. However, the pandemic has forced him to move his base of operations from the firm's Manhattan offices to his home in Westchester County just north of the city and to a cottage near Montauk, Long Island.

**Nobody Left Untouched:** "There are so many highs and lows in this business, but this affected everyone," he says of the pandemic. In normal times "maybe 15% of my clients are in flux and don't have work." With the shutdown, "it's 95%."



**Julie Boos**  
CHAIRMAN

**Mary Ann McReady**  
CO-FOUNDER

**Jamie Cheek**  
PRESIDENT

**Duane Clark**  
VICE CHAIR

**Carmen Romano, David Boyer**  
VPS



**Trey Dunaway**  
CFO AND CHIEF  
COMPLIANCE OFFICER

**Paul Barnabee**  
DIRECTOR, WEST COAST OPERATIONS  
Flood Bumstead McCready & McCarthy (FBMM)

In February, FBMM opened a Los Angeles office staffed by executives transferring from the Nashville headquarters (there's a longstanding New York office too). News reports indicate that the firm's clients include Kelly Clarkson, Dan + Shay, Diplo, Vince Gill, Black Keys, Keith Urban, as well as TV producer/music entrepreneur Josh Wakenly. Boos says working remotely is here to stay to some degree, even after the pandemic lifts. "I feel this has been like a great experiment without knowing if it would work," Boos says. "But it did work," with staff shifting to home on a moment's notice with shelter-in-place in the spring.

**Rainy Day Funds:** Cheek finds that client psychology for what constitutes an emergency fund changed because music touring, which is 80% of some talent's income, was devastated by the pandemic for perhaps two years. The prior benchmark of six to 12 months of reserves is being elongated "in case this ever happens again," Cheek says. "This certainly shifted where we might put their money," tilting to stable vehicles and away from speculative investments.

**"There are so many highs and lows in this business, but this [the pandemic] affected everyone."**

Anthony Bonsignore

BOOS, MCREADY, CHEEK, CLARK, ROMANO, BOYER, DUNAWAY, ALEX BERGER (7)

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who has led us through this incredibly challenging year.

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**Matthew A. Burke**  
MANAGING PARTNER  
Singer Burke Zimmer

Burke's firm handles showrunners from "The Handmaid's Tale," "Grey's Anatomy" and "The Walking Dead." Other clients are music composers, athletes, production companies, digital media companies and talent managers. Encino-based Burke says the firm developed a software database to monitor royalties that "literally uncovered millions of dollars in outstanding contractual payments due to clients over the past couple of years." He also is an executive at collaborative SB Capital Management. **Change of Scenery:** Work-from-home due to coronavirus opened clients' eyes to the possibility of "moving their domiciles to be tax-advantaged because they realize they can from work anywhere," Burke says.



**Steve Callas**  
**Layth Carlson**  
PARTNERS  
**Callas & Carlson**

Callas founded the L.A.-based firm in 1990. Carlson came aboard in 1993 and was elevated to partner three years later. While many other business management firms have been swallowed up by conglomerates, the duo is proud to keep theirs an independent boutique. With a high staff-to-client ratio it provides personal service to a roster that includes directors Marc Webb, Antoine Fuqua, Derek Kolstad, Liz Friedlander and Nic Mathieu, and singer-songwriter Colin Hay. **Battening Down the Hatches:** "First, we had to make sure the staff was safe, then tell the clients, 'Your stuff is safe, we're still here and we're going to take care of you,'" Carlson says. "Then it was battle mode when we had to do all the PPP loans, then the stock market was tanking and people were freaking out. Although some clients did pull back on equities, many stayed the course and have been rewarded with the tremendous rally since then."



**Charles Clancy**  
PARTNER  
Level Four Business Management

Clancy is quick to point out that he is not star-struck and doesn't watch a lot of movies or TV, but he knows how to handle money for people in the biz, as he's demonstrated for the past 35 years. His clients include the writing-directing team Chris Miller and Phil Lord ("Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse") and authors Kristin Hannah and Tami Hoag. **Hate to Say, "I Told You So," But ...:** "You tell people to save for a rainy day," Clancy says. "Now, you can say, 'Here's the example of a bad time you need to be prepared for.' It's an example that I think will help going forward."



**Christopher Curry**  
DIRECTOR OF BUSINESS MANAGEMENT  
Manhattan West

New York-based Curry has a roster heavy with music, film and TV clients, along with high-net-worth individuals. He does everything from helping them start their own record labels to, on a more regular basis, finding them high-yield real estate investments. When Curry moved from Prager Metis to Manhattan West in March, he only got to enjoy his new digs for a week and a half before the pandemic hit; then he switched to working from home. **Because the Show Can't Go On:** "Without touring, a lot of people are sitting down and asking, 'What are my other income streams?'" he says.

**"Without touring, a lot of people are sitting down and asking, 'What are my other income streams?'"**

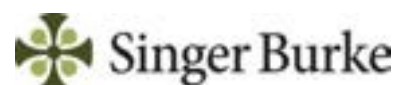
Christopher Curry

CARLSON: AMY GRAVES; CLANCY: JOSHUA MONESSON

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RICHARD SINGER  
STEPHANIE CONNOR ARKOF  
ELAINA KOGAN  
AMITHA HARICHANDRAN**

*With gratitude to all of you who have entrusted us  
with your financial lives and your careers for nearly five decades.*





**Brandy Davis,  
John Blakeman**  
PARTNERS  
MGO

The Century City-based duo have clients in film/TV, sports and online with influencers as well as production companies. During the pandemic, Davis says she "spent a lot of time checking in with clients by phone or video conference. In a normal year, it would hard to find the time that we had during COVID. We did a lot of reviewing of financial strategies; 'life visioning,' is the way that I would put it." **Spreading Their Wings:** Given that regular work evaporated with shelter-in-place, Davis says clients developed useful capabilities in new areas. Those ranged from polishing music talent to producing podcasts to writing. "They were restless and looking for alternative creative outlets," she says.



**Pat Dunn**  
FOUNDING PARTNER  
**Mark Pariser, Tony Peyrot**  
PARTNERS  
Dunn, Pariser and Peyrot

The three partners bring complementary skills to the table. Dunn, who founded the firm in 1996, excels in developing business strategies inside and outside the entertainment industry, such as taking former client James Cameron's plant-based food business from startup to a \$100 million valuation. Pariser and Peyrot are experts in navigating domestic and international tax issues. Pariser works with musicians as well as film and TV producers including Matt Tolmach and Michael Edelstein, while Peyrot's clients include showrunner Rob Thomas, writer-producer Gary Janetti and actor Giancarlo Esposito.

**The Advantage of Virtual Meetings:** "We send the clients cash-flow reports each month, and they don't necessarily read them," Peyrot says. "With Zoom, you can share the screen, so you know they're looking at it."



**Christopher Fazzolari,  
John Menneci, David Phillips**  
MANAGING DIRECTORS  
Gelfand, Rennert & Feldman/Audits

Working on opposite coasts (Fazzolari and Menneci in New York; Phillips in Los Angeles), the three partners head the Gelfand, Rennert & Feldman group that handles royalty audits and examinations. They target a variety of IP rights holders, including, artists, music publishers, celebrity brands and Fortune 500 companies (in regard to licensing and merchandising), as well as directors, actors and other financial participants in film and TV distribution. The unit also has a group within the group that offers royalty administration services for artists and small record labels. Increasingly, they're also doing consulting work regarding the sale of music publishing and recording catalogs. **Business as Usual:** "We've been able to successfully conduct examinations and audits remotely during the pandemic," says Fazzolari. In fact, "we're kind of busier than ever."



**Mark Friedman**  
PARTNER  
Level Four Business Management

Friedman has some impressive names on his roster, including writer-director Quentin Tarantino, but his client load is lighter than that of his three partners at Level Four, giving him more time to focus on the day-to-day operations of the firm, which have been anything but business-as-usual during the pandemic. Thanks to their spacious 11,000-sq.-ft. office, they've been able to rotate in a dozen or so socially distanced members of their 45-person staff to work alongside the partners.

**Staying Healthy During Shutdown:** "I started a riding bike to work," Friedman says. "I did cheat and got an electric-assist bike to help me on the hills."

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**Eric Fulton**  
FOUNDER AND PARTNER  
**Elizabeth Ricin,**  
**Matthew Gilbert-Hamerling**  
PARTNERS  
Fulton Management

Founded in 1990, the Encino-based firm handles a mix of on-camera and behind-the-camera talent (Chris Hemsworth, Channing Tatum, Taika Waititi, Mayim Bialik, Taran Killam), digital influencers (Rhett & Link, James Charles, Emily Ratajkowski) and athletes (UFC champion Conor McGregor). Ricin came aboard as a bookkeeper two decades ago and worked her way up to partner five years ago. Gilbert-Hamerling joined in 2005 and has proved adept at building clients' branded businesses, such as McGregor's Proper No. 12 Irish whiskey. Big names aside, Fulton is proud of the firm's reputation for taking on baby clients and helping guide them to career success and financial stability. With the pandemic, that meant helping some out by discounting fees. **Virus-Inspired Fiscal Responsibility:** "A lot of people hunkered down and really got nervous about when they'd go back to work, so people's spending declined dramatically," Fulton says.



**Steve Gelon**  
MANAGING PARTNER  
**Alex Smith**  
PARTNER-IN-CHARGE OF BUSINESS  
MANAGEMENT  
**Steve Glodney**  
PARTNER  
**Van Lee**  
PRINCIPAL  
**Justin Sroka**  
SENIOR BUSINESS MANAGER  
Mann Gelon Glodney Gumerove Yee  
(MGGGY)

MGGGY was founded in 1967 as a traditional accounting and tax firm, and after current managing partner Steve Gelon joined 1985, it branched out into business management, which today accounts for a third of its revenue. Clients include top TV series creators, along with major actors, writers, producers, directors, musicians and social influencers. Behind the scenes, the practice boasts a balance of seasoned vets and next-gen employees. Glodney has been with the firm since 1994. Lee joined three years ago, bringing with her a special talent for handling the estates of the rich and famous. Smith came aboard in 2015 and frequently works on his film, TV and music clients with Sroka, who arrived in February.

**Pandemic-induced questions:** "A lot of clients have been asking us, if revenue is going to take a dip, what kind of liquidity do we need to create to keep people on payroll and rents paid?" Smith says.

**"A lot of our clients have been asking us ... what kind of liquidity do we need to create to keep people on payroll and rents paid?"**

Alex Smith

GELON, GLODNEY, JAY ESQUIERRA (2), LEE, SROKA, CLAUDIA HOAG (2)

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**Paul Glass**  
VICE CHAIR

**Pam Malek, Amir Malek**  
MANAGING DIRECTORS  
The Colony Group

The trio handles directors, producers, actors and entertainment execs, with its main strength being in the music arena — including major touring acts, singer-songwriters and recording artists. That sector has been hit hard by the pandemic's shutdown of the concert biz. Glass estimates that touring was 15%-20% of their business, "but we're not down that much from the past," he says. "We've made it up in other areas." Paul Glass and his son W. Shane Glass worked with Malek at Provident Financial Management, then split off to form Glass Malek in 2011. Malek's husband, Amir, left Prager and Fenton to join them following year. In September 2019, Glass Malek was absorbed by the Colony Group.

**Tighten Your Belts:** "We're telling people to not necessarily cut [staffers] off totally, but to have reasonable expenses," says Glass.



**W. Shane Glass**  
PRESIDENT, COLONY BUSINESS  
MANAGEMENT & MANAGING DIRECTOR  
The Colony Group

Glass became enamored with the music business at the age of 13, when his father, Paul, took him to a Michael Jackson concert. He went on to serve as a tour accountant for Paul McCartney before partnering with his father in a business management firm, where today, several mergers later, he handles big music acts, along with athletes, directors, producers, writers, digital influencers and execs.

**Do Online Concerts Pay?** "Some new platforms might pay a little bit of money to a big-name act to be a flagship artist, but it's not the same kind of money you'd get touring," he says.



**Alan Goldman**  
**Paul Knell**  
FOUNDING PARTNERS  
Goldman & Knell

Goldman started the firm 28 years ago with the goal of maintaining a hands-on approach with his clients, who hail exclusively from the entertainment industry. "People can get us on the phone," he says. "We're not part of a big publicly traded entity." He and Knell, his partner of 26 years, handle an impressive collection of world-famous actors, comedians and talk show hosts, writers, directors and producers, production entities and executives, as well as the estates of iconic rock legends.

**The Challenge of Paycheck Protection Program Loans:** "Between explaining it to clients and having [the Small Business Administration] change the applications and the rules numerous times during the process, it has been extremely stressful for people in our situation," Goldman says. "It could've been done much easier."



**Laura Gordon**  
FOUNDER  
Gordon & Associates

The daughter of the late NFL All-Pro tackle Ernie Wright, Gordon has both a masters in divinity and BA in economics, giving a unique flavor to her 28-year-old business management practice, allowing her to move easily between cheering clients' successes and challenging their relationship with money. Her roster has a mix of entertainers (including Nick Cannon), professional athletes, small business owners, executives and high-net-worth individuals.

**Doing the Right Thing:** "In our industry, even some of the biggest companies had to lay people off and cut salaries," she says. "I was really touched to see how much my clients fought for their staff."

**"In our industry, even some of the biggest companies had to lay people off and cut salaries. I was really touched to see how much my clients fought for their staff."**

Laura Gordon

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**ROB GRUBMAN**

*and the team at Tanton Grubman on being named  
Variety's 2020 Business Managers Elite*



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**Sean Granat**  
PARTNER  
CohnReznick

The New York-based CPA works with some of the most influential artists in the music industry, with a special focus on the tax and accounting needs of foreign artists who tour in the U.S. Increasingly, he's been focusing on their real estate holdings and, in this time of historically low interest rates, exploring lending options for both new purchases and refinancing of existing properties.

**PPP Loans and Chill:** "When our clients' tours went on hiatus, I thought I might be able to catch up on Netflix," he says. Instead, "I worked for a month straight understanding as many different policies of the CARES Act as possible."



**Warren Grant, Jane Tani, Corey Barash, Howard Altman, Kim Ibrahim, Zoe Lawrence, Fran Wild, David Jackson**

PARTNERS  
Grant, Tani, Barash & Altman



An independent, Beverly Hills-based firm rich with marquee names, Grant, Tani, Barash & Altman counts among its clients Tom Hanks, Dwayne Johnson, Brad Pitt and Earvin "Magic" Johnson, who's been with Grant for more than 30 years. Grant's focus is real estate and Barash's specialty is tax matters, while Altman works on private equity investments and Ibrahim is the expert on the intricacies of accounting software. Tani (whose clients include Eric Idle and Joni Mitchell) oversees the administration of firm. The partners have mostly been able to work from their offices during the pandemic, while support staff rotates in and out to maintain social distancing protocols.

**No COVID Slowdown:** "We feel we're working harder than ever now, because some clients have been using their free time to do old projects, like reviewing estate plans or investment portfolios, and a number of people have been selling or renting homes," Grant says.



**Rob Grubman**  
PARTNER  
Tanton Grubman

Grubman incubates commerce ventures of talent clients, leveraging expertise from handling companies. These include Pharrell Williams for his clothing brands Billionaire Boys Club and Ice Cream; and designer/TV personality Leah McSweeney for her Married to the Mob brand. Other clients are graffiti artist Futura, PR firm the Lede Co. and rapper French Montana.

**Support Group:** With regular work evaporating for talent clients in the pandemic, the business manager's job required "a lot of reassurance and we had to be there for them," Grubman says. To fill income gaps, he collaborated with personal managers, scouting gigs for presenters/ambassadors of consumer brands.

**"We feel we're working harder than ever now."**

Warren Grant



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**Bernie Gudvi**  
PARTNER  
NKSFB

Gudvi, who is the 2020 *Variety* Business Managers Honoree for his community work and charitable endeavors, is legendary for his relationships with music industry executives, recording artists, songwriters and producers. He finds that discussions amid the virus shutdown often center on financial planning and on how to tap alternative income sources. Music talent can monetizing catalog assets and future royalty streams for immediate cash, notes Gudvi. NKSFB is a Focus Financial Partners company.

**I'm OK, You're OK:** "Now that everyone is working at home, we found that we can take care of business without any hiccups," Gudvi says. "Our staff has all been wired up with good internet access at home. I don't think we've missed a beat in the business, though there's less face-to-face with clients."



**Scott F. Guber**  
PRESIDENT  
SFG Business Management

Manhattan-based Guber handles TV and film producers and directors, and high-net-worth individuals. Hollywood clients include director-producer Anthony Hemingway ("Red Tails"), cinematographer and producer David Miller ("Veep"), director-producer Greg Mottola ("Superbad") and talent manager/producer Rory Rosegarten ("Everybody Loves Raymond"). Guber finds that clients could give more attention to job offers for passion projects, since doing-it-for-the-paycheck gigs dried up during shelter-in-place.

**This Shall Pass:** After advising cost-cutting during the virus shutdown, Guber then shifted to the role of quasi-therapist "assuring clients it's not a matter of 'if' production comes back but 'when.' I encouraged them to hang tough both financially and mentally."



**Arnie Herrmann,**  
**Wayne Mejia, Sharon Sullivan,**  
**Matthew Segreto**  
PARTNERS

**Douglas Cammarano**  
DIRECTOR  
Citrin Cooperman

Ana de Armas, Guillermo Del Toro, Savannah Guthrie, Joan Jett & the Blackhearts, Sam Mendes and celebrity chef Jean-Georges Vongerichten are clients. Of the five business managers, Herrmann, Sullivan, Segreto and Cammarano are based in New York. In December, a merger with Mejia & Kaplan created a Beverly Hills office, bringing Mejia aboard and serving Hollywood with 30 employees focused on entertainment clients; Citrin has 100 employees company-wide specializing in showbiz clients. The parent company is a top-25 accounting-tax-advisory firm with a diversified practice nationally. The entertainment unit is also beefing up its royalty administrative/audit capability with new hires. When clients hunkered down for shelter-in-place, Segreto says the move triggered discussions determining how domiciles would impact personal taxation — whether it would be higher perhaps from double taxation, or else reduced.

**Plugged In:** "As a result of the pandemic, the [clients'] desire became even stronger" to review and discuss, Mejia says. Talks focused on where assets are, diversification, tweaking portfolios and reviewing banking arrangements, he says.



## Here's to Michael Thompson, Brett Anderson, Andréa Bacon

and all of *Variety's* 2020 Business Managers Elite Honorees

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**Jordan L. Josephs**  
DIRECTOR AND BUSINESS MANAGER

**Joel D. Levy**  
DEPARTMENT HEAD AND PARTNER

**Andrea Link**  
PARTNER  
SingerLewak

Their client roster encompasses TV producers, including Ivan Reitman and his production company the Montecito Picture Co., and Ken Corday; actors Carrie-Anne Moss and Marlee Matlin; and music artists such as Marcus Miller and Vic Mensa. SingerLewak was established in 1959 and serves a wide variety of industries ranging from real estate and construction to technology to cannabis. This gives the trio the ability to offer clients multiple investment opportunities that match their passions.

**Extra Service:** "One client did a drive-in show at an observatory in Chicago, and there were a lot of nuances we had to go through with the promoter and the insurance company to ensure the health and the safety of the audience," Josephs says.



**Wayne Kamemoto**  
PARTNER  
NKSFB

Kamemoto has a broad-based music practice with clients Cypress Hill, Rage Against the Machine, and consulting/accounting for festivals. He also handles young talent including Grammy winners Ella Mai and Zedd; and also Mustard and Rich Brian. The Encino-based Kamemoto is at the David Weise and Associates unit of NKSFB, which is a Focus Financial Partners company.

**Staying Practical:** When shelter-in-place devastated touring, Kamemoto advised clients to focus on what is doable such as recording and building their presence on social media, so they are "mindful of what they can do in this time to connect with their fan base."



**Michael Kaplan**  
Justine Ruffalo  
PARTNERS

Miller Kaplan

Kaplan finds that Hollywood clients are reflective in the pandemic slowdown. They "step back from the grind of daily work, reflect and refocus on what they want to do," Kaplan says. That can mean rolling up their sleeves to write a TV series pilot or collaborate with other talent they've always admired. The firm's North Hollywood office is headquarters, and one of six offices, which also handle high-net-worth clients outside of entertainment.

**Onward:** Ruffalo finds that clients crimped by the pandemic are resourceful, engaging in virtual performances or monetizing their intellectual property. "Trying to stay positive has been key," Ruffalo says. "Originally, we thought it would be two weeks but it's just gone and on." Many also explore a change-of-scenery and moving their residences.



**Michael Karlin**  
FOUNDING PARTNER  
NKSFB

Karlin's clients include Outkast's Andre Benjamin, Bill Maher, Walter Parkes and Laurie MacDonald, as well as Melissa Rivers/Joan Rivers estate. With California income tax expected to increase, Karlin finds that clients fall into two camps: some feel it's their duty to help government, while others explore moving to lower-tax states. NKSFB is a Focus Financial Partners company.

**Sign of the Times:** Karlin says one of his rare in-person meetings was canceled when someone involved received notice from contact tracers to isolate. With digital communications de rigueur, "it's just a new normal and I think it will carry over to a post-COVID environment."

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**gary schneider**

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**Matt Klarberg**  
MANAGING DIRECTOR  
Monarch Business & Wealth Management

Clients include TV personality/entrepreneur Bethenny Frankel; influencer/entrepreneur Danielle Bernstein; actress Sophia Bush; DJ Kaskade; rapper-actor Quincy; ESPN analyst Jay Williams; sports figures Michael Bradley and Josef Newgarden; and supermodel Martha Hunt. Klarberg says that the firm developed a niche service assisting clients who want to buy into sports franchises. His father, Barry, founded the firm and is a minority Yankees team owner.

**Mixed:** While the pandemic crimps music clients relying on touring, Klarberg finds others doing well. Reality TV star Frankel is “a well-oiled machine running 24/7” with ongoing licensed merchandise, speaking fees, social media, podcasts and TV appearances, he says.



**Josh Klein**  
MANAGING PARTNER  
TKG Business Management

Klein’s clients include the Chainsmokers, Prince Amukamara, Winnie Harlow, Logic, Kelly Rowland and Big Sean. His roster spans entertainment, sports and entrepreneurs. One silver lining of the pandemic is artists that are usually in perpetual motion get to recharge and re-group at home, Klein says. He just opened his Beverly Hills-based firm (the acronym is from the Klein Group), splitting from Monarch Business Management.

**Diversify!** “Make money in your sleep as opposed to being on the road or being on the set,” Klein advises. That means real estate, the stock market and private investments — and less dependency on career work.



**Elaina Kogan**  
TAX PARTNER  
Singer Burke Zimmer

The pandemic’s economic slowdown pushed clients to quickly make decisions regarding spending, overhead and their careers, Kogan says. “There was no timeline” on how long the virus will linger. “It was a very nerve-racking time.” The firm handles showrunners, composers, athletes and industry executives, including talent on TV series “Power” and “Tom Clancy’s Jack Ryan.”

**Generosity:** Amid the virus hardships, Kogan is touched that some of her well-off clients quickly jumped to provide financial aid to the less fortunate, with direct cash or through charitable entities. “They graciously stepped up, offering assistance to their colleagues,” she says.



**Mark Landesman**  
FOUNDER AND PRESIDENT  
ML Management Partners

Jim Cameron and the husband-wife team of John Krasinski and Emily Blunt are new clients — joining longstanding client Eddie Murphy (going back 36 years), Ryan Reynolds and Chris Rock. To clients idle during the pandemic shutdown, Landesman advises that they create material during down time so they can “own their content when we can get back to work.”

**Relentless:** “Never in my wildest dream did I think all our clients would need us at the same time,” Landesman says. Due to shelter-in-place, there was a deluge seeking advice on alternative housing and navigating the then-crashing stock market last spring.

**“Make money in your sleep as opposed to being on the road or being on the set.”**

Josh Klein

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## BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

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**David Levin**  
MANAGING PARTNER, BUSINESS  
MANAGEMENT  
DL Business Management

When Levin started his New York-based boutique in 1997 it had one client, the rock band Live. Twenty-three years later, band members are still clients. The firm, which became part of Adeptus Partners in September 2019, has a long, music-rich roster that includes Jessica Simpson, John Legend and Chrissy Teigen, Joshua Radin, Hailey Baldwin-Bieber, Wyclef Jean, Madison Beer and Lake Street Dive. **Musicians With Pandemic Side Gigs:** "Some have even started doing music lessons over Zoom," he says. "But most of the clients have other ways of earning a living, such as branding, merchandising, endorsements and other types of commercial activity. It's been very good for them."



**Sam Levin, Jason Zayon,  
Chris Mays, John Karls**  
PARTNERS  
**Elisabeth Cai,  
Catherine Catherine**  
PRINCIPALS  
**Rob Abramowitz**  
DIRECTOR  
Armanino Business Management

Armanino is a nationwide firm, with business management offices in Los Angeles, Dallas, Irvine and San Jose, and this team of six handles a large collection of executives, writers, producers, directors, actors, musicians, athletes, talent management, production companies, dealmakers and high-net-worth individuals. Many have additional clients and skills that complement their core entertainment business. For instance, Levin's accounts include the owners of several major retail brands, Zayon has Silicon Valley entrepreneurs on his roster and Cai specializes in trusts and estates. The firm's long-term, diversified approach and clients' own sense of self-discipline meant nobody had to let panic or fear drive their investment decisions during the pandemic shutdown, according to Levin. "My clients have done a very good job of helping themselves by watching their spending, and we're overseeing it to an even greater degree," he says. **Not Just Worried About the Pandemic:** Prior to election day, "a few clients contacted me, asking how they could defend themselves best against results of the election, and the craziness that comes from that," Levin says.



**Matt Lichtenberg**  
PARTNER  
Level Four Business Management

Bronx-born Lichtenberg handles a wealth of highly successful clients, many of whom have their roots in comedy, including Larry David, Will Ferrell, Adam McKay and Joe Rogan. The four-decade vet says: "I've been doing this a long time, and most of my clients have been with me a long time, so we've been through things we never would've imagined, but [the coronavirus] was really unpredictable." **Going Paperless for Pandemic:** "Every once in a while, we have to send a traveling notary to someone's house to get a wet signature on something, but I would say 90% of the signing has transitioned to electronic," he says.

**Clients "are looking inward with very creative results. We're seeing home movies that they posted, screenplays being finished and books being completed."**

Carrie Malcolm

LEVIN, ZAYON, MAYS, KARLS,  
ABRAMOWITZ, ROBERT HOUSER (S)





**Carrie Malcolm**  
PARTNER  
NKSFB

Malcolm finds that clients are shying away from the stock market because of volatility and uncertainty, preferring cash positions. "They're looking for stability," she says. "They're not trying to outperform the market." Her clients are actors, filmmakers, writers and production companies. In July, her CRM Management merged into NKSFB, which is a Focus Financial Partners company. The merger gives the Manhattan-based firm a West Coast presence. **Done It!** With free time amid the pandemic slowdown, clients "are looking inward with very creative results," Malcolm says. "We're seeing home movies that they posted, screenplays being finished and books being completed."



**Craig A. Manzino**  
PARTNER-ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY  
LEADER (NEW YORK)

**Richard Goldstein,**  
**Dean Michaels**  
PRINCIPALS (NEW YORK)

**Thomas F. Smith**  
PARTNER (CONNECTICUT)

**Simon Winters**  
PARTNER (LONDON)  
Prager Metis



Clients of the quintet include TV/film talent Toni Collette, Laverne Cox, Edie Falco, Danaei Gurira, Laurie Metcalf and Samira Wiley. Their business management practice spans Hollywood talent, producers, athletes, influencers, game developers and executives; and also film and game-development companies. In September, the entertainment practice launched a specialist Latin American team focused on regional entertainers, music publishers and record labels. Prager Metis is a top 50 national advisory/accountancy firm. Manzino observes that Hollywood content is still about engaging storytelling, despite upheaval from the digital revolution. "It's just that the way it is consumed is more personal and direct to the audience," he adds.

**Side Gigs:** Manzino suggests that clients engage in podcasts, master classes, online concerts, voiceover work and social media to offset declining conventional gigs. "The more tools that clients have at their disposal, the easier it will be for them to pivot" in future downturns, he says.



**John McIlwee**  
FOUNDING PARTNER

**Alec Grissom**  
SENIOR BUSINESS MANAGER  
J. McIlwee & Associates



McIlwee left Shephard McIlwee Tinglof in December to launch his eponymous firm, taking all 41 of his clients with him, along with his lead account manager Alec Grissom, who helped him shape the strategic goals for his new shingle. Those clients include writer-director Matt Reeves ("The Batman") and his production shop 6th & Idaho, actors Maura Tierney, Jane Lynch and Christian Serratos (star of Netflix's "Selena"), designer-director Cali Thornhill DeWitt and Olympic team skateboarder Sky Brown.

**Death of the Traditional Workday:** Collaborating remotely, "We've all developed this interactive workflow that works on anybody's time and we're incredibly more efficient," McIlwee says.

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR MANAGING PARTNER AND FRIEND

**JOSH KLEIN**

ON THE LAUNCH OF HIS NEW FIRM



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AND HIS SELECTION TO THE

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**Mike Merriman**  
PRESIDENT  
Parr3

Based in the downtown Los Angeles arts district, Merriman's company is 7 years old with 26 employees. Clients include music multihyphenate Louis Bell, singer-songwriter Clairo, record label LVRN, rapper-singer 6lack and electronic dance music maven Alison Wonderland. Merriman thrives on retrieving client funds from underpayments by drilling down on statements from music labels and publishers. "We call it royalties hunting," he says. **Be Prepared:** In good times, the industry should have steeled clients for rainy days, which have arrived with the pandemic. "This is the time we find out if we're any good at our jobs," Merriman says.



**Andrew Meyer**  
FOUNDING PARTNER  
Freemark Financial

Meyer feels that remote employment — forced by the coronavirus — will become a new normal, particularly for actors, writers and producers. "This pandemic only accelerated the understanding that work can be done frictionlessly from anywhere in the world," says the Beverly Hills-based Meyer. Clients are believed to include Yahya Abdul-Mateen II (Emmy-winner for HBO's "Watchmen"), Kenya Barris, director Jon M. Chu, Adam Driver, Henry Golding, Anna Kendrick, Ellen Pompeo, Alexander Skarsgard and Ramy Youssef. **Pandemic Pause:** With the virus-induced Hollywood shutdown, Meyer finds clients introspective in their strategies, "whether that be real estate projects that they are working on or ethically based investing."



**Harley J. Neuman**  
PARTNER  
Neuman + Associates

Ellen DeGeneres, Scarlett Johansson, TV producer Ryan Murphy, Netflix's Ted Sarandos, Emma Roberts, Zoe Saldana and Lena Waithe are clients of Neuman's shop. While a shelter-in-place mentality rules, he says, "people crave being around other people to consume entertainment for concerts and tentpole films when it's safe again." The Encino-based firm is a division of NKSFB, which is part of Focus Financial Partners. **Rapid Reaction:** When pandemic financial relief commenced, "We really had to mobilize quickly," Neuman recalls. "The government kept changing the rules for eligibility and how to apply. It was pretty chaotic."



**Michael Oppenheim**  
PARTNER  
NKSFB

With clients including Beyoncé, Eminem, Steve Aoki, Slipknot, Smashing Pumpkins and YG, Oppenheim handles music talent, labels, management companies and some film/TV. He finds clients eager to explore financial adjustments for election impact, such as booking ordinary income this year under the current tax rate. Evaluating before the elections means that they "won't be reactive afterwards," Oppenheim says. NKSFB is a Focus Financial Partners company. **Be Prepared:** Due to the pandemic, "I think clients want more advice from you now" for handling cash, budgeting and "managing expectations." Oppenheim says. "This isn't going to be just three months or six months."

**"This is the time we find out if we're any good at our jobs."**

Mike Merriman

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**STEVEN SHAPIRO**  
ON ANOTHER YEAR OF BEING NAMED AS  
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**John Rigney**

**PARTNER**  
Level Four Business Management

A 48-year veteran of the business, Rigney's clients include directors Luc Besson, Kenny Ortega and David Gordon Green, actor/producer Josh Hutcherson, and film and TV stars such as Danny McBride, Walton Goggins, Omar Epps and Jim Carrey, the latter of which has been with him since 1983.

**The Post-Pandemic Future:** "It won't look the same as it was, whether you're talking about the distribution business, my business or commercial real estate, which I think is going to be horrifying for a long time because everybody has either gone out of business or realized that they don't need as much space," he says.

**Steves Rodriguez**

**FOUNDING PARTNER**  
Freemark Financial

The Beverly Hills-based Rodriguez handles music, media production companies and high-net-worth outside Hollywood, including Activist Artist Management; marketing executives David Droga and Omar Johnson; influencer Anastasia Karanikolaou; and Southern-rock duo Larkin Poe. He says business managers need to improve diversity by recruiting outside traditional channels — for example at historically Black colleges. "We can focus our hiring practices to do more," says Rodriguez, a son of immigrants.

**Decisive:** When company clients were cautious in early stages of the pandemic, he advised them not to be afraid to make moves such as reducing staff and overhead. That steeled them for hard times.

**Beth Sabbagh**

**PARTNER**  
NKSFB

Her clients include rapper Common, Janet Jackson, R&B artist Miguel and Guns N' Roses bassist Duff McKagan. Encino-based Sabbagh marvels that clients ride out the pandemic scattered across the country from Vermont to Florida. "People's actual location doesn't seem to matter that much anymore," says Sabbagh, who is at the David Weise and Associates unit of NKSFB, which is a Focus Financial Partners company.

**No Slowdown:** Though clients' employment dried up during the pandemic, "it became busier for me and the firm, applying for aid and doing projections to help clients to determine how to stretch their resources," Sabbagh says.

**Phil Sarna**

**SENIOR MANAGING DIRECTOR**  
Tara Beaudine-Moore

**DIRECTOR**  
PS Business Management

Sarna's New York-based firm handles a heady mix of figures from the worlds of film, fashion, sports and, most significantly, music, including Billie Eilish, Lizzo, Halsey, Camila Cabello, Sara Bareilles, Arcade Fire, the National and Benny Blanco. Beaudine-Moore joined the team 14 years ago, bringing with her a "passion for music and a brain for numbers," according to Sarna. With touring shut down, they're exploring ways for their clients to stay in touch with their fans, from virtual concerts to special merchandise — and also exploring the Paycheck Protection Program and Economic Injury Disaster loans to keep support staff on payroll.

**Cautiously Optimistic:** "Early on in my career, there was the saying that music and entertainment are recession-proof," says Sarna. "Well, we're going to test that to its boundaries going forward."



Goldman & Knell, LLP

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NEW PARTNER, LISA ROBINSON



**Gary Schneider**  
MANAGING PARTNER  
Kessler, Schneider & Scheltinga

While the trend is to reduce physical footprints, Schneider is moving the firm headquarters to a Bel-Air two-story indoor/outdoor facility, while also maintaining its current Sherman Oaks high-rise office. Clients include John Corbett, Thomas Haden Church, Alyson Hannigan and Ed Helms, and high-net individuals outside entertainment. With the pandemic, client portfolios move more to cash and less to stock market speculation, Schneider says.

**Workloads:** Schneider finds actors and directors are most financially impacted by the pandemic because of production shutdowns, while "our writers continue to thrive because they can work from home and the constant need for new content."



**Mickey Segal**  
MANAGING PARTNER  
NKSFB

Segal is at the epicenter of Hollywood's business manager consolidation trend, helming a key Focus Financial Partners company. In July, New York-based CRM Management merged into NKSFB. Segal says he spends about 80% of his time administering 560 employees, including 46 partners; he also rolls up his sleeves evaluating merger prospects. The rest of his work is handling clients that include Paul Anka and Hollywood entrepreneur Thomas Tull.

**Sign of the Times:** When the pandemic struck, client contact was reduced mostly to phone calls, emails and texts. "There's limited number of face-to-face meetings with clients in this new environment," Segal says.



**John Shaheen**  
Business Wealth & Tax Management

Shaheen has a diverse stable of cutting-edge clients with a heavy emphasis on musicians, including Nigerian singer-songwriter Burna Boy (who recently cut an album with Diddy), Goody Grace (who worked with Blink-182), record producer Kenny Beats, Watsky (who recently set the record for longest freestyle rap at 33 hours, 30 minutes and 30 seconds) and country-rap artist Breland. He also works with up-and-coming director Gibson Hazard, who produced the Kobe Bryant tribute video for TNT and the NBA All-Star Game.

**Coronavirus Wisdom for Clients:** "Continue to operate outside of your comfort zone and pivot," he says. "I have one client who started a book club."



**Steven L. Shapiro**  
FOUNDER  
Summit Business Management

During an era of increasing consolidation in the world of business management, Shapiro remains the sole owner of his Woodland Hills shop. The firm handles upward of 500 actors, writers, directors, musicians, cinematographers, editors, producers and athletes, including marquee names such as Zendaya, Weird Al Yankovic, Aaron Paul, Elliott Gould and star Milwaukee Brewers outfielder Christian Yelich.

**Advice on CARES Act Loans:** "I let them know that all the government did is throw candy at a crying baby," he says. "When the crying is over, anything given to them by the government will be paid back in tremendous tax increases."

**"Continue to operate outside of your comfort zone and pivot. I have one client who started a book club."**

John Shaheen

# THANK YOU

Fulton Management is proud to be included in such esteemed company on the year's Variety Business Managers Elite Edition. We are deeply appreciative of the commitment our team has shown during this tumultuous year.

Thank you. We couldn't do this without you.

**Eric, Elizabeth, and Matthew**



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**Barry Siegel**  
Co-Managing Partner

At Provident Financial Management Siegel's clients include Al Pacino, Rob Dyrdek, Mike Judge, David Mamet and composer-scorer Trevor Rabin. Siegel observes that clients used to view their careers as mostly propelled by their personal actions, but no longer as the pandemic casts a shadow over everything. "It caused them to be more introspective and allowed us to interact more in the planning for their economic challenges," he says. **New World:** Siegel says the latest challenge for the business manager industry is managing employees who increasingly work at home. Firms will need "new ways of retaining control, security and proper coverage for clients," he says.



**Richard Singer,**  
**Stephanie Connor Arkof,**  
**Amitha Harichandran**

**WEALTH MANAGEMENT PARTNERS**  
**SB Capital Management**

The firm's clients include showrunners, producers and actors from TV series "Animal Kingdom," "Dead to Me," "The Kominsky Method," "A Million Little Things," "Outlander" and "Star Trek: Strange New Worlds." With bonds and bank accounts generating little in today's low-interest world amid the pandemic, Singer has "increased investments in fixed income 'substitutes,' specifically lending money against real estate." He adds that yields are good. SB Capital Management is the investment arm of Singer Burke Zimmer. **Sustainable Investing:** With California wildfires elevating environmental concerns, ecologically responsible investing moves even more to the forefront for clients and the firm, Burke says. "The interest in that area has skyrocketed."



**Mike Skeet, Simon Hopkins,**  
**Jeff Kaye**

**MANAGING DIRECTORS**  
**Gelfand, Rennert & Feldman/U.K.**

The London-based trio became part of Gelfand, Rennert & Feldman when their music-focused firm Skeet Kaye Hopkins was acquired in May 2019, giving the L.A.-based company (owned by investment giant Focus Financial Partners) an increased presence in the European market, as well as added expertise in local tax laws, which is a specialty of Hopkins. Ironically, Skeet spends a fair amount of time in L.A. servicing expat British music clients, who especially need counseling and reassurance during the pandemic, which eliminated touring income and forced them to either lay off support personnel or cut salaries, as well as fight for insurance claims covering cancellations. **Virtual Concerts:** "Touring isn't looking like it's coming back anytime soon," says Skeet. "So it's a combination of making money and keeping fan engagement going."



**Lou Taylor**  
**FOUNDER/CEO**  
**Tri Star Sports and Entertainment Group**

With offices in Nashville and Los Angeles, Taylor's 28-year-old firm handles a diverse collection of music artists (Mary J. Blige, Steven Tyler, Reba McEntire, Meghan Trainor, Florida Georgia Line, Jason Derulo) and actors (Priyanka Chopra Jonas, Samara Weaving, Natalie Dormer, Jack Huston, Charles Melton), along with Netflix CMO Bozoma Saint John. **Surviving the Shutdown:** "The month of March was fast and furious, realizing we were in a pandemic, quickly addressing the financial needs, filing for all the PPP loans and the Main Street Lending programs," Taylor says. "We had some clients that did not see a reduction in deal flow and others that experienced the opposite."

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We humbly thank our esteemed clients and our amazing staff without whom this would not be possible. We are so grateful to you.





**William H. Tanner,  
Peter Mainstain, Michael L.  
Glynn, Bradley W. Johnson,  
Thomas F. Fouladi, Robert  
Harrison, David Coronel**  
PARTNERS  
Tanner Mainstain Glynn & Johnson

People looking for someone to handle their finances tend to value consistency, and TMGJ has that in spades. The Westwood firm was founded in 1976 by Mainstain and Tanner, and Glynn, Johnson and Fouladi joined in 1987, 1990 and 1991, respectively. Even newer partners Harrison and Coronel have already been there 13 years. It wouldn't mean a thing if TMGJ didn't do well by its clients, who include actors Michael Keaton and Bradley Whitford, writer-producer-director Aaron Sorkin, film and TV composer Sean Callery, "Glee" co-creator Ian Brennan, and "Frasier" co-creators Peter Casey and David Lee, as well as behind-the-scenes types ranging from agents to cinematographers. Tanner decided to step back from day-to-day operations in 2019, but he's still actively engaged with clients and has cemented his stamp on the firm's character. And, while many business management firms with partners approaching retirement age have sold out to big financial services firms, TMGJ has resisted all such entreaties. Recently, TMGJ has been encouraging clients to take advantage of pandemic downtime to tackle bigger projects including estate planning and taking advantage of the \$11.6 million exemption for gifting that is set to expire at the end of 2025.

**Saved for a Rainy Day:** "We've always been [fiscally] conservative so clients can ride out storms like this [pandemic]," says Coronel. "Our program is designed to let them to be able to do work when they want to, so they don't have to take on a project that they hate just to keep the lights on."



**Michael Thompson,  
Brett Anderson, Andréa Bacon**  
PARTNERS  
Savitsky Satin Bacon & Bucci

With clients that include film and TV producers, writers, directors, actors and athletes, the 30-year-old company has expanded its scope by adding partners. Thompson, with 45 years of experience repping talent, advises the next generation to be nimble as technology will continue to dramatically reshape the entertainment business. Anderson, the firm's youngest partner at 34, serves clients that include influencers. He advises the use of social media to keep fans engaged as "companies exponentially re-allocate advertising dollars to non-traditional platforms like YouTube, Instagram and TikTok." Bacon has 25 years of experience, including stints at some of the best-known business management firms serving entertainment clients.

**Words of Encouragement:** "Take deep breaths," Bacon says. "We will get through this. Keep your attitude and your bank account positive!"



**Larry Tyler**  
PARTNER  
NKSFB

Tyler's music practice includes Bruno Mars, Anderson .Paak, Alex Da Kid and Tori Kelly. While touring has been battered, Tyler says, "the music business has been shown to be resilient, strong and very vibrant." Recording, music releases, songwriting, catalog transactions and new artist signings flourish across the industry, he notes.

**Face-to-Face:** While most of Hollywood moved to digital communications, Tyler says during shelter-in-place "I've had more in-person meetings with clients and more often." However, that constant contact tends to be concise, focused, in-person interactions following social-distancing protocols at his office, clients' homes or studios.

## Variety's Business Managers Elite Honorees and Partners **John Rigney, Mark Friedman, Matt Lichtenberg and Chuck Clancy**

would like to thank all of our employees for their adaptability and dedication during these difficult and uncertain times.

Specifically, we would like to thank

**Bill Olson, Jacqueline Hernandez,  
Fabiola Aceves and Alexandria Gift**

for working from the office every day which enabled us to continue working remotely to meet the needs of our clients over the last several months.

We could not have done it without you. Thank you!



**LEVEL FOUR**  
BUSINESS MANAGEMENT LLC



**Rit Venerus**  
SENIOR MANAGING DIRECTOR,  
CHARLOTTESVILLE

**Butch Gage**  
MANAGING DIRECTOR, NEW YORK

**Dan Goscombe**  
MANAGING DIRECTOR, NASHVILLE  
Cal Financial Group

Cal Financial Group, founded by Venerus in 2003, is headquartered in Charlottesville, Va. The music-centric firm handles tour accounting, royalty administration, financial planning and tax preparation for Dave Matthews Band, John Mayer, Dead & Co., Bon Iver, Odesza, Maxwell and the Lumineers; and NBA all-stars Joel Embiid, Brook Lopez, Pau and Marc Gasol. Venerus' nephew Gage runs the New York office, Goscombe heads up Nashville; in January they hired Sweeta Ali to run an L.A. office.

**Prepared for the Unexpected, COVID-19 Edition:** "For the most part, our clients followed the mantra of saving for the future, keeping lifestyles in check and not living beyond their means," Venerus says.



**Bill Vuylsteke**  
SENIOR MANAGING DIRECTOR  
Provident Financial Management

Vuylsteke's clients include actor Lucy Liu, talent manager/investor Guy Oseary and music's Sheryl Crow, Green Day and Shakira. The business manager says it's a golden era to sell music publishing catalogs as booming streaming lifts prices and talent gets favorable tax treatment. "It's something that I haven't seen in 30 years in the business," says the Santa Monica-based Vuylsteke. Talent can also monetize music publishing in securitizations, without outright sales.

**Opportunity Knocks:** In the good times before the pandemic, Vuylsteke says some thought the gravy train of Hollywood work offers would never stop, but now realize that sometimes opportunity knocks only once.



**David Weise**  
PARTNER  
NKSFB

Coldplay, Carol King, Marshmello, Lil Wayne, the Weeknd and Jack White are Weise clients. Music clients are exploring the sale of their royalty and publishing assets in order to cash in on sky-high valuations, which, Weise says "is a great opportunity." In January 2019, Encino-based David Weise and Associates merged into NKSFB, which is a Focus Financial Partners company.

**Resourceful:** After the merger, "having the resources of a large firm with people who can focus on the changing regulations, government incentive programs and tax law changes during the pandemic allows me to concentrate on my everyday business management needs for my clients," Weise says.



**Adam Yorkshire**  
PARTNER/FOUNDER  
Yorkshire Management Group

Even in the midst of the pandemic, Yorkshire finds clients exploring "a lot of symbiotic ventures that have a great deal of functional carryover to their careers that create new income streams for the world as it is now and the world as it will be." This includes collaboration with other artists on songs, starting media promotion companies and developing personally branded consumer goods. L.A.-based Yorkshire handles music artists, actors and athletes.

**Re-thinking:** With shelter-in-place, Yorkshire finds clients receptive to conversations taking stock of their "lives to optimize their business structures for the current world."

**"For the most part, our clients followed the mantra of saving for the future, keeping lifestyles in check and not living beyond their means."**

Rit Venerus

VENERUS: HEATHER SELF; GAGE: BRITT GAGE

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