

# Scrutiny Secures Safe Supervision

Business managers find ways to handle client needs with integrity

• By Todd Gilchrist • Illustration by Cheyne Gateley



FOCUS



**Business managers** are more critical than ever in the entertainment industry — and that may be why they are under more scrutiny now than any other time in the history of their profession.

Artists and celebrities aren't just "rich" any longer; they have true eight- or nine- (or more) figure wealth, invested in a multitude of ways to keep them making money whether their careers soar or sink.

To them, business managers are a sort of financial quarterback, the individual who pays their mortgages, bills and taxes, outsources their investments to wealth advisers and effectively runs their lives. Unfortunately, a series of high-profile clashes between business managers and the entertainers they work for has undermined the integrity



Britney Spears' conservatorship controversy has drawn scrutiny of both the law and business practices.

of this essential role, especially after the details of their various acts of financial malfeasance were litigated not just in courts of justice, but also in the court of public opinion.

In 2017, business manager Jonathan Schwartz was convicted and sentenced to six years in prison for embezzling almost \$5 million from former client Alanis Morissette. This year, the Britney Spears conservatorship controversy has thrust many of the most arcane aspects of business management practices into front-page headlines.

These incidents and others have only intensified the light shone on this profession, but with more artists making more money in more different ways than ever before, the attention may not only be deserved, but necessary.

Howard Krant is the managing member of Adeptus Partners, an accounting firm whose services include business management. One reason he thinks that individuals in his profession may be getting themselves into trouble is because they are increasingly being permitted to invest their clients' money when they shouldn't. "We consider it to be a conflict of interest," he tells *Variety*.

Krant indicates that much of this multi-level capitalization starts at an institutional level when financial planning organizations merge with business management firms to bring a potential client's entire financial portfolio under a single roof. Business management firms get licenses to sell investments, so when their agents cultivate familiarity, or trust, with clients, they can mine their

money multiple times by providing a number of services simultaneously — and this practice is not only legal, but encouraged.

"This was started a long time ago by American Express, who bought a number of accounting firms just to mine the clients for investment dollars," he says. "There's a lot of cross-pollination going on where it really shouldn't be going on."

Krant says business managers must not only understand the complex world of investments in order to advise their clients, but also know how and when to be able to say no to their clients.

"You've got to remember that professional athletes are always on the road, and they don't really pay attention to anything that's going on," Krant says. "A lot of creative people are not financially

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**Our protocols are incredibly strict, but I would rather inconvenience somebody instead of making a mistake.” — John McIlwee**

savvy and are looking for people to take care of them. And I think the reason these incidents are getting reported more often is because you’ve got a lot of high-level people that people are taking advantage of.”

John McIlwee, founder of Los Angeles business management firm J. McIlwee & Associates, suggests the constant evolution of technology may further be enabling individuals to take advantage — although he says it might also make it easier for them to get caught.

“As we move into this much more complete digital world,

that there’s a lot less personal interaction with people, which obviously makes it easier for somebody to get hacked and manipulated,” McIlwee says.

“The people trying to commit fraud are much more sophisticated and savvy now instead of just being the person that faxes something from South Africa saying they’re stuck in an airport. They’re mimicking people’s wording and they’re mimicking people’s emails and people’s habits. They’ve hacked and followed something for a while hoping to try to lure in a big fish.”



Alanis Morissette’s management woes have become a widely publicized cautionary tale.

McIlwee acknowledges that every time a business manager’s bad behavior gets reported by the media, it makes his job a little harder. But as Krant does at his firm, McIlwee buttresses against those risks by being communicative and absolutely transparent with his clients through every step of the process about every decision.

“Our protocols are incredibly strict, but I would rather inconvenience somebody instead of making a mistake,” he says.

David Schachter is not a business manager, but as a wealth adviser for UBS Wealth Management USA, he works frequently with them in his day-to-day operations. When asked if he thinks there’s been a significant increase in acts of financial misbehavior or merely an uptick in the reporting of those acts, Schachter says that because of social media and the star wattage of many of the victims, these incidents have generated a greater degree of visibility, whether they’re reported completely or accurately.

“I think in entertainment, it pops up more because of the nature of the people,” he says.

“But when a story breaks, there’s kind of a perception of a negative thing without actually hearing the story, and then when you hear about it later, it may not be as bad as it was perceived.”

At the same time, Schachter insists that “transparency is probably the best that it’s ever been,” and says the business managers he works with are honest and operate with integrity. “I don’t think it’s like a kid looking at a candy jar,” he says. “A lot of these people have been responsible for helping these people build and maintain their fortunes. But because it’s Hollywood entertainment, it tends to magnify the negatives even more.”

He also offers an important reminder that when people become wealthy and famous, many people want to be around them and bend their ear. A business manager’s job is to handle clients’ financial lives, as well as help them make good decisions.

“They are a very important level of gatekeeping, so they can stay on and focus on their craft,” he says. “Without business managers, I think these clients would be really exposed.”

McIlwee goes further and says it’s important to try and understand each client’s personality as it relates to finance.

“What that means is [realizing] when a client is going to become panicked, and how do I avoid that from happening,” he says. “And people have different thresholds on peacefulness and security, so the best thing I can do is make sure that I’m in tune with the client and their situation as they are.”

Though none of the three argued for making significant changes to the industry to prevent financial temptation — and in fact consistently highlighted the stopgaps at their institutions that prevent it from happening — Krant suggests the easiest tactic is for business managers to remember their fiduciary duty to their clients.

“Why people don’t is truly amazing to me, but I think they get a little caught up,” he says.

“They’re like, ‘OK, I’m gonna invest like LeBron James bought part of the Boston Red Sox.’ I’m not saying it’s not a good deal, but that’s something that’s a little sexy, so the business manager will recommit to whether it’s good or not. So you’ve really got to look at the mindset of all these clients and how they’re going to spend money.”

The challenge, Krant says, is balancing the business manager’s skillset with the client’s. “They need people to take care of them because they’re good at what they do, so you’ve got to be good at what you do. You’ve got to care about the client and not care about the money.

“That doesn’t mean you shouldn’t earn a living, and it doesn’t mean you shouldn’t get paid for your work. But care a little bit more about the client.”

He adds a bit of evergreen advice: “When the client wants to invest in a restaurant, which almost every client usually does, tell them no.”





# Barry Siegel Hits It Out of the Park

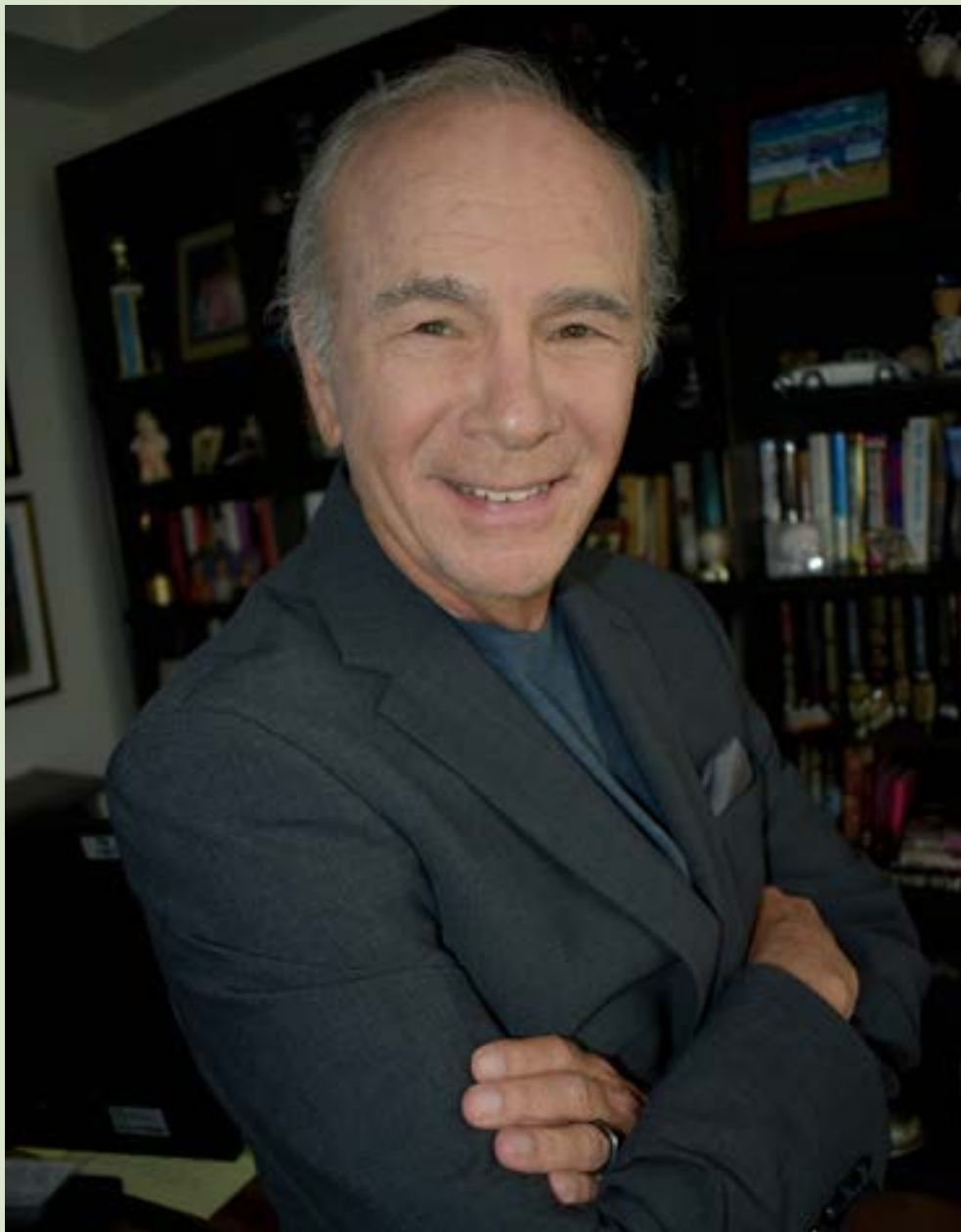
**Variety's 2021 Business Managers Elite Honoree straddles the worlds of philanthropy and baseball while safeguarding his clients' assets • By Todd Longwell**

If Barry Siegel's face seems strangely familiar, it's probably because he can often be seen on telecasts of Dodgers home games, in the front row behind home plate, right next to former "Entertainment Tonight" host Mary Hart.

Siegel is not what most would consider a celebrity. He is, however, something of a legend in industry circles for his work as a business manager. The senior managing director of Provident Financial Management boasts a stellar client roster that includes actors Al Pacino and Elijah Wood, writer-director-producer Mike Judge ("Silicon Valley," "King of the Hill"), Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright David Mamet, Tony Award-winning theater director Des McAnuff ("The Who's Tommy," "Jersey Boys") and pro skateboarder-turned-reality TV host/producer Rob Dyrdek ("Ridiculousness"). And that's not to mention music acts including Air Supply and Frankie Valli and the Four Seasons, both of whom have been clients for decades.

It's for this long and illustrious career, stretching back to 1972, that Siegel will receive this year's *Variety* Business Managers Elite Honoree award at a virtual breakfast celebration Nov. 18.

As proud as Siegel is of his clients and the level of service he provides them, he is equally proud of his employees, whom he has mentored and nurtured over the decades, helping several rise through the ranks to become managing directors of the company.



→ Barry Siegel is a legend in industry circles for his work as a business manager.

“Our employees are generally extremely loyal and we consider everybody part of the family,” Siegel says. “Our average employee now has been with us for over 15 years, and many have been with us since we started the firm.”

Growing up, Siegel had a drum kit and dreams of being in a band, but felt he had no talent for music, so he decided the only way he could get into the entertainment industry was on the business side. While in college, he built his fledgling financial chops working for a brokerage house and as an auditor for Sunkist. After earning his B.S. in business administration from Woodbury University and taking the CPA exam (“I was very lucky to have passed it,” Siegel says), he got a job with Gelfand, Rennert & Feldman (GRF), which had just moved from New York to Los Angeles, and fulfilled the experience requirement to get his CPA license.

Siegel quickly made partner at GRF and was sent up to San Francisco to open a satellite office for the firm in 1975. Several of his first clients — including Carlos Santana (who was with Siegel for 20 years) and the late Eddie Money — were referred to him by legendary Bay Area concert promoter Bill Graham, who went on to become something of a mentor for Siegel.

“He basically helped me build the business up there,” says Siegel of Graham, who died in a helicopter crash in 1991.

Siegel made an even more important connection during his San Francisco years: longtime business partner Bill Vuylsteke, whom he recruited to join GRF at a job fair at UC Berkeley, where Vuylsteke was a student at the time.



Al Pacino, starring in “House of Gucci,” has been a client of Siegel’s from early in their careers.



“He was very personable and probably one of the smartest guys I’ve ever met,” says Siegel of fellow Provident senior managing director Vuylsteke, whose clients include musicians Green Day, Weezer, Sheryl Crow and Shakira, actor Lucy Liu and talent manager Guy Oseary. “He really understood what it was that we were trying to do, which is protect artists who have a real talent on the artistic side, but not necessarily from a business perspective. And I think that’s really what has made our business grow like it has.”

Siegel returned to Los Angeles in 1980, and two years later he left GRF to co-found the business management firm Siegel & Feldstein, which went on to add Vuylsteke as a partner and eventually change its name to Provident Financial Management. In 1997, they sold the business to American Express, which at the time was acquiring major accounting firms throughout the United States. Provident

was the sole business management firm it acquired.

In 2011, “they decided to get out of the accounting business altogether, which was probably a smart thing for them, and we bought the business back,” Siegel says. “But we actually enjoyed our time with American Express. They were very good to us and very good business partners.”

Today, Provident has satellite offices in San Francisco and Nashville, run by Joan “Joni” Soekotjo and Dawn Nepp, respectively, and its Los Angeles team is split between offices in Woodland Hills and Santa Monica.

“We had a large office in Santa Monica and it became very difficult when our lease came due and Snapchat came in and took the entire building,” recalls Siegel. “We had to make a move and we decided that because we had so many people on the staff that lived in the [San Fernando] Valley, we would split it in two and have an office in Woodland Hills and another office in Santa Monica, so we would help our people cut down on their commutes.”

When the pandemic lockdown hit in March 2020, Provident immediately went out and bought duplicate office equipment for its employees so they could work from home. More than a year and a half later, the operation is still work-from-home, save for a few administrative people who go in to retrieve the mail and take care of

other essential office operations, and a handful of account managers who feel more comfortable working in the office, all of whom must be vaccinated and wear masks.

The pandemic was also a tough time for many of Provident’s clients, who were affected by production stoppages and the complete shutdown of the live touring business. Siegel and his team stepped up, helping them secure PPP loans and facilitating the sales of portions of their music catalogs, when needed.

“It was enough to keep everybody going, and we had no client that was so hurt by the pandemic that they had to change their lifestyle,” says Siegel.

Siegel has been working from his office in the Hermosa Beach, Calif., home he shares with his wife, Pattie. His glass-topped desk with a base made of eight bats and some 40 balls — a gift from Air Supply lead singer Russell Hitchcock — is a testament to his love of baseball. When he was growing up in Pasadena, his father would often pick him up from school and drive him down to the newly built Dodger Stadium to catch the last few innings of a game. Today, he’s a Dodgers season ticketholder of long standing. He likes to get to the ballpark as early as possible to watch batting practice and warm-ups, but he admits he has a bad habit of leaving the game early. “I hate the traffic getting out of there. It drives me nuts,” he says.

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**We had no client that was so hurt by the pandemic they had to change their lifestyle.” — Barry Siegel**



When Siegel can't attend Dodger home games, he often donates his tickets to charity, and for the past 20 years he has also arranged for kids from boys and girls clubs in Los Angeles to come see the matches.

"We belong to the Dugout Club, so when we give our tickets away, it's a full meal and it's all the food you can eat," he says.

Siegel's philanthropic efforts extend beyond the gifting of Dodger tickets. He sits on the board of governors of the Cedars-Sinai Medical Center and is on the emeritus board of directors of the L.A. Regional Food Bank, which distributes 1 million pounds of food per week to people in need.

The business manager is also CFO of the Sidewalk Angels, a

↑  
Elijah Wood, seen here in "No Man of God," is part of Siegel's stellar roster.

charity run by client Rob Thomas (former lead singer of Matchbox 20) and his wife, Marisol, that supports more than 20 no-kill shelters and animal rescues in the United States, Mexico, the Caribbean and Serbia. It works with homeless shelters to make sure that unhoused people don't have to give up their pets.

"I'm a big believer that we have to give back," Siegel says. "If you don't have the time, there are other things that you can do. Every year, the firm takes suggestions from our staff for different charitable endeavors to push."

In the past, those charities have included the Silverlake Conservatory of Music, the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation and Upward Bound. Provident also works with Good Today, an organization that allows employees to choose a charity a

day from its website. The firm contributes 25 cents a day to each one, which adds up to about \$10,000 a year.

In addition to his work with his firm and various charities, Siegel has also served on the advisory board of investment bank Park Lane, providing consulting services to sports teams and businesses, and the board of directors of CORE Media Group.

Siegel is well aware that next year will mark his 50th anniversary in the business ("And that's really difficult because I'm only 60," he jokes). But he has no intention of retiring anytime soon.

"I don't know what I would do with my time," says Siegel. "I love my family and my staff, and that's it."

And, he might add, the Dodgers. 🍌

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# Raising Budding Business Pros Higher

Laura Gordon gives back to the Black community that helped her soar • By Malina Saval

**For the past three decades,** Laura Gordon, founder of the eponymous L.A.-based business management firm Gordon & Associates, has helped to buoy the careers of Emmy- and Oscar-winning actors, Grammy-winning musicians and a slate of high-profile comedians, producers and directors.

A Black, female accountant in a field primarily dominated by white men, Gordon is a standout, bolstering the financial prosperity of Black artists.

Gordon grew up in San Diego. Her father was an offensive lineman for the Chargers and she was raised to embody a spirited and enterprising work ethic, pushing hard for what she wanted. But her success has not been without challenges — namely the racism and gender discrimination she encountered along the way.

As an economics major at UCLA, Gordon was interviewing for an entry-level position at an accounting firm when she was told that as a Black woman, she would never make partner. For Gordon, raised in a family of accountants, it was an “eye-opening moment.”

“It wasn’t the first time somebody told me what I couldn’t do because I was a Black woman, but it was a moment that happened so soon in my journey trying to enter into the professional space and I was crushed. I drove home in tears,” Gordon says. “The fact that this is what goes on behind closed doors wasn’t surprising, because as any person of color in this country knows, these are things that happen. But the fact that he said it so blatantly was disarming. It knocked the wind out of me.”

After arriving back on campus, Gordon relayed her experience to her friends and then-college

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eponymous  
agency will  
celebrate  
30 years in the  
business  
next year.



sweetheart, who later became her husband. They reminded Gordon of something that has stuck with her ever since: “They said to me, they did you a favor. Why would you want to work in an environment where that’s their mentality?”

Gordon went on to accept a position at Simpson & Simpson, a Black-owned accounting firm in Los Angeles. It was, she says, “a great training ground.”

“It didn’t have those roadblocks. There weren’t people telling you

what you couldn’t do. They told you what you could do and that you could do a great job. They opened that path to me.”

When she founded her own firm, which is now on the eve of its 30th anniversary, in 1992, Gordon knew she wanted to give back to the community. That desire took root in Gammy’s House, the firm’s corporate philanthropy arm, which supports various initiatives, both locally and abroad, from scholarship endowments to micro lending to digging water wells in Zambia.

Formed in 2003 and named after Gordon’s paternal grandmother, Leonor, Gammy’s House aims to empower Black-owned businesses and the next generation of Black entrepreneurs.

Growing up, Gordon worked for her grandmother selling Tupperware. “She was a real woman of faith,” says Gordon. “She’s the reason for our family being so grounded and having deep roots and confidence, knowing we are empowered, that if someone tells you no, we have another path to take.”

Whether donating seed money to an aspiring entrepreneur or inspiring women in Ghana to launch their own businesses, Gordon remains motivated by her grandmother’s beneficent legacy. “I stand on her shoulders, on all the prayers she prayed, the lessons she taught, and I put those things into action,” says Gordon. “I watched my grandmother go from selling Tupperware to doing domestic work and providing elder care—she was diligent and intentional in giving of herself. She modeled what she taught us — that it’s better to give than to receive.”

Today Gordon leverages the financial growth of top players in entertainment, but it’s the impression her grandmother left upon her that continues to inspire.

“I would watch her take fruits and vegetables from her garden and package them for customers or prepare food in Mason jars for winter. She would literally take lemons and turn them into lemonade. She could take very little and somehow turn it into enough to raise an entire family. She never expected anything in return. She was one of the most authentic people I’ve ever met. One day I hope to grow up to be like her.”

# Breakthrough in 80-Year Battle for Entertainer's Assets

Heirs of Euro music star Fritz Grunbaum fight for rights to Holocaust-looted art collection • By Steven Gaydos

**Among its many** surprising pieces of entertainment history arcana, the *Variety* Archives contain stories from the 1930s involving an arena sadly familiar to business managers: government seizures of entertainers' assets. But these seizures took place not because of any financial malfeasance, but because the artists were Jewish. As early as 1933, *Variety* was reporting on music rights organizations fighting over new entertainment industry rules coming out of Germany because "the Nazi powers barred the performances of compositions created by those of Jewish descent." That was followed by the Nazi regime's seizures of copyrights and property assets belonging to German show business figures.

One of their many entertainment industry victims was a hugely successful composer-songwriter-cabaret emcee from Vienna named Franz "Fritz" Grunbaum, who tragically died at Dachau in 1941. Many have cited Grunbaum's work as a politically fearless Berlin cabaret emcee of the era and one of the key inspirations for the Joel Grey character in the Tony- and Oscar-winning hit "Cabaret."

And, irony of ironies, a piece from Grunbaum's extensive modern art collection, an Egon Schiele drawing that had been seized by the Nazis during his internment at Dachau, wound up on the wall of "Cabaret" lyricist Fred Ebb's New York apartment. Titled "Self-Portrait 1910," the work could have been over Ebb's

shoulder as he wrote the songs that would be sung by the character based upon the owner of his drawing. Today, that drawing is owned by the Morgan Library in New York, a gift from the Ebb estate and a work whose ownership is currently being contested.

Unbeknownst to Ebb, the clouded title of the work began to become clearer in 2005, the year after his death. Clearer, but as New York attorney Raymond Dowd can attest, that Schiele, which Dowd continues to fight to have returned to Grunbaum's heirs — like the estimated 50,000 pieces of Nazi-seized art that have never been returned to their rightful owners — remains surrounded by controversy and unending pall cast by that human catastrophe called the Holocaust.

Last week, in a New York courtroom, Dowd was there, as he has been since 2005, fighting for the claims of the Grunbaum Foundation as they try to recover the rights to artworks stolen from Grunbaum and his widow, Lily, more than 80 years ago. Two Schiele works, "Woman in a Black Pinafore" (1911) and "Woman Hiding Her Face" (1912) were ruled to rightfully belong to Grunbaum's heirs in 2018 and this year they were ruled to have accrued prejudgment interest.

On Nov. 10, in front of the five judges of the Appellate Court in Manhattan, Dowd argued in the case of Reif vs Nagy that the current estimate of \$750,000 in prejudgment interest was too low by half, but also pressed the point that the titleholders of the



←  
Composer-songwriter-emcee Fritz Grunbaum was an inspiration for Joel Grey in "Cabaret."





← Egon Schiele's "Woman Hiding Her Face" was among the seized art treasures.

works were continuing to cloud ownership rights to them.

The recent court rulings are critical, says Dowd, because "these victories provide the kind of clarity that museums and art collectors cannot deny."

In Dowd's view, the importance of this year's prejudgment interest ruling in this case can't be overstated. "This is the first application of prejudgment interest in the art world," explains Dowd, "which means the interest

clock starts ticking after a legal demand and refusal process has been undertaken. This is a pressure point and one of many we now have. There is also the court of public opinion and there is a ground war at the board level of museums. You have trustees speaking out and saying, 'We don't want to be associated with this kind of activity.'"

While last week's court case is good news for those on the side of restitution of rights to Nazi-looted artworks, the bleak reality is that these are small victories in a long war that has at times seemed exceedingly hopeless. The case of Grunbaum and his collection of Schiele's works, roughly five paintings and 76 drawings out of a collection estimated to contain 449 pieces, all confiscated by the Nazis, pro-

vides a fascinating window into the daunting obstacles and the indefatigable efforts of heirs and their attorneys.

Judge Timothy Reif of the U.S. Court of Intl. Trade is one of the two trustees of the Leon Fischer Trust for the Life and Works of Fritz Grunbaum, the official beneficiaries of these recent court victories and any victories in the future. Reif began working on restitution efforts as a result of his family's history with Grunbaum. That history dates back to the 1930s when Reif's father, Paul, an aspiring musician, was aided by his distant cousin and then-superstar Grunbaum, even collaborating with him.

"In the 1950s and 1960s, my family began looking around for relatives of Fritz Grunbaum, because we didn't want the royalties from

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"Woman in a Black Pinafore" will return to Grunbaum's heirs.

his musical works going to the Germans or Austrian authorities. In 1998, when I was practicing law, I began researching and put together a full chronology and history, and it was much easier after the Cold War was over," Reif says.

Designated heir Leon Fischer named Reif and financial services expert David Frankel as executors of his trust, and upon his passing more than a decade ago, the work that Fischer and Raymond Dowd began together in 2005 soon became the mission of Reif, Frankel and Dowd along with the Viennese probate researcher Herbert Gruber.


Gruber calls the events of the past year "the first real success" in the case and says he "expects other works to be returned" as a result of the recent court rulings. In addition to the team that

has toiled for decades, he credits the Obama administration as well for passage of the Holocaust Expropriated Art Recovery Act of 2016, which regularized a federal statute of limitations of six years, beginning with the discovery of an object, during which claims can be made for the recovery of Nazi loot in the U.S.

But the dry statistics of court cases and their resulting financial wins are certainly far from the center of the Fritz Grunbaum story, as even a brief conversation with anyone associated with his murder and the theft of his estate makes abundantly clear.

In Reif's view, "These people are gone. What the law can do is put us in their shoes and help us do the things they sought to do. Fritz Grunbaum was known for helping underprivileged artists

have opportunities to work and create. We can use this opportunity to pay it forward."

And for Dowd, the hard-fought victories are simply the fulfillment of a pledge. "I'm the Irish-Catholic son of an Irish-American New York fireman. I was a blank slate when I came to this case. I had no cultural preparation for what I learned when I began studying the mechanics of the Nazi looting operation. But my reaction was the same reaction the average person has, which is, 'Are you telling me that this has still not been resolved?' But we are on the right side of history. [New York County District Attorney] Robert Morgenthau told me to 'keep on fighting' and I promised him I would, and I intend to keep that promise." 

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# Good Advice Helped Showbiz Talent Survive Pandemic

The business managers on *Variety's* list aided Hollywood's wealthy in navigating crisis

• Profiles by Peter Caranicas, Todd Longwell and Robert Marich



## Abacus Financial Business Management

**Belva Anakwenze**  
Principal and Business Manager

• With the pandemic disrupting employers, Anakwenze finds that talent pay that used to arrive in weeks can now take months. "It's creating cash-flow issues," she says. "Clients have to be prepared and get in front of it." Her clients include Jay Ellis ("Top Gun: Maverick") and "ET" co-hosts Kevin Frazier and Nischelle Turner. Anakwenze also reps behind-the-camera film/TV talent, actors, digital influencers and executives in events and concerts.

**Avoiding the squeeze:** Even wealthy talent can get squeezed if their money is locked down in investments. Los Angeles-based Anakwenze counsels creating living-expenses reserves and, of course, pressing employers to pay up.

**Even wealthy talent can get squeezed if their money is locked down in investments.**



## Adeptus Partners

**Howard Krant**  
Managing and Founding Partner

**David Levin, Alice S. Lee**  
Managing Directors

**Richard L. Goldstein, Lewis Stark**  
Partners

**Michael Hoffman**  
Senior Partner

• Clients include John Legend and his wife, Chrissy Teigen, Jessica Simpson, Imagine Dragons, Wyclef Jean, Derek Hough, Edie Falco and fashion designer John Varvatos. The practice led by Krant spans entertainment, sports, media and fine arts. He is joined by Levin, Lee, Goldstein, Stark and Hoffman. They handle individuals, productions, music touring, valuation work including for music catalogs and non-profits. The firm's base is in Manhattan, with offices in Asbury Park, N.J.; Jericho, Long Island; Marina del Rey, Calif.; and suburban Washington, D.C.

**No horror stories:** Clients are more concerned about their personal financial affairs, Krant says, because they're aware of personal-finance horror stories of showbiz figures. "Most of them are very financially savvy and they don't want to be taken advantage of."



## Armanino

**Ken Coehlo**  
Partner-in-Charge, Business Management

**Corey Pelton**  
Director, Business Management

**Rob Abramowitz, Craig Manzano, Marc Rosen, Sam Levin, Jason Zayon, Elisabeth Cai**  
Partners, Business Management

**Catherine Catherine**  
Director, Business Management

• If someone has a question about a cutting-edge investment such as bitcoin, NFTs or cannabis, Armanino has the expertise. One of the clients it services is a leading cryptocurrency exchange and another's a cannabis tax group that contributed to a 250-page treatise for Thompson Reuters exploring the

33 states that tax marijuana sales. It's just one of the benefits of being part of one of the top 25 largest accounting and consultancy firms in the country. The Armanino team handles a large collection of execs, writers, producers, directors, actors, musicians, athletes, talent management and production companies and high-net-worth individuals. Within the group, there's a variety of specialties. For instance, Abramowitz's roster includes a world-famous celebrity dermatologist, Pelton works primarily with music business clients, Levin's accounts include the owners of several major retail brands, Cai specializes in trusts and estates and Zayon has Silicon Valley entrepreneurs.

**Gloves on:** "Our business management practice acts like a boutique firm within a much larger organization because it requires a hands-on, white-glove concierge-type of service," Coehlo says.



## Bell & Co.

**Evan R. Bell**  
Managing Partner

**Liza de Leon**  
Business Management Partner

• The firm's clients include writer-director Robert Eggers, fine artist Gerald Jackson, actor-director Camrus Johnson, filmmakers Dee Rees and Steven Soderbergh, screenwriter Brian Tucker and non-binary actor/fashion and community influencer Lachlan Watson. With television, film, literary and podcasting clients, Bell and de Leon work in midtown Manhattan, where their office remained open throughout the pandemic. Staff is vaccinated and tested weekly. "We consider this the safest office on earth," Bell says.

**Real estate roulette:** During the pandemic, de Leon says, older clients who were renters in New York City sought homes in the region but "kept getting outbid. It was hectic and stressful." Bell adds that residence-buying clients were upsizing at prices "at least double what they sold their old homes for," but were staying in the region.





### Bills & Stoll

**Steve Bills, Peter Stoll,  
Julie Krimstein**  
Partners

• Bills and Stoll launched their firm in 2016 and promoted Krimstein to partner last year. A team of 27 looks after the needs of clients, who include actors, directors and other showbiz talent. Investment in technology helped the firm transition to remote work and

weather the pandemic. As for the clients, “those that were working before the pandemic have resumed work and flourished,” Stoll says. “We’re pleased that they didn’t panic during the financial downturn at the beginning of 2020.” He attributes that to “the education and planning that was done at the beginning of the investment process.”

**Back to normal:** Although much of the firm’s work is still done remotely, Stoll looks forward to recapturing “the sense of community we had pre-pandemic. We miss seeing each other in person.”



**In 2022, I think we’ll see more people giving and supporting one another, as well as more cryptocurrency, blockchain, real estate and metaverse disruptions!” — John Shaheen**



### Business Wealth & Tax Management

**John Shaheen**  
Partner

• Shaheen handles business for a sizeable roster of clients, including

rappers IDK and Burna Boy; Jamil Davis, CEO, the Revels Group and co-founder of Black Music Action Coalition; producer Kenny Beat; and director Gibson Hazard. He reports that the recovery from the pandemic is going better than expected because during last year’s lockdowns “the majority of our entertainment clients worked hard producing an arsenal of content, and now they’re starting to reap the benefits of unlocking these creative treasure chests.”

**Futurecast:** “In 2022, I think we’ll see more people giving and supporting one another, as well as more cryptocurrency, blockchain, real estate and metaverse disruptions!”



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**Anna, John, Jason, Leo, Darren  
and everyone at PTD Business Management.**



### Cal Financial Group

Rit Venerus, Butch Gage, Dan Goscombe

Partners

• Continuing its growth, Cal Financial Group recently added clients Jack White, Third Man Records and writer-producer Dan Wilson. As the pandemic wanes and live events return, the firm saw record tour numbers

“

**We made a commitment to not make any reductions during the pandemic and coming through it, it has helped us to really thrive.” – Rit Venerus**

from Dead & Co. and the Dave Matthews Band, as well as artists including Phoebe Bridgers and All Time Low, who experienced their biggest years yet. In addition, NBA All-Star client Joel Embiid signed a \$196 million super max deal.

**Keeping the team:** “At the core of our success is our staff,” Venerus says. “We made a commitment to not make any reductions during the pandemic and coming through it, it has helped us to really thrive. I can’t say enough good things about our team.”



### Callas & Carlson

Steve Callas, Layth Carlson

Partners

• Clients of the duo include directors Antoine Fuqua and Marc Webb; screenwriter Derek Kolstad; music

multi-hyphenate Colin Hay; and two-time Oscar-winning production designer Don Burt. Callas and Carlson handle directors, writers, production designers, composers and performers. After last summer’s doldrums, Carlson says clients returned to work in late 2020 and that welcome trend continued into this year.

**Long view:** “The stock market continues to defy the odds; residential real estate in the large epicenters has seen tremendous growth,” says Carlson commenting on the business landscape.

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### Citrin Cooperman

**Matthew Segreto**  
Partner & Entertainment, Music,  
and Sports Practice Leader

**Arnie Herrmann, Sharon Sullivan,  
Wayne Mejia, Douglas Cammarano**  
Partners

- The quintet's clients include Chevy Chase, Damien Chazelle, Ana de Armas, Guillermo del Toro, Bryce Dallas Howard, Sam Mendes, Liam Neeson and Martin Scorsese. In a generational

passing of the baton, Segreto became practice leader in February, responsible for monitoring industry developments, growing the overall practice and still serving some clients. Herrmann segued to senior partner and is known for expertise in financial market investments. Sullivan has a hybrid practice in film/TV and also music. Mejia handles client work internationally. Promoted to partner a year ago, Cammarano is also leader of the sports practice. Segreto finds client work is increasingly mobile, leaving home states and sometimes moving overseas. "Today's business manager has to represent clients' affairs in a global arena that requires additional expertise for compliance and taxation." Segreto, Herrmann, Sullivan and Cammarano are based in New York; Mejia in Beverly Hills.

**Expansion:** In January, West Los Angeles-based Goren, Marcus, Masino & Marsh joined the Citrin Cooperman team.



### CohnReznick

**Sean Granat**  
Partner

- New York-based Granat has a client roster packed with top musical talent, but the pandemic shut down the touring business, and it's still not back to full strength. To help them cope financially, Granat has facilitated PPP loans and music catalog sales for some, while searching out new sources of passive income, like second homes turned into rental properties.

**Second look:** "Not only has [the pandemic] made our client more cost-conscious, it's given us an opportunity to re-evaluate investment strategies."



### The Colony Group

**W. Shane Glass**  
President

- His clients include names in music, film/TV, social media stars and Hollywood executives. Glass has an extensive tax background. He is proud that no staff layoffs or salary reductions occurred during the pandemic. A current client conversation is whether music talent should sell off personal music publishing and royalties stream, given that buyers are bidding up prices.

**Tunes to cash:** "For older clients, it gives them an opportunity to convert their music rights for significant cash today on a favorable tax basis."



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### The Colony Group

**Paul Glass**  
Vice Chair

**Pam Malek, Amir Malek**  
Managing Directors

- The trio is based in Brentwood, Calif. Glass handles touring acts, singer-songwriters, recording artists, TV/film talent and execs; many have been clients for 30 years. Pam Malek focuses on touring and aids music talent in



← Carrie Malcolm's client Benedict Cumberbatch in a scene from "The Power of the Dog."



### CRM Management/ Division of NKSFB

**Carrie Malcolm**  
Founding Partner

- Malcolm's trip to New Zealand to visit clients Benedict Cumberbatch, Kirsten Dunst and Jesse Plemons on a film set was nixed by the pandemic in 2020. But Malcolm recently went to a festival presentation of their film "The Power of the Dog" in New York, where she's based. She handles actors, filmmakers and production companies.

**TV rising:** Clients that used to talk up films as passion projects increasingly warm to TV series, "which enjoy growing prestige."

evaluating monetization of their music publishing/recording rights. Amir's practice spans music talent, writers, TV and film talent, execs and high-net-worth individuals. With the pandemic putting the kibosh on concerts, Glass worked to help music clients generate money from their personal intellectual property.

**What happened to Jerry?** For actors, Glass says business managers need to help clients grasp Hollywood's new economics. "They might do more shows for the year, but get smaller income per show. There aren't as many 'Seinfelds' as before."



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### David Weise & Associates/ Division of NKSFB

**David Weise, Beth Sabbagh**  
Partners

• Weise and Sabbagh run a music-centric-practice. Clients include Alice in Chains, Coldplay, Common, Deadmau5, Carole King, Korn, Usher, Lil Wayne and the Weeknd. During the pandemic, Sabbagh helped clients revise finances as concert paydays disappeared.

**Benefits:** Some pandemic aid programs have broad eligibility criteria. "Be on the lookout for anything that could be available for clients and then take a shot," says Sabbagh.



### Davis Financial Group

**Brandy L. Davis**  
Owner/Founder

• Davis became introspective when recovering from a broken bone just as the pandemic hit, but like the post-pandemic economy, she bounced back. She decided to open her own shop in January. Her clients are film and TV figures, athletes and high-net-worth individuals.

**Seeing them through:** As clients reeled from the COVID crisis, Davis found that her job also required therapeutic soothing. "When you add in the pandemic, you end up talking with clients on a more emotional level."



### Dunn, Pariser and Peyrot

**Pat Dunn**  
Founding Partner

**Mark Pariser, Tony Peyrot**  
Partners

• While some areas of the industry are still crawling back from the pandemic, Dunn, Pariser and Peyrot have found that the remote work methods normalized by the lockdown have not

only been good for the employees, they've helped the firm pick up new international clients.

**Worldwide business:** "I have one client that lives in Mexico City, starring in one of the Marvel movies filming in Atlanta, and a director who was based in South Africa that's here directing a limited series on Netflix," says Peyrot. His personal roster also includes TV creator/showrunner Rob Thomas ("Veronica Mars"), writer-producer Gary Janetti ("Family Guy"), actors Giancarlo Esposito ("The Mandalorian") and Tiffany Boone ("Hunters"). Pariser works with indie labels and musicians as well as film and television producers including Matt Tolmach and Michael Edelstein. Dunn, who founded the firm in 1996, works with clients including actor Randall Park ("WandaVision") and manages the financials of EatWell, a Canadian plant-based food company he co-founded.



## Kessler, Schneider & Scheltinga proudly celebrates the following accomplishments in 2021:

- **Gary Schneider** being named among Variety's 2021 Business Management Elite
- The opening of its Brentwood office
- The promotion of **Jason Schneider** to partner
- 35 years in business and counting

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**Julie Boos**

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**Jamie Cheek**

Co-Owner, Business Manager, President

**Duane Clark**

Co-Owner, Business Manager, Vice Chairman

**Erica Rosa**

VP, Royalties and Contract Compliance

**Paul Barnabee**

Director of West Coast Operations

**Mary Ann McCready**

Founding Co-Owner, Business Manager

**Carmen Romano, David Boyer**

Co-Owners, Business Managers, VPs

• Boos, Cheek, Clark, McCready, and Boyer are based at the Nashville headquarters; Rosa and Barnabee work in L.A.; and Romano in New York. News reports indicate the firm's clients include Eric Church, Luke Combs, Kesha, Kings of Leon, the Tom Petty estate, Rage Against the Machine and Blake Shelton. Boos oversees FBMM's staff in three offices, sets corporate strategy and handles music clients. Cheek sets the vision for client service and manages music clients worldwide. Clark handles clients, works FBMM's

strategic plan and is a two-time winner of the Country Music Assn.'s Business Manager of the Year award. Rosa leads the royalty group, evaluates music catalog values and oversees contract compliance and royalties. Barnabee works business management. McCready handles clients, and became the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum's board chair in August and was honored with *Variety's* Business Manager Elite Award for 2018. Romano develops new income sources for clients. A former recording artist, Boyer is a business manager active in music and film.

**Full service:** The cutback in touring during the pandemic tested whether the industry had prepared clients for rainy days, Boos says. "Business managers were the star of the show last year," she says. Boos also observes that business managers are part accountants, part finance educators and part psychologist for clients.

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### Forward Business Management

**Christopher Curry**  
Founding Principal

• Curry launched his own firm at the beginning of 2021, determined to be a personal antidote to corporate consolidation in his industry. “I’m going back to the basics of the business management, where I’m the gatekeeper and outsource CFO that protects the clients,” he says.

**Music expertise:** Curry’s client roster is about 65% music-related and 30% film and TV. A former lawyer at Universal Music, he uses his expertise to help facilitate music catalog sales.



### Freemark Financial

**Steves Rodriguez**  
Founding Partner

• Clients include Activist Artist Management; marketing execs David Droga and Omar Johnson; influencer Anastasia Karanikolaou; and Southern rock duo Larkin Poe. Rodriguez handles music, production companies, ad agencies and high-net-worth outside Hollywood. A growing slice of his practice is consulting for companies. For example, clients may ask “should we open another office or not?”

**Collaboration:** “They want us to think with them about their businesses and look ahead,” he says.



### Freemark Financial

**Andrew Meyer**  
Founding Partner

• With a well-rounded clientele of actors, writers, directors and producers, Meyer handles Yahya Abdul-Mateen II, Jon M. Chu, Adam Driver,

Eric Heisserer, Anna Kendrick, Ellen Pompeo, Alexander Skarsgård, Constance Wu and Ramy Youssef. As the pandemic shut down traditional work, Meyer says his clients shifted gears to entrepreneurial initiatives that have “been interesting and gratifying to support.”

**Values-based:** Meyer helps his roster navigate tools that help their investments match their values — environmental, social and governance. “That’s something that’s new, cutting edge and has resonated with clients,” he says.

“

**They want us to think with them about their businesses and look ahead.”**  
— Steves Rodriguez

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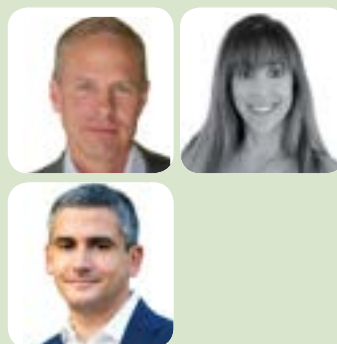
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MMA champ Conor McGregor gets advice from Fulton Management.



### Fulton Management

**Eric Fulton**  
Founding Partner

**Elizabeth Ricin, Matthew Gilbert-Aranoff**  
Partners

•The team at Fulton Management handles some big names in front of and behind the camera (Chris Hemsworth, Channing Tatum, Taika Waititi, Mayim Bialik, Taran Killam), along with top

social-media influencers (Rhett & Link, Emily Ratajkowski) and major athletes (Conor McGregor). But, because it bills clients on an hourly basis, it also attracts a large number of young, up-and-coming talent from all corners of the media world, including platforms such as TikTok. Fulton founded the Encino, Calif.-based firm in 1990, and brought in Gilbert-Aranoff in 2005. Ricin joined as a bookkeeper more than two decades ago and was named partner in 2015.

**Future-proofing:** "It's still a little bit of the wild west out there as far as that type of client goes," Fulton says. "It always starts out with a conversation about how you're doing, things are getting better and better and you're making good money, but don't plan on this lasting forever."

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### Gelfand, Rennert & Feldman

Tyson Beem, Grady Brown, Andrew Crow,  
Mark Goodman, Adriane Hibbert, David Lloyd,  
Melissa Morton Managing Directors, Los Angeles  
Anton Pamer, Managing Director, New York

• Gelfand, Rennert & Feldman has a large team of business managers serving client needs that have shifted and grown in unusual ways as the global pandemic has waxed and waned. Since the lockdowns lifted, one of the big challenges has been helping clients deal with shortages of everything from crew members and buses for live tours to personal assistants and nannies at home. “I’ll do anything I can to help my clients to make sure that they feel supported and successful, whether it’s calling up agencies, interviewing nannies or reaching out to friends to look for staff, asking, ‘Do you know anybody?’” says Morton. In the L.A. office, Morton, Beem, Brown, Goodman and Hibbert handle a variety of touring musicians and singer-songwriters, actors, writers, directors, entrepreneurs and YouTube and social-media influencers, while Crow has multi-hyphenate Jordan Peele, actors Olivia Holt and Alan Tudyk, and Norwegian songwriting and music

production team Stargate. In New York, Pamer has a roster rich with music, fashion, film and television and talent.

**New initiatives:** Whether it’s due to more downtime or reduced revenue streams, across the board clients have been getting more entrepreneurial, post-COVID. “Clients that never thought about doing brand deals are doing more entrepreneurial things like their own product lines,” Morton says.

↓  
Jordan Peele’s financial well-being is looked after by the L.A. office of Gelfand, Rennert & Feldman.



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### Gelfand, Rennert & Feldman (Audits, Royalty)

**Christopher Fazzolari**  
Managing Director, Los Angeles

**John Menneci**  
Managing Director, New York

• It's been a busy time for Fazzolari and Menneci, who head up Gelfand, Rennert & Feldman's 40-person royalty consulting services division. They work with artists as well as independent labels to track the money due to artists across multiple media and platforms — including the exploding streaming space — using specialized tools to analyze the data. They've

increasingly been called upon to consult on the value of royalty streams for artist catalog sales and potential rights reversions under the Copyright Act of 1976. For the latter, "we'll provide consulting services alongside the attorneys who are really getting in the weeds with the reversion rights and the language in the agreement," Fazzolari says.

**Negotiation boost:** "What we'll often do is calculate the effect of potential reversion on an artist's catalog to assist them in negotiations with the record companies or publishers," he says.



**It's people operating in bubbles ... and a lot of testing going on."**  
— Mike Skeet



### Gelfand, Rennert & Feldman (London)

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

• When Gelfand, Rennert acquired London-based music specialists Skeet Kaye Hopkins in 2019, the plan was to have Skeet spend two-thirds of the year in Los Angeles, where many

of that firm's British clients live and work, so the company could be consistently hands-on with its accounting, business management, royalty and taxation services, no matter which side of the pond clients were on. But the pandemic lockdown threw an unexpected wrench into the works, keeping Skeet in L.A. from March 2020 until last month. Now that the lockdowns have lifted, the British trio is working with clients to restart their live touring businesses in a post-COVID world.

**Tested by tests:** "It's people operating in bubbles, no longer having guests backstage, and a lot of testing going on," Skeet says. "If you're doing regular testing for a big crew, you've got a sudden big additional cost, and different countries have different rules on testing, so it makes it a bit more difficult to navigate than it normally would be."



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### Global Business Management

**David Garelick**  
President/CEO

**Jarrod Hicks**  
Account Manager

• Garelick began working for Global Music Business Management in 1987, but the company can trace its roots back to New York in 1960. Today, he runs the company out of its Sherman Oaks, Calif., headquarters, while Hicks operates its Nashville office. It has a roster of 60, including Oscar-winners Anthony Hopkins, Ernest Thompson and Robert Nagle, director Bethany Rooney, celebrity stylist Cristina

### Garelick cautions clients to go slowly with some things including cryptocurrency.

Ehrlich, numerous active NFL players, and a large collection of DJs, including DJ Vice, as well as Sujit Kundu, president and CEO of SKAM Artist Management, which reps DJs.

**Go easy on crypto:** While Garelick is proud of how adeptly the company has kept in step with the times, he cautions clients to go slowly with some things including cryptocurrency. “I tell our clients a small allocation based on their risk tolerance and in their portfolios is OK,” he says.



### Gordon & Associates

**Laura Gordon**  
Founder & CEO

• This boutique firm specializes in wealth management, tax planning and preparation, and small-business development for a clientele of pro athletes, musicians, comedians, producers, directors and high-net-worth individuals. Gordon takes pride in being a Black female accountant in a field dominated by white men.

**Giving back:** Gordon & Associates includes a philanthropic arm. Gordon follows the advice of her grandmother “who taught us that it’s better to give than to receive.”



### Kessler, Schneider & Scheltinga

**Gary Schneider**  
Managing Partner

• Clients include Alyson Hannigan, Ed Helms, Carol Mendelsohn, John Requa and David Semel. Schneider handles film/TV talent and execs, talent agencies and management companies. Some clients worked through the lockdown; others bounced back.

**Crypto risks:** One client was paid by a blockchain company in cryptocurrency warrants, “which is speculative and can be fruitless,” says Schneider. “But in this instance, his service fee is six to eight times his original deal.”

# C.R.E.A.M.

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PARR3 LLC



**Charles B. Clancy, Mark Cattalini,  
Paul Ta**

Executives

• Clients for Rigney include Samuel L. Jackson and Danny McBride; for Lichtenberg, Will Ferrell, Adam McKay and Joe Rogan; for Friedman, Quentin Tarantino; for Clancy, Phil Lord and Chris Miller; for Cattalini, showrunners Patrick Somerville and David Weil; for Ta, Cheech Marin and Fred Durst. The six are all in L.A. and share a film/TV focus. During the pandemic, Cattalini says staff had to adjust to remote work. "You knew it was going to get better, but you just didn't know when," he says.

**Bridge over troubled waters:** Cattalini says during financial uncertainty, client ears are particularly attuned to advice. So amid the lockdown it was back to prioritizing spending. That meant telling clients "it's not that you can't have certain things, but you can't have them all at once."



### LL Business Management

**Marius Bercovici, Justin Kobay,  
Bruce Seckendorf**

Partners

• Bercovici, Kobay and Seckendorf handle music-industry artists, executives, labels and management companies, and are headquartered in Lake Success, N.Y., with a Los Angeles office. Clients include Grammy-winning

artist Lil Nas X; Grammy-winning producer Timbaland; the estate of Jarad Higgins (aka Juice Wrld); artist-songwriter Lauv; Grammy-nominated producer Omer Fedi; Grammy-winning producer-songwriter Chris DeStefano; producer collective and record label Internet Money; director, writer and musician Boots Riley; Disney actor/music artist Kylie Cantrall; and artist Trippie Redd.

**Artist power:** With the pandemic shutting down concert tours, Kobay says clients improved their residences or bought new ones, finding they could be productive and make a living from home. In business, clients increasingly focus on owning their output in social media, music and licensed merchandise. "Traditionally, creatives only got a small piece of that," Kobay says. "Usually, the ownership was held by a large corporation."

### Level Four Business Management

**John Rigney, Matt Lichtenberg,  
Mark D. Friedman** Partners

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### Grant, Tani, Barash & Altman

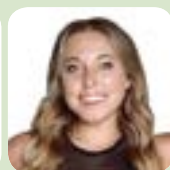
Warren Grant, Jane Tani, Corey Barash, Howard Altman, Kim Ibrahim, Zoe Lawrence, Fran Wild, David Jackson

Partners

- The firm's practice spans clients in film and TV, as well as digital media, including podcasters, influencers, and consumer products and music. The

firm also works private equity investments, real estate and taxation optimization. Tani, Barash, Altman, Ibrahim, Lawrence, Wild and Jackson are based in Beverly Hills. During the pandemic, the firm maintained its services with staff working remotely.

**Female presence:** In a male-dominated industry, the firm has a relatively large number of women partners with long tenures.



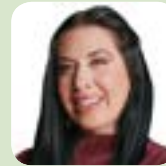
### J. McIlwee & Associates

John McIlwee  
Founding Partner

Alex Grissom  
Senior Business Manager

- After 30 years at his previous firm, McIlwee struck out on his own in December 2019, taking with him account manager Grissom and all 41 of his clients, including Matt Reeves ("The Batman") and his production company 6th and Idaho; Jane Lynch (host of NBC's "The Weakest Link"); actors Maura Tierney (Showtime's "American Rust"), Christian Serratos (AMC's "The Walking Dead"), Tanisha Long (BET's "Bigger"), Curran Walters (HBO Max's "Titans") and Duncan Joiner (Amazon's "Tales From the Loop"); and Olympic skateboarder Sky Brown.

**Mobility:** While his clients have remained largely the same, McIlwee says the pandemic has changed their lives. "People, especially talent, are realizing they can shoot a series somewhere for four months and be somewhere completely different for the other six or eight," he says.



### KLBM

Kristen Lee  
Founder and Managing Director

- Lee doesn't look like the typical business manager. First of all, she's female, and sometimes, instead of wearing conservative power suits, will wear a T-shirt, jeans and a leather jacket. The one way she resembles the other top players in her field is the impressive client list she maintains, populated with multiplatinum rockers, rappers and producers, as well as a top FX house.

**Getting it done:** "I've had a lot of my clients for a very long time now, and they like the way we're doing the job," she says.



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### Manhattan West

**Lauren Adovasio, Elizabeth Campos, Jack Sinorayan**  
Business Managers

• Founded in 2016 by a group departing financial services giant J.P. Morgan, Los Angeles-based Manhattan West brought in Adovasio the following year to start its business management division, which today handles a mix of actors, producers, musicians, athletes, execs and production companies. Campos and Sinorayan joined in 2020, a week before the lockdown, which seemed to bring more clients to the firm.

**Big shake-up:** “The pandemic put a lot of people into crisis mode and drove them to either seek out or change business managers who could handle things that others might not have been able to handle before, whether it be PPP loans or something else,” says Campos, who worked with the Kardashian-Jenner clan for more than a decade, helping build out their brand and grow their businesses. Adovasio specializes in music industry clients, while Sinorayan’s strength is in comedy, and Campos works with “all of the above.”



### Mann Gelon Glodney Gumerove Yee

**Steve Gelon**  
Managing Partner

**Alex Smith**  
Partner-in-Charge — Business Management  
**Steve Glodney, Van Lee**  
Partners

**Justin Sroka**  
Principal

• The firm’s clients include TV series creators, actors, writers, producers, directors, musicians, athletes and social-media 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 about four years ago, bringing with her expertise in handling the estates of the rich and famous. Smith came aboard in 2015 and frequently works on his film, TV, social media, sports and music clients with Sroka, who arrived in last year.

**The taxman cometh — not:** “We’re laser-focused on the implementation of California AB 150, which will provide tax relief for our clients who have been unable to deduct their state taxes since the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act in 2018,” says Smith.



### ML Management Partners

**Mark Landesman, Paul Zukowsky, Scott Landesman**  
Partners

• Landesman started with Eddie Murphy when both were in their early 20s — they’ve been together 37 years. Landesman, Zukowsky and Mark’s son Scott are based in New York, repping film, TV, comedic talent and executives. Scott also handles podcasters. Their other clients include James Cameron, Pete Davidson, Vin Diesel, Gal Gadot, Ryan Reynolds, Chris Rock and Bruce Willis. When the pandemic lockdown hit, Mark says at-home clients became highly engaged in their personal finances since they weren’t employed. Then clients returned to work in a wave, requiring another surge of services.

**A changed world:** “COVID has blurred everything,” says Mark, adding that his email inbox is as full on weekends as weekdays. Client gigs recently tilted to more non-standard deals, requiring more attention, such as jobs with video streamers where the compensation template is different from the systems of traditional Hollywood.



### MGO

**John Blakeman**  
Partner

• Century City-based Blakeman handles film/TV, sports, digital-media influencers, production companies and next-generation talent. His pandemic experience is different than that of business managers with idle clients; Blakeman’s roster actively landed TV deals, and his up-and-comers worked in digital media to launch their careers.

**Direct contact:** Blakeman observes that consumer marketers increasingly contact talent directly to start negotiations for celebrity ambassador gigs, and then talent quickly brings business managers into the conversation along with their lawyers and agents. “That’s a little different for business managers than a few years ago,” he says.



### Miller Kaplan

**Michael Kaplan**  
Managing Partner

**Justine Ruffalo**  
Partner

• Kaplan was named top partner in December of the accounting firm that has a large business management department in entertainment. With a staff of over 200, it operates six offices covering the Western U.S. Kaplan works a wide-ranging Hollywood practice. Ruffalo reps music talent, advises companies buying/selling music catalogs and handles actors. She says clients constantly propose ideas to generate income as entrepreneurs in tech (including digital non-fungible tokens) or lifestyle ventures.

**Hear your clients:** Ruffalo listens closely “because sometimes they have an insight that’s really valuable.” She investigates ideas afterward to help clients weed out the bad initiatives.

“

**COVID has blurred everything.” — Mark Landesman**



## Monarch Business & Wealth Management

**Matt Klarberg**  
Managing Director

• Manhattan-based Klarberg's clients include DJ Kaskade; street-artist Alec Monopoly; actor Sophia Bush; TV personality/entrepreneur Bethenny Frankel; ESPN host/entrepreneur Jay Williams; supermodels Martha Hunt and Anok Yai; influencer/entrepreneur Danielle Bernstein; AEW world champion Kenny Omega; R&B singer/actor Quincy Brown; and rapper Tierra Whack. When the stock market slumped in March, Klarberg told nervous clients, "You can't panic. You have to make strategic decisions. And every one of them listened."

**Complicated lives:** Klarberg says client affairs are becoming more complex. For example, actors dive into tech ventures requiring "a holistic approach to every realm of their professional life."



## Neuman + Associates/ Division of NKSFB

**Harley Neuman**  
Founder and Partner

• Clients include Scarlett Johansson, Ryan Murphy, Ellen DeGeneres and Ted Sarandos. Neuman says hot topics for clients are whether to invest in cryptocurrency and making/selling digital merchandise as non-fungible assets. Neuman sees "the way the talent gets paid is going to evolve over the next 12 months." Box office is no longer a reliable lever for talent bonus pay, as streamers siphon cinema audiences. His client Johansson litigated that issue with Disney.

**What's ahead:** Neuman looks to bonuses linked to premium-VOD revenue generated by films credited with lifting streamer subscriber counts.



## NKSFB

**Mickey Segal**

Founding and Managing Partner

**David Bolno**

Name Partner

**Michael Karlin**

Founding Partner

**Dian Vaughn, Larry Tyler, Matt Segal, Michael Oppenheim, Bernie Gudvi**  
Partners

• Segal oversees Hollywood's biggest business management specialist with 600 employees in five offices; he still handles a short list of long-standing clients. The firm, which is a Focus Financial company, has grown through acquisitions, and Segal says some more could materialize soon. Mickey and son Matt, Bolno, Karlin, Vaughn and Tyler are based in Westwood. Oppenheim and Gudvi are in Encino. Their clients include Adam Levine/Maroon 5, A\$AP Rocky, Ben Wallace, Beyoncé, Bill Maher, Bruno Mars, Conan O'Brien, Demi Moore, Drake, Dr. Dre, Eminem, Frank Miller, Jessica Biel, Jonah Hill, Justin Bieber, Justin Timberlake, Kate Hudson, Katy Perry, Kenya Barris, Madonna, Marciano Family Group, Michael Strahan, Pharrell Williams, Post Malone, Russell Westbrook, Scooter Braun, Selena Gomez, Skrillex, Steve Aoki, Will.i.am and Wolfgang Puck.

Bolno specializes in music and athletes, including crafting business

plans for recording and music publishing startups. Karlin handles executives including for contract negotiations, and film/TV and music talent. Vaughn focuses on film/TV talent, music talent and playwrights. Tyler handles music clients including helping them structure business entities. Matt Segal's clients are athletes and Hollywood talent. Oppenheim is focused on music talent including touring and film/TV talent. Gudvi, who was *Variety's* Business Managers Elite Honoree last year, handles Hollywood and sports clients.

**Upward pressure:** America's shortage of job applicants hit the business manager industry too, says Mickey Segal, pushing up salaries. Executive search firms are more active and job-hopping has picked up. From the employer perspective, Segal notes, "We're all driving each other's employee costs because the search firms are presenting [candidates] to us at a substantial increase, many in the range of 20%-30%."



## Parr3

**Mike Merriman**  
President

• Merriman's music-centric practice includes multi-hyphenate producer Louis Bell; singer-songwriters Clairó and Kehlani; record label LVRN; singer-rapper 6lack; and electronic dance music's Alison Wonderland. Because digital media is full of audience data, Merriman compares listening stats to royalty statements to check clients' pay. The firm that Merriman founded in 2013 added 10 employees during the pandemic, growing to 35 people.

**Employee satisfaction:** Moving from managing a startup to a mid-sized operation, Merriman increasingly focuses on work environment because "if my team feels supported when it shows up for work every day, that comes out in the quality of our service."



## Prager Metis

**Thomas F. Smith**

Partner — Entertainment Industry Leader

**Bruce I. Kolbrenner**

Managing Partner — Los Angeles

**Lahteefah Parramore, Simon Winters**

Partners

**Mark Carter, Maren Stenseth**

Principals

**Jennifer Coyne**

Director

• Smith focuses on music, entertainment and TV companies and litigation services. Kolbrenner specializes in music/touring, entertainment clients and royalty audits. Parramore handles entertainers, music, athletes and non-profits. Winters is focused on entertainment, music and athletes with specialties in tax planning, forensic accounting and litigation support. Carter covers music, entertainment and athlete clients. Stenseth concentrates on entertainment and music clients with specialties in taxation and retirement planning. Coyne handles entertainment, artist management companies, music execs, athletes, venture capital deals, cryptocurrency and digital assets.

**Raising awareness:** Smith says the year was marked rising valuations for music publishing/royalty streams. He says it's smart for creatives to cultivate higher re-sale prices after the initial transaction to stoke interest in new NFTs.





## Provident Financial Management

**Barry Siegel**  
Senior Managing Director

• Siegel, who is *Variety*'s 2021 Business Managers Elite Honoree, has built a roster that includes Al Pacino, Mike Judge, David Mamet and Deshaun Akers. He also has many music artists, including longtime clients Air Supply and Frankie Valli and the Four Seasons, many of whom have expressed interest in exploring the red-hot market for music catalog sales.

**Don't sell it all:** "If they're still active in the business, we advise our clients to never sell 100% of their income source, because that way they have an interest in continuing to promote their business, and when they do new product, it helps sell older product," he says.



## Provident Financial Management

**Bill Vuylsteke**  
Senior Managing Director

• Vuylsteke's musician-rich roster had its touring business shut down by the pandemic last year, but it came roaring back in 2021 with clients ranging from Green Day and Weezer to Sheryl Crow hitting the road, giving him a crash course in COVID-19 concert protocols. He's also been busy with the booming market for musicians' publishing and recording catalogs, assisting on \$350 million-plus worth of deals for clients and non-clients alike.

**Untangling rights:** "Initially, you're figuring out what they own and what their titles actually are and getting it to the point where people can understand it," says Vuylsteke, whose other clients include Shakira, Lucy Liu and talent manager Guy Oseary.



## PS Business Management

**Phil Sarna**  
Senior Managing Director

**Tara Beaudine-Moore**  
Director

• Sarna's New York-based firm handles a mix of figures from the worlds of film, fashion, sports and music, including Billie Eilish, Lizzo, Halsey, Camila Cabello, Sara Bareilles, Arcade Fire, the National and Benny Blanco. Beaudine-Moore joined the team 15 years ago, bringing with her a "passion for music and a brain for numbers," Sarna says.

**State of the biz:** "It's an exciting time for art and artists," he says. "The pandemic has allowed them to reset, relax and create. Their work will be a historical and cultural archive of the challenging times."



## PTD Business Management

**Anna DerParseghian**  
Managing Partner

**John Power**  
Senior Partner

**Jason Brown, Leo Jenkins, Darren Calbay**  
Partners

• The firm handles entertainment talent in front of and behind the camera, touring comedy including four of the top 10 grossers, talent management,



entertainment attorneys and digital content creators. DerParseghian is one of few women in charge of a firm in the sector. Power, the only still-active founding partner, works big client transactions. Brown is focused on Hollywood talent, multi-hyphenates and touring clients. Jenkins handles live touring comedians and entertainers and an expanding podcast and digital-media practice. Calbay leads the team for domestic/international taxation. As clients found their world turned upside-down in the pandemic, Jenkins says business managers helped them budget for the worst while hoping for the best.

**Ultimate discretion:** Business managers are unique confidantes because of societal taboos not to reveal personal money matters to peers, friends and even family, Jenkins says. "What we do is both ends of the spectrum, both business and personal, although only 'business' is in our job titles."



## Reback Lee & Co.

**Alan Reback, Derrick Lee**  
Founding Partners

• The duo specializes in high-profile awards telecasts, with Reback handling production accounting and Lee tackling tax issues, while they both serve as business managers for a roster of fine artists, actors, producers, writers, directors, executives, production companies and non-showbiz high-net-worth individuals. In 2021, the firm earned its version of EGOT, providing production accounting services for the Emmys, the Grammys, the Oscars and the Tonys. The partners were at separate firms when they began working together in 1995. Nine years later, they launched their eponymous company.

**Content everywhere:** The recent content explosion has been good for business, with some clients doing as many as 20 additional shows a year just for streaming services. "Once the streamers are happy with the production company, they want to give them as much as possible," Reback says.



## Savitsky Satin Bacon & Bucci

**Brett Anderson, Vera Singartiyska, Andréa Bacon, Jared Kroll**  
Partners;

• The Century City-based quartet handles film and TV producers, writers, directors, actors and executives; professional athletes; digital influencers; and the wealthy outside entertainment. The firm is owned by insurance broker/consultancy NFP. Anderson has clients in the digital media and beauty space, TV/film writers, producers, Hollywood execs, and families; and specializes in business planning for digital media creators. Singartiyska handles an array of clients and high-net-worth individuals, with particular expertise on international tax planning. Bacon focuses on studio execs, producers, directors, actors, screenwriters, musicians, composers, photographers and publishers. Kroll's clientele works before and behind the camera and encompasses writers, managers, songwriters, composers, influencers and athletes.

**Office bliss:** What started as a "lunch buddy" assignment for partner Jeff Bacon in 1991 to acclimate a then-new employee blossomed over time to a 1994 marriage to Andréa Bacon.

“

**What we do is both ends of the spectrum, both business and personal, although only 'business' is in our job titles."**

— Leo Jenkins



## SFG Business Management

**Scott F. Guber**  
President

• Clients include director-producer Anthony Hemingway (“Red Tails,” “Genius: Aretha”), cinematographer and producer David Miller (“Veep,” “Mr. Mayor”), director-producer Greg Mottola (“Superbad,” “Confess, Fletch”) and talent manager/producer Rory Rosegarten (“Everybody Loves Raymond”). Guber says the slowing job market because of the pandemic allowed his clients more time to scrutinize work offers, as well as put more effort into personal passion projects.

**Conservative measures:** With the Delta variant and Hollywood labor uncertainty clouding the economic outlook, Manhattan-based Guber says, “We’re advising clients to once again dig in and reassess their spending habits. While we can’t control the inflow, we can control the outflow.”



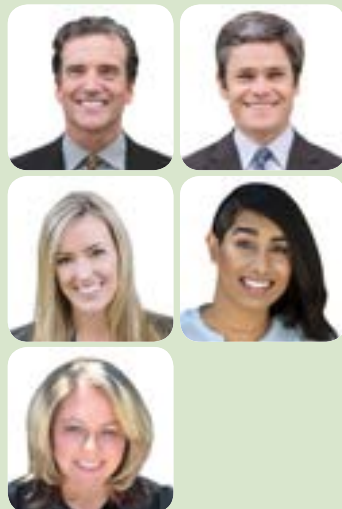
## Shephard Tinglof + Associates

**Rick Shephard**  
Founding Partner  
**Mark Tinglof**  
Partner

• Shephard and Tinglof first met 35 years ago when they worked at the same firm, and they regularly played poker together before finally deciding to join forces. The pair also have many longstanding clients, including Courtney Cox (pre-“Friends”), Jon Favreau (since 1996’s “Swingers”) and Ben Stiller (since 1998’s “There’s Something About Mary”). Other clients include Kurt Russell, Wyatt Russell, Meredith Hagner, Tara Strong, David Schiff, Jeff Kleeman, Alan Poul and Narrative Media.

**Surprise growth:** While the pandemic

may have been the worst of times in many ways, Shephard says it was a surprisingly prosperous period for his clients. “So long as your business manager is flexible, not tied to any particular strategy, everyone seems to be finding their wealth has increased,” he says.



## Singer Burke

**Matthew Burke**  
Managing Partner

**Richard Singer, Stephanie Connor Arkof, Amitha Harichandran**  
Wealth Management Partners

**Elaine Kogan**  
Tax Partner

• The firm’s clients include TV producers/showrunners, some of whom are working on “Bridgerton,” “The Handmaid’s Tale,” Netflix limited series “Maid” and animated Amazon series “Invincible.” They handle digital media, high tech and personal management companies. In the COVID era, Burke says work tilted to tax matters, including moving domiciles from high-tax areas and buying second homes, when clients realized they could work efficiently remotely. In personal finance, Burke says the Opportunity Zones federal tax breaks for real estate, created in 2017, “are a once-in-a-generation chance to shield significant capital gains from taxes.”

**Positive social impact:** With the boom in real estate, Harichandran says clients need to efficiently handle taxes on the big gains in properties purchased over the past five to 10 years. “Rolling over these investments into Opportunity Zones has not only provided tax benefits but achieved positive social impact,” Harichandran says.



Singer Burke handles business for some of the “Bridgerton” creatives.



## Singer Lewak

**Jordan Josephs**  
Director, Business Management

**Andrea Link**  
Partner, Business Management

• The firm can trace its history back to 1959 Los Angeles and over the decades it has spread out to 15 offices across five states. However, its business management and sports and entertainment department is still based in L.A. and for the most part still handles the traditional collection of actors, directors, film and TV producers, music artists, producers and athletes. But in recent years it has experienced an influx of social-media influencers and other digital-first entrepreneurs such as podcasters who have their own economic quirks, which, it turns out, gave them an economic edge during the lockdown.

**Digital leads the way:** “Advertising and marketing companies allocate budgets way in advance, so they had budgets already set aside [for social media] and maybe even reallocated budgets from things like live events and put them into new digital marketing opportunities because you can do those remotely,” Josephs says. “You also have the consumers who are spending money on things like subscriptions, like merch, so [digital talent] did pretty well.”



## Summit Business Management

**Steven Shapiro**  
Owner/Founder

• Shapiro’s independent firm services about 500 entertainment clients, including Zendaya, “Weird Al” Yankovic, Aaron Paul, Elliott Gould and Vanessa Hudgens. In spite of the pandemic, most are having a very good year in 2021, especially the 150 writers the firm handles. However, eight did sell their homes in California and leave the state. They mostly moved to non-income tax states (Texas, Florida and Nevada), but the moves weren’t necessarily motivated by economics.

**Exit sign:** “They just felt the state wasn’t as conducive to raising a family as it once was. But I think they may discover down the line that the grass is a little greener in California,” says Shapiro.





Javier Bardem and Nicole Kidman flank director Aaron Sorkin on the set of "Being the Ricardos."



### Tanner Mainstain Glynn & Johnson

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

- The seven represent film/TV talent in front of and behind the camera,

Hollywood executives including in music, composers of TV program music, athletes and other sports figures. Clients include Sean Callery, Jackie Chan, Martin Henderson, Michael Keaton, Jordan Kerner, Marc Lawrence, Aaron Sorkin, Krista Vernoff and Bradley Whitford. Their firm was acquired by insurance broker/consultancy NFP in July. Fouladi says the pandemic made for new tasks such as helping clients refinance homes amid income declines and applying for financial aid programs. Ordinarily, Fouladi would meet personally with clients, but made a point of videoconferencing to see how they were holding up in the shutdown as well as to conduct business. He says video streaming jobs for clients provide front-loaded pay, including signing bonuses, but that such practices increase the need for more savings to cover later employment gaps.

#### Planning for the missing backend:

Fouladi points out that traditional Hollywood work provided downstream bonuses — the so-called backends not typically found in streaming deals — that would cover later employment gaps. "It's more imperative for clients to have a savings plan and that they don't spend every dollar as it comes in," he says.



### Tanton Grubman

Rob Grubman  
Managing Partner

- Focused on music, particularly R&B and rap, Grubman's clients include record producer-songwriter and DJ Black Coffee, the Christina Grimmie Foundation of the late singer-rapper French Montana, emerging rap star Capella Grey, graffiti artist Futura, Legacy Records (paying artists in bitcoin) and experiential-marketing agency Team Epiphany.

**New streams:** In June, college athletes were allowed to license their name-image-likeness, and he predicts these "are going to be amazing sources of revenue." He's the only non-attorney on the New York City Bar's entertainment law committee navigating digital expansion.



### TKG Business Management

Josh Klein  
Managing Partner

- Clients include the Chainsmokers, supermodel Winnie Harlow, Logic, Modest Mouse, Normani, Kelly Rowland, Big Sean and the X Ambassadors. Klein focuses on the music industry figures, athletes, entrepreneurs and high-net-worth individuals. He used the pandemic slowdown to re-educate clients about benefits of passive investments including the stock market and real estate.

**Independence is best:** Klein is no fan of consolidation sweeping the business manager industry. He says merging firms "present an inherent conflict of interest and take away from the true philosophy of being an independent fiduciary to our clients." That includes limiting competition and favoring in-house service providers.



### Topline Business Management

Joe McGill  
Partner

- One of the very few Black-owned entertainment business management companies, McGill's firm has a client roster that includes director Adam Wingard ("Godzilla vs. Kong"), actors Aliya Royale ("The Red Line") and Mykal-Michelle Harris ("Big Little Lies"), as well as singer Diamante Bovelli. Born and raised in South L.A., McGill attended college on a football scholarship, but shifted his focus to his accounting studies after an injury ended his athletic career.

**Access to Topline's top:** "One of our biggest calling cards is, when you come on board with Topline, you have complete access to me and my business partner Bryan Meyer."



### Yorkshire Management Group

Adam Yorkshire  
Partner/Founder

- The Los Angeles-based Yorkshire handles music artists, and their touring, actors and athletes. Yorkshire says clients increasingly seek advice on investments in both the traditional (e.g. the stock market) and so-called alternative spheres. The latter are often startup businesses including apps related to client business, such as music discovery apps, and personal-care products. He sees clients leaning on their business manager more than ever as their commercial prospects expand — for example, celebrities cashing in on personal side-deals outside their Hollywood careers.

**The big one:** "Everyone wants to catch that next app or next brand on the way up," Yorkshire says.