



→ Robert A. Darwell

Partner

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Robert Darwell is a partner in the Entertainment and Digital Media Practice Group in the firm's Century City office.

Areas of Practice

Over the course of Bob Darwell's legal career, Bob has worked on the development, finance, production and distribution of hundreds of motion pictures and television productions (including personal favorites such as "Traffic", "Brokeback Mountain", and "Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind"). In addition, he's handled major newsworthy deals such as Disney's termination of Bob and Harvey Weinstein (which garnered him the prestigious CLAY Award as California Entertainment Lawyer of the Year for Entertainment) and Disney's subsequent sale of Miramax. Bob later served as lead entertainment counsel to Comcast in connection with its acquisition of NBC Universal.

Bob brought his team to Sheppard Mullin in 2003 and served as Chair of the Entertainment, Technology and Advertising practice for more than a decade as it achieved accolades such as Top Tier ranked by Chambers and US Legal 500, as well as Entertainment Practice Group of the Year by Law 360.

Through the years, Bob launched several specialty practices in the areas of advertising, fashion, and art law and has handled transactions that reflect the intersection of those verticals as well as those in sports, music, gaming, merchandising and mobile/digital areas. He represents clients in all segments of these businesses around the world. He currently serves as legal counsel to Amazon Studios for its film and television content and has handled some of the most significant new media deals for clients such as AwesomenessTV, Machinima, and Endemol Beyond.

Bob studied law at Georgetown in Washington, DC and focused his studies on international trade. While there, he worked for the Attaché de Presse at the French Embassy and for DC powerhouse law firm Wilmer Cutler (including assisting Lloyd Cutler, who served as counsel to President Carter, with the Robert Bork Supreme Court confirmation hearings).

At Georgetown, Bob took the only offered entertainment course and, following the tragic deaths of Vic Morrow and two child actors on the set of "The Twilight Zone" movie, wrote his seminar paper on the employment of minors in the entertainment industry. Its publication coincided with the birth of his first child. Upon graduation, Bob moved to Los Angeles and combined his passion for entertainment and media with his interest in international business.

Bob travels and works regularly from his homes in Los Angeles, NYC, Nashville, Paris and Buenos Aires. Always reachable, clients praise his availability at all hours and dedication to service and excellence. Recently, Bob spoke at the Toronto, Zurich, and Rome International Film Festivals after stopping in DC for the launch party of a global art law compendium to which he contributed.

When not negotiating and drafting, Bob may be found in the DJ booth or taking photos for his popular Instagram feed @TheDailyServer, which will be the subject of a month long gallery exhibition in Paris.

Honors

Top Entertainment Attorney, *Variety's* Legal Impact Report, 2017, 2019, 2021

Thought Leader, *Who's Who Legal*, 2018

Dealmakers Impact Report, *Variety*, 2017-2018, 2020

Power Lawyer, *The Hollywood Reporter*, 15 out of 15 years (2006-2021)

Marketing and Advertising, *Legal 500*, 2017

Media and Entertainment, *Legal 500*, 2017, 2019-2020

Leading Lawyer in Media & Entertainment (California), *Chambers USA*, 2017-2021

Daily Journal: Top Entertainment Lawyers

Who's Who Legal: Sports & Entertainment

Top Thirty Media Practitioners in the U.S., *Expert Guides*

CLAY Award, Attorney of the Year, Entertainment, *California Lawyer*

California's Top Entertainment Lawyer, *Daily Journal*

AlwaysOn Power Player in Digital Media

Top Rated Lawyer in Technology, *American Lawyer Media* and Martindale-Hubbell

20 Most Important People to Meet at AFM, *The Hollywood Reporter*

Which Lawyer?, Practical Law Company, Media

One of Top 100 Lawyers in California, *Daily Journal*

Best Lawyer in America, Advertising and Entertainment categories, *Best Lawyers*

One of 40 Who's Who in Law?, *LA Business Journal*

Southern California Super Lawyer, *Super Lawyers*

Best of the Bar, Media and Entertainment, *Los Angeles Business Journal*

Lawdragon 500 Leading Lawyers In America, *Lawdragon Magazine*

Tier 1, Transactional Entertainment, *Chambers and Partners*

500 New Worlds, New Stars, *Lawdragon*

3000 Leading Lawyers in America, *Lawdragon*

Experience

Representative Experience

- Lead entertainment counsel to Comcast in connection with its multi-billion dollar acquisition of NBC Universal.
- Represented Disney on the sale of Miramax.
- Represent French television powerhouse Banijay Entertainment in expanding its reality television empire by acquiring Stephen David Entertainment and Bunim/Murray Productions.
- Counsel to City National Bank in connection with a series of off balance sheet financing transactions for video game titles.
- Represented IAC in connection with its deal with Ben Silverman to form Electus.
- Representation of Focus Features with respect to its co-development/co-financing venture with Random House to form Random House Films.
- Represented Los Angeles Clippers in connection with multi-year telecast rights agreement.
- Lead outside counsel representing Walt Disney Company in connection with the separation of Bob and Harvey Weinstein from Miramax.
- Legal counsel to producer in the production, distribution, financing and/or acquisition of 100s of high profile motion pictures, including "The Beguiled", "Wonder Wheel", "The Revenant", "Suffragette", "Selma", "American Hustle", "Her", "Zero Dark Thirty", "Best Exotic Marigold Hotel", "Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind", "Traffic", and "Brokeback Mountain".
- Entertainment counsel to USA Networks in connection with its sale of its entertainment assets to Vivendi Universal.
- Represented ABS as promoter of Manny Pacquiao boxing event in Manila, Philippines.
- Represented South Korean developer in connection with MGM theme park.
- Represented France Animation/Moonscoop in its acquisition of a majority interest in animation company Mike Young Productions.
- Counsel to private equity investor involved in Legendary slate financing arrangement at Warner.
- Structure and negotiate key Telemundo strategic alliances with Globo, Argos, and TV Azteca.
- Entertainment Counsel to USA Networks in connection with its acquisition of Polygram domestic library and merger with October Films to form USA Films.
- Outside general counsel to The Broad Stage.

Articles

- "Don't Quote ME" - The Fall of the precedent System
Media Law International, 04.2018

Media Mentions

Dealmakers Impact Report
Variety, 12.04.2018

The Best Job To Prepare You For Biglaw Life
Well, This is Unexpected
Above The Law, 05.02.2017

Say Cheese! Big-Law Partner's Instagram Feed Captures Life in the Tasty Lane
American Lawyer, 05.01.2017

Power Lawyers 2017: Hollywood's Top 100 Attorneys
The Hollywood Reporter, 04.26.2017

Speaking Engagements

Film Finance Forum East - Making the Sale: Securing Domestic and Intl. Distribution

Beijing International Film Festival - Sino-European Co-Productions

Cannes Film Festival - Slate Film Financing

Havana Film Festival - Co-Production and Distribution Arrangements

Miami International Film Festival - Bank, Bonding and Insurance Panel

Milan Fashion Week - Celebrity Endorsement Deals

Rio Film Festival - North American Production Incentives

Shanghai International Film Festival - Doing Deals with A List Talent

UCLA Entertainment Law Symposium - Celebrity Endorsements and Licenses

Ventana Sur (Buenos Aires) - Remake Deals

Zurich Film Festival - Making Movies and Generating Revenue in Today's Environment

Memberships

Nashville Fashion Forward Advisory Counsel

Law360's Media and Entertainment Editorial Advisory Board

Former Co-Chair, Beverly Hills Bar Association Entertainment Law Section

Past President, Premier Patrons of the American Cinematheque

Board Member, Planning Committee for the UCLA Entertainment Law Symposium

Practices

Entertainment and Digital Media

International Reach

Japan

Korea

Latin America

Advertising

France

Industries

Advertising

Art

Entertainment and Digital Media

Esports & Games

Fashion, Apparel and Beauty

Sports

Education

J.D., Georgetown University Law Center, 1988, *magna cum laude*

B.A., Arizona State University, 1985, *summa cum laude*

French Language Program, Sorbonne (University of Paris), 1985

Admissions

California

U.S. District Court of the Central District of California

Additional Office

New York

Languages

French