

James G. Sammataro

Partner



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James Sammataro is a partner at Pryor Cashman and co-chair of the firm's Music Group and Media + Entertainment Litigation Practice.

Entertainment Litigator

James is one of the music industry's most recognized attorneys, having represented Eminem, Justin Bieber, Enrique Iglesias, Karol G, Don Omar, Chris Cornell, Chris Brown, Dr. Dre, Becky G, Luis Fonsi, Lil Baby, DJ Tiesto, Paulo Londra, Roddy Ricch, Universal Music Group, Sony Music Entertainment, Warner Music, and Spotify in high-profile music-related disputes.

James has defended a number of iconic works, including Luis Fonsi's "Despacito," Pitbull's "Give Me Everything," Karol G's remix of "Dame to Cosita," Chris Brown and Drake's "No Guidance," and Da Baby's "Rockstar."

James' trial success has resulted in *Billboard* repeated recognition of him as one of the nation's top music lawyers. He's cemented this reputation by:

- Defending the reggaeton industry, including Daddy Yankee, Karol G, Ozuna, Becky G, Anitta, and Diplo (among 93 total defendants) in the sprawling "Dem Bow" copyright infringement action in which reggae duo Steely & Cleve claim that 1,800 songs infringe their drum pattern.
- Extricating several of the music industry's biggest stars from copyright infringement actions, including actions involving Chris Brown's collaboration with Drake, "No Guidance," Da Baby and Roddy Ricch for the mega-hit "Rockstar," Future's "Life is Good," Chris Brown's "Pills & Automobiles," and Lil Baby's "My Turn."
- Resolving the Estate of Chris Cornell's litigation with the band Soundgarden over the recordings containing Cornell's final vocal performance, bringing a close to the highly publicized, heavily contested three-year litigation and paving the way for the release of Soundgarden's final album.
- Spearheading Universal Music Group and Sony Music Entertainment's parallel copyright infringement actions against Bang Energy, securing both summary judgment and spoliation sanctions against the energy drink company.

Variety has hailed James as one of the most impactful entertainment attorneys based on his deft handling of media entities and A-list celebrities in delicate disputes, including defamation matters (Sean Penn vs. Lee Daniels), right of publicity claims (Lindsey Lohan vs. Pitbull), trademark disputes (*American Idol*, *America's Got Talent*, *The Price Is Right*), and profit participation disputes (*Keeping Up With the Kardashians*, *Making the Band*, and *The Real World*). He also represented Netflix, Univision, and Rakontur in defamation actions, and defended

claims involving the television shows *American Gods*, *Press Your Luck*, *Maradona*, and *God Forbid: The Sex Scandal That Brought Down a Dynasty*.

Transactional Expert

James represents leading concert promoters and production companies, and oversees concerts featuring Cardi B, Ozuna, Bad Bunny, Shakira, Daddy Yankee, Justin Bieber, Snoop Dog, Jennifer Lopez, Marc Anthony, Ricky Martin, Rosalía, and Genesis. He also possesses unparalleled experience in touring exhibitions, working with *Harry Potter*, *The Pink Floyd Exhibition: Their Mortal Remains*, *Bodies*, *Van Gogh*, *Frida Kahlo*, *CoComelon*, *The Little Prince*, and *The Lionel Messi Experience*.

James guides major entertainment deals to fruition, managing both day-to-day and breakthrough transactions on behalf of television stations, radio stations, and e-sports franchises. He also advises media companies on managing and defending their valuable intellectual property, as well as negotiating talent, content, production, syndication, and distribution agreements. Recently, James has been involved in a number of high-profile NIL deals and NFT-related transactions.

Industry Authority

The author of the definitive “Film and Multimedia and the Law,” James is a regular podcast contributor and is frequently called upon to provide legal commentary on emerging trends and pivotal legal decisions for *The Hollywood Reporter*, *Billboard*, *Deadline*, *Variety*, *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *Entertainment Tonight*, and *The USA Today*.

Services

- Copyright
- M+E Litigation
- Intellectual Property
- Litigation
- Media + Entertainment
- M+E Transactions and Financing
- Music
- Privacy, Publicity + Defamation
- Music Litigation
- Music Transactions

Education

- Duke University School of Law (J.D., *cum laude*, 1999)
- Cornell University (B.A., *summa cum laude*, 1995)

Recognition

- Named one of *Lawdragon* 500 Leading Global IP Lawyers for Litigation – Music, Entertainment (2025)
- Recognized in *Variety*’s Music Legal Elite Report (2024-25)
- Recognized in the *Chambers USA Guide* for Media & Entertainment (Florida) (2024-25)
- Named “Top Music Lawyer” by *Billboard* (2016-25)
- Recognized in *Variety*’s “Legal Impact Report” (2018-19, 2021-23) and “Miami Legal Impact Report” (2022)
- Labeled Most Effective Lawyers: Intellectual Property (*Daily Business Review*, 2019, 2020)
- Named “Lawyer of the Year” by *Best Lawyers in America* (2020, 2025-26)
- Named a “Sports and Entertainment Trailblazer” (*National Law Journal*, 2019)
- Named a “Leader in the Law” (*LA Business Journal*, 2019-2021)
- Named a leading attorney in Motion Pictures + Television and Intellectual Property Litigation (*Best Lawyers in America*, 2012-26)

- Distinguished Leader (*Daily Business Review*, 2018, 2023)
- Recognized as a leading attorney in Media + Entertainment: Litigation (2021), Media + Entertainment: Transactional (2020-21), and Copyright (2015-18) by *The Legal 500 US*
- Named Top Entertainment and Sports attorney (*Super Lawyers*, 2009-23)
- Recipient of the Burton Award for excellence in legal writing (2016)
- Named “Florida Entertainment Attorney of the Year” (2015, 2018)
- Recognized as a Litigation Star (Media and Entertainment) by Benchmark

Admissions

- New York
- California
- Florida
- District of Columbia

Professional Affiliations

- Media Law Resource Center, member; Media Copyright & Trademark, committee member; Pre-Publication/Pre-Broadcast, committee member

Publications

February 3, 2026

Sammataro Quoted on the Dismissal of the ‘Breezy Bowl’ Trademark Dispute Against Chris Brown & Live Nation

Billboard

July 11, 2024

Sammataro Comments on First-of-Its-Kind Influencer IP Lawsuit

Bloomberg Law

May 23, 2024

Sammataro Discusses Antitrust Lawsuit Against Live Nation

Los Angeles Times; Atlanta Journal-Constitution

March 31, 2023

Sammataro Comments on Rolling Stones Copyright Suit

Billboard

January 27, 2023

Sammataro and Saady Write About AI Music and Copyright

Billboard

January 17, 2023

Sammataro Comments on Miami IP Litigation Outlook

Daily Business Review

August 24, 2022

Sammataro Discusses Fair Use Factors in UFC Doc Fight

Law360

August 11, 2022

Sammataro Weighs in on Stallone/Rocky Rights Bout

Variety

August 10, 2022

Sammataro Asks for Sanctions in UMG/Bang Energy Trial
Law360 and Complete Music Update

July 31, 2020

Sammataro Opines on Impact of Copyright Trolls

April 16, 2020

Canceled Live Events – Is Coronavirus a Force Majeure Event?

December 13, 2019

How to Protect Yourself From the Copyright Trolls

December 12, 2019

Sammataro Discusses Taylor Swift Feud on WGN Podcast

August 1, 2019

Understanding the Impact of the "Stranger Things" Idea Theft Lawsuit

July 25, 2019

Gigi Hadid, Heroine of the Copyright Revolution?

July 11, 2019

How Taylor Swift Could Exact Revenge on Scooter Braun