



James F. Guerra

Partner, through his Professional Corporation



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legal expertise

Mr. Guerra has extensive experience in non-scripted and scripted television development, production and distribution; children's television animation and live action production and financing; documentary theatrical film production and distribution; entertainment related corporate acquisitions and mergers; acquisitions and divestitures of program libraries; multi-media entertainment development, production and distribution; merchandising and licensing; book publishing and co-author agreements; and executive employment agreements. His practice involves structuring transactions and advising clients in all aspects of their business, including the acquisition, enforcement, monetization and sale of intellectual property rights. Mr. Guerra represents clients based in Washington, D.C., Crystal City, Virginia, New York City, Boston, Philadelphia, Portland, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Monterrey, Toronto, Montreal, London, Stockholm, and Paris.

representative matters

- Negotiated numerous co-financing and co-production deals, including major fund with Carlton Production and Carlton International (bought by Granada and n/d/b/a ITV), and major fund with Channel Four International.
- Negotiated a major co-financing deal for PBS with BBC and BBC Worldwide.
- In final stages of negotiation on another major co-financing deal between existing media company and multiple film distributors to co-finance and co-market a slate of theatrical films.
- Regularly handle single and multi-title co-financing deals on behalf of independent production companies.
- Negotiated and drafted complex production and distribution agreements for top-rated children's television series, including Sesame Street, Caillou, Thomas & Friends, Barney, Cyberchase, Angelina Ballerina, Dragon Tales, Bookworm Bunch, and WordWorld.

practice areas

entertainment transactions
corporate & business transactions
early-stage private company financing
general corporate law
mergers & acquisitions

admissions

District of Columbia
Texas

education

University of Michigan Law School, J.D., 1984

Notes Editor, *Michigan Yearbook of International Legal Studies*; Campbell Moot Court Competition: Chairman, 1983-84, Finalist, 1982-83

Boston College, A.B., 1981; *magna cum laude*

Varsity Debate Team; Gargan Award Recipient

other career experience

- Senior Vice President, Program Business Affairs, PBS
- Assistant General Counsel, PBS
- Corporate and Tax Associate, Dow, Lohnes

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- Provided advice and guidance on structuring the financing of Foyle's War Series 8, acquired by Acorn Media Group (AMG) in bankruptcy in 2010-2011 from the popular British TV series' owner/producer. Series 8 is AMG's first entry into production of a prime time TV series. MSK is also drafting and negotiating the production agreement with the production company producing the series, as well as drafting, negotiating and/or overseeing all agreements being entered into by client with the writers, main talent, directors, and composers, as well as the major licensee of the series, ITV Network, and the U.S. broadcaster, WGBH (for PBS) - involving U.S., UK and Irish law as well as U.S. dollars, British pounds and Euros. In addition, MSK is overseeing and advising client on loan agreements with the bank providing production financing, and working with client's attorney in Ireland, as filming will be taking place to take advantage of Irish tax credits (S481).
- Represents an independent production company in connection with the development, funding, production, distribution and exploitation of a \$7.5 million multi-platform transmedia project called "Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide," based on *New York Times* reporter Nicholas Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn's bestselling book of the same name. The project incorporates several components, including a multi-part television documentary program that aired on PBS, a Facebook game, television and video modules, and a website. The series stars Diane Lane, America Ferrera, Eva Mendes, Olivia Wilde, Gabrielle Union and Meg Ryan, and also features Nick Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn.
- Represents the Ossorio Foundation in negotiating deals and developing agreements with various museums and art galleries and institutions in connection with the Foundation's inventory of the work of Alfonso Ossorio. The Foundation works with other art institutions to develop educational projects about the life and work of Ossorio, his contemporaries and other artists whose careers are relevant to an interpretation of Alfonso Ossorio's art. Representation of the Foundation has involved the following: arranging appraisals for artwork for inventory and in connection with negotiating deals; drafting and negotiating agreements for various museums and art galleries, including the Rhode Island School of Design, Dallas Museum of Art, The Phillips Collection, Findley Gallery, Chicago's McCormick Gallery, Michael Rosenfeld Gallery, Seattle Museum of Art, Frist Center for the Visual Arts and Oklahoma City Museum of Art, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, and Harvard Fogg Art Museum.
- Represents an independent production company in the development, production, distribution and exploitation of "The Artist is Present," a documentary film examining the life, character and work of the performance

& Albertson

- Attorney, Office of the General Counsel, The Southland Corporation
- Commercial Litigation Associate, Maxwell, Godwin & Carlton

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artist Marina Abramovic, and negotiated an access agreement with the Museum of Modern Art in New York, NY for permission to interview the museum's staff, performers and curators, and to film the exhibition "Marina Abramovic: The Artist is Present," the artist's longest duration solo work of her career. The film first aired on HBO in 2012, premiered at the 2012 Sundance Film Festival in Park City, Utah, and won the Audience Award at the 2012 Berlin Film Festival.

- Represents PBS with respect to the development, production and distribution of "Circus," a six-hour, multi-million dollar series featuring unprecedented access to a year in the life of the world-famous Big Apple Circus, which includes an interactive web-based educational component, as well as domestic and international broadcast and home video distribution.
- Represents PBS in negotiating various pre-school children's agreements.
- Represents various independent producers on the development, financing, production and distribution of children's series, including dealing with CAVCO.
- Represents various independent producers on the development, financing, production and distribution of multi-million dollar, multi-media projects.
- Represents Tangled Bank Studios, LLC, a division of Howard Hughes Medical Institute, including in the negotiation and drafting of an international distribution agreement, North American home video distribution agreement, and development and production agreements.
- Drafted and negotiated marketing and software license agreements for major national company.
- Represented major record label in acquisition of film studio's music catalog.
- Represented National Geographic in negotiating various children's series agreements, such as "Iggy Arbuckle," "Mama Mirabelle's Home Movies," "Plantzilla," and "Toot and Puddle."
- Served as lead counsel on numerous transactions with television broadcasters, international television distributors, home video distributors, and internet content providers.
- Responsible for structuring major investments in program funding for PBS.
- Negotiated the PBS home video distribution agreements.
- Negotiated agreements with Oracle Corporation and other software companies for the development of innovative software, including fundraising software and fulfillment software.

professional, business and civic affiliations

- MSK (DC office) Managing Partner
- Co-Chair, MSK Motion Picture, Television & Music Transactions Practice

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- Board Member, MSK

headlines

Mitchell Silberberg & Knupp Announces New Leadership
Business Wire, December 11, 2023

MSK Client PBS Scores \$1.5M Jury Win in Tavis Smiley #MeToo Case
March 4, 2020

MSK Brokers Deal Between Breakthrough Entertainment and Daniel H. Birman Productions for New Documentary Series
October 29, 2015

MSK Sponsors 2013 Minority Corporate Counsel Association Diversity Honors Gala
September 19, 2013

media mentions

MSK-Produced *Soundbreaking* Series Described as "Don't-Miss" & "Riveting"
November 18, 2016

Jim Guerra Quoted in *LA Business Journal* on *Soundbreaking*
November 18, 2016

events & speaking engagements

The New Arena: Legal Considerations Where Sports Meet Entertainment
June 11, 2025

Fair Use in Film and Television
May 2014