

Daily Journal

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TOP BOUTIQUES IN CALIFORNIA 2024

CELEBRATING CALIFORNIA'S SMALL BUT MIGHTY SPECIALIZED LAW FIRMS

Lewis & Llewellyn

SAN FRANCISCO

PLAINTIFFS AND DEFENSE
COMPLEX LITIGATION,
SEXUAL ABUSE,
FOUNDERS' DISPUTES



From left: Ryan Erickson, Evangeline A. Z. Burbidge, Paul T. Llewellyn, Becca Furman and Marc R. Lewis

Lewis & Llewellyn LLP name partner Paul Llewellyn believes so passionately in the boutique as the best way to practice law that he wrote a book about it. Entitled *Unshackled: Reimagining the Practice of Law*, it has become an Amazon bestseller.

Llewellyn described it as “a call to action for establishing a more service-oriented and satisfying profession.”

“Boutique is best,” he wrote in an email. At his firm, “we strive to provide the highest quality legal representation with the white-glove service that clients deserve.”

He and his colleague Marc Lewis joined up in 2012 with “the primary goals of practicing law at the highest level,” Llewellyn said. “There’s no opponent we wouldn’t go against.” They get to pick the clients and cases they want and are “not afraid to take cases to trial.”

The 20-attorney firm represents both plaintiffs and defendants in a wide variety of commercial litigation.

In one current matter, the firm is going up against Tesla in defense of two of the several former employees accused of taking trade secrets to competitor Rivian, partner Becca Furman said. *Tesla, Inc. v. Rivian Automotive Inc.*, 20CV368472 (Sta. Clara Super. Ct., filed July 17, 2020).

This summer, in another trade secrets case, the firm won summary judgment a month before trial

on behalf of a large technology company facing claims for as much as \$500 million in damages.

“We do both sides of trade secret theft work,” said partner Evangeline Burbidge. “We’ve had jury verdicts in our favor for plaintiffs and then we’ve done the defense side work as well.”

In an unusual engagement, the firm’s litigators are advising one of the most recognizable athletic clothing and shoe brands in the world on an upcoming trade secrets trial — even though not actually serving as defense counsel in the case. Instead, they are acting as consultants. “They brought us in to help get them battle tested and ready for their upcoming trial where there are hundreds of millions of dollars at stake,” Burbidge said.

The firm was chosen because it had won a \$25.7 million jury verdict for the plaintiff in a similar trial against a different company. That case is now on appeal. *EchoSpan Inc. v. Medallia Inc.*, 5:22-cv-01732 (N.D. Cal., March 18, 2022).

Lewis & Llewellyn is representing plaintiffs in a high-profile antitrust case set for trial in November 2025 that challenges an aspect of the real estate Multiple Listing Service. The case was dismissed in 2021, but Llewellyn and his team reversed that decision at the 9th Circuit. *Top Agent Network Inc. v. National Association of Realtors*, 3:20-cv-03198 (N.D. Cal., filed May 11, 2020).

In addition to high-stakes commercial litigation, the firm, almost since it opened, has represented victims of sexual assaults. “We’re proud that we’ve recovered approximately \$50 million on behalf of survivors of sexual assault and sexual abuse,” Llewellyn said.

Right now, it is pursuing two lawsuits on behalf of the families of girls who were secretly filmed using the restroom on a commercial airliner. The flight attendant who allegedly installed the hidden camera has been criminally charged. The matter made news when previous counsel for the airline seemed to cast some blame on the young girls. *Doe v. American Airlines Group Inc.*, 3:23-cv-00819 (W.D. N.C., filed Dec. 1, 2023).

Llewellyn said another way in which his boutique is different from many law firms is that it is not tied to billing by the hour. “We basically embrace all forms of billing,” he said. “That includes ... the contingency model on the plaintiff’s side, a hybrid approach, a fixed fee approach [and] an hourly subscription model.”

“We try to meet the client’s needs,” he continued. “We try to tie our compensation to value that we delivered, and that way we’re fully aligned with our clients. ... We ask clients what they want and strive to deliver.”

— Don DeBenedictis

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