

# Kristi Gamble

Entertainment Lawyer

When we think of music, we tend to think of the fun stuff: glitz, glamour, fame, fashion, dancing, and parties. But music is a business, too, which means marketing, promotion, advertising, management, royalties, and of course, record deals and contracts. To navigate the business aspects of the industry and understand their legal terms and consequences, most artists retain an entertainment lawyer.

Kristi Gamble, a founding partner in her newly formed law firm, Kaplan & Gamble, specializes in entertainment law and has worked with many top names in the music business. But as you'll see, being an entertainment lawyer means a lot more than wading through endless paperwork and signing contracts.

## What attracted you to entertainment law?

I grew up in Las Vegas—an entertainment city—and I've always been interested in entertainment and the arts. Plus, I was in dance and gymnastics as young girl. Then, when it came time for college, I was interested in law. So I kind of merged my upbringing in Las Vegas and my background in dance with my legal studies.

## What are some of your duties as an entertainment lawyer?

I wear all sorts of hats: lawyer, advisor, manager, best friend—even babysitter, depending on the age of the artist [*laughs*]. If you're really going to be involved in entertainment law, you can't just sit behind the desk looking at contracts. You need to know about labels and trends in music, who the key players are, what type of



music your artist is trying to sell, and which record companies will be responsive to that style. You also have to set up showcases, help the artist obtain copyrights, find appropriate music producers, and make sure your artist has a bio and photos. There's so much.

## How do you fit it all in?

It's a full day; it doesn't end at 5:00. And with musicians, especially, you get phone calls at 10:00 or 11:00 p.m., because they're more productive at night. During the day, you're often making phone calls, trying to close deals, or checking up on your artists. And after work, you're going out to hear new bands and keep your finger on the pulse of what's going on. That's when you'll see other people from the industry, do some

networking, and make valuable contacts.

## Who are some of the musicians you've worked with?

[In the past] I've worked with pop artists like Britney Spears, Backstreet Boys, Aaron Carter, and 'N Sync. With my new practice, I work with a number of recording artists, like Nikki Cleary, who's signed to Jive Records, and a number of producers, like Tony Dofat, who's working on the TV show *Making the Band* right now.

## What's your favorite part of the job?

I like working with the artists behind the scenes. A lot of people like the parties, the networking, and being in the mix of things—and I like those, too. But at the end of the day, I like being part of the team that brings everything together to get the finished product out on the shelf. It's like being a dance choreographer; you're in the wings, putting together all the pieces, and then you see it being performed onstage.

## What should someone interested in entertainment law do to best prepare for the job?

Get into the arts. Take music classes, get into theater, learn a musical instrument—because you need to understand the environment in which you'll be working. You should also seek out courses in speech and debate. Being able to speak to people and communicate effectively is definitely something that will be good not only in the practice of law but in any career you pursue. You don't need to be a natural; you just need to practice a lot. **MA!**