

DANICA MATHES AND BRENT TURMAN ON TEXAS LAWBOOK EXPLORE RISKS OF INFORMAL CONTRACTS IN ENTERTAINMENT

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Bell Nunnally partner Danica L. Mathes and associate Brent A. Turman authored The Texas Lawbook article titled, “Are Handshake Deals in the Entertainment Biz on Shaky Ground?” The piece explores the tradition in Hollywood of “handshake” deals where parties agree to terms without executing formal contracts. Recently, this sort of arrangement was in the spotlight as an attorney for actor Johnny Depp sought compensation from the actor based on an informal agreement. He was denied as a judge in California held that the contingent-fee relationship that Depp and the attorney entered into needed to be in writing, a stipulation found in Texas law as well. As a result, the attorney was denied compensation of \$30M. (He does, however, have the opportunity to prove quantum meruit damages.) The article by Mathes and Turman delves into the Depp matter and also considers: 1) vulnerabilities for parties entering into agreements while forgoing formal contracts; 2) the enforceability of some oral agreements in Texas; 3) “soft contracts,” their benefits and uncertainty; and 4) what the future may hold for informal agreements.

To read the full article, please click [here](#).

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Practice Area Contact

Brent A. Turman

Danica L. Mathes