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# Pierce O'Donnell

Of Counsel

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Pierce O'Donnell is one of the most influential, accomplished, and sought after trial attorneys in the U.S., with groundbreaking success representing clients in closely watched matters across virtually every major industry and area of litigation. Pierce was lead counsel to Shelly Sterling in the litigation surrounding the \$2 billion sale of the Los Angeles Clippers to Steve Ballmer.

A graduate of Georgetown University and both Georgetown and Yale Law Schools, Pierce's legal career began with prestigious clerkships for U.S. Supreme Court Justice Byron R. White and Ninth Circuit Judge Shirley M. Hufstедler. This early experience set him on a path that would always combine his passions for trying cases in the courtroom and for writing provocative articles and books outside of his law practice.

## A Decorated Litigator

Pierce was named one of the "100 Most Influential Lawyers in America" by *The National Law Journal*, as one of "California's Top Entertainment Lawyers" by the *Daily Journal*, and "MVP of the Year" by *Law360*. *LawDragon* has consistently named him one of the 500 leading lawyers in the nation. The *Los Angeles Business Journal* named him one of the 500 Most Influential People in Los Angeles (2016 - 2018). In 2014, the *Daily Journal* recognized Pierce as one of the "Top 100 Lawyers in California" and as a "Top Entertainment Lawyer in California."

He is a member of the elite International Academy of Trial Lawyers, the American Law Institute, the American Board of Trial Lawyers, and the American Trial Lawyers Association. In addition, he is routinely named as one of the premier trial lawyers in his hometown of Los Angeles, California and in the U.S. by legal publications such as *Super Lawyers*, *The Best Lawyers in America*® (2025), *Chambers & Partners* and the *Daily*

## Services

- Litigation
- Entertainment Litigation
- Environmental Litigation
- Intellectual Property Litigation
- Sports
- Crypto & NFTs
- High Net Worth & Probate Litigation
- Appellate Litigation

*Journal*, and he has achieved the highest possible AV Rating from Martindale-Hubbell. *Forbes* called him the “new Perry Mason in Hollywood.” Pierce's advocacy on behalf of children around the world earned him the prestigious Raoul Wallenberg Save the Children Award.

### **A Legendary Trial Lawyer**

Over his 48-year legal career, Pierce has tried a long list of significant cases for major clients, such as the famed *Buchwald v. Paramount Pictures* case related to the movie “Coming to America,” litigation on behalf of the victims of Hurricane Katrina, and the *Metro Goldwyn Mayer v. American Honda* case that recognized federal copyright protection for James Bond. In 2009, he led a team that secured the largest jury verdict in California (\$350 million), making him Trial Lawyer of the Year. In addition to dozens of trials across the country, Pierce has argued more than 25 cases in federal and state appellate courts and handled more than 500 civil and white-collar criminal cases. Spotlighted by *Variety* as “The Billion Dollar Litigator,” he has collected over \$7 billion for clients in a variety of cases ranging from antitrust, divorce, entertainment, environmental cost recovery, intellectual property, and business litigation.

### **A Renowned Author and Speaker**

A highly-respected thought leader in the legal profession, Pierce is also the author of more than 200 articles and six books. His scholarly articles have covered important legal topics such as constitutional law, intellectual property, toxic torts, sports, professional responsibility, and criminal justice reform, and they have been published in respected journals such as the American Bar Association Journal, Colorado Law Review, and Georgetown Law Journal.

Pierce has also published a number of highly-acclaimed books and other creative works. His articles have appeared in a number of publications, including *The Washington Post*, *Los Angeles Times*, [Huffington Post](#), *Chicago Tribune*, *San Francisco Chronicle*, *Boston Globe*, *Houston Chronicle*, *Miami Herald*, *Philadelphia Inquirer*, and *Denver Post*. Pierce co-authored “Fatal Subtraction: How Hollywood Really Does Business,” a best-selling account of his role in the *Buchwald v. Paramount Pictures* case, co-authored the screenplay for the feature film “Home Team” starring Steve Guttenberg, wrote a stage-play “Socrates on Trial”, and authored a critically-acclaimed book regarding a forgotten episode of World War II, “*In Time of War: Hitler’s Terrorist Attack on America*.” In 2021, Pierce published “*Last Pick*,” a whimsical warmhearted autobiography of a twelve-year-old who became a great trial lawyer.

A regular TV and radio commentator, Pierce has appeared on numerous programs on ABC, CBS, NBC, CNN, FOX, PBS, NPR, and BBC. Pierce has lectured at the nation's premier law schools, including Harvard, Yale, UCLA, USC, Loyola (Los Angeles), Pepperdine, Stanford, and Georgetown. In a major address on international human rights, he was the first person to speak in the Rotunda of the Four Courts in Dublin, Ireland since Winston Churchill.

## Clerkships

- Honorable Justice Byron R. White on U.S. Supreme Court
- Honorable Judge Shirley M. Hufstедler on the Ninth Circuit

## Professional Affiliations

- International Academy of Trial Lawyers
- American Board of Trial Advocates
- American Law Institute
- American Trial Lawyers Association
- Economic Roundtable of Los Angeles

## Community and Charitable Organizations

## Awards

## Bar Admissions

- California

## Court Admissions

## Education

- Yale Law School (LL.M.)
- Georgetown University (J.D.)
- Georgetown University (B.A.)

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# Trials

## ***Terpin v. AT&T Mobility, LLC* (U.S District Court for Central District of California; judge) (2025)**

Pierce led a Greenberg Glusker team representing a prominent cryptocurrency investor who had \$24 million of cryptocurrency stolen by a 15-year-old hacker who breached AT&T's porous customer security system by executing a "Sim swap." The hacker was aided in accessing its customer's accounts by an AT&T retail store employee who was

bribed with \$200. The lawsuit was filed in 2018. The federal judge granted two motions to dismiss and then a motion for summary judgment. The trial court ruled that the Federal Communications Act did not protect the personal information on the victim's phone that the hacker had commandeered.

Mr. Terpin appealed, arguing that the hacker gained control over his phone number through a fraudulent Sim swap, received his password reset messages for his online accounts, and stole the \$24 million of his cryptocurrency. In the first of its kind precedential decision, the Ninth Circuit reversed the grant of summary judgment and remanded the case for trial. The court of appeal held that Section 222 of the Federal Communications Act imposes a duty on telecommunications carriers to protect “customer proprietary network information” (CPNI). Thus, the telecom giant can be liable for damages when it allows a hacker to get into its system, access the customer's AT&T account, steal the CPNI and thereby purloin his assets. *Terpin v. AT&T Mobility, LLC*, 118 F.4th 1102 (9th Cir. 2024) Following remand, the case settled.

***Jones v. T-Mobile (Los Angeles; arbitrator) (2024)***

Pierce served as lead counsel representing a client who had millions of dollars of Bitcoin stolen by a 17-year-old hacker who breached T-Mobile's customer security system. This “Sim swap” was facilitated by T-Mobile's failure to follow its own controls designed to prevent such security breaches. Pierce and his Greenberg Glusker team proved that T-Mobile knew about the flaws in its security measures but failed to correct them. The arbitrator ruled that the T-Mobile negligently failed to protect our client's personal data as required by Section 222 of the Federal Communications Act. She awarded \$33 million to the firm's client, including attorney's fees. This is a landmark victory since it is the first decision holding a mobile phone carrier liable for a customer's financial losses in these circumstances.

***Corday Productions, Inc. v. Sony Pictures Television, Inc. et. al. (Los Angeles County Superior Court; judge) (2019)***

Pierce represented Corday Productions, Inc., producer of the “soap” *Days of Our Lives*, in a lawsuit against Sony Pictures Television (including Columbia Pictures and Screen Gems) for over \$20 million, alleging breach of contract and fraud. The lawsuit claimed Sony (the series distributor and co-owner) sabotaged the show's international distribution to benefit *The Young and the Restless*. The recipient of numerous Emmy Awards, *Days of Our Lives* has aired over 15,300 episodes on NBC since its debut 61 years ago. Specifically, the complaint alleged that Sony deliberately neglected marketing and distribution to create artificial losses. The lawsuit highlighted Sony's conflict of interest because it holds a 100% ownership stake in *The Young and the Restless*—the *Days of Our Lives* rival. After a round of pre-trial motions, the case settled.

***Angelina Jolie v. Brad Pitt (Los Angeles County Superior Court; judge) (2016)***

Academy Award-winning actress Angelina Jolie (*Girl Interrupted*) and Academy Award-winning actor Brad Pitt (*Once Upon A Time in Hollywood*) were launching a contentious public divorce battle. Jolie hired Greenberg Glusker partners Bert Fields and Pierce

O'Donnell for what she called her "dream team." The case was eventually settled.

***Amber Heard v. Johnny Depp (Los Angeles County Superior Court, Judge) (2016)***

Pierce represented Amber Heard in her divorce case against Johnny Depp. The contentious, highly-publicized battle featured Heard's charges that Depp has guilty of domestic violence, and she obtained a temporary restraining order in May 2016. Heard presented evidence of repeated verbal and physical abuse associated with alcohol and drug abuse. On the eve of the hearing for issuance of a permanent domestic violence protection order, Depp agreed to pay Heard \$7 million for only a 15-month marriage. Pierce did not represent Heard in her subsequent defamation cases with Depp.

***Technical Training Foundation v. California Pacific Medical Center (San Francisco County Superior Court; judge) (2016)***

Along with his partner Fred Fenster, Pierce represented a foundation which had funded a pathbreaking, world-renowned biorepository for liver tissues located for a decade at the California Pacific Medical Center (CPMC) in San Francisco. Problems developed, and three years ago, CPMC sent a notice of eviction that threatened the existence of the biorepository. The foundation hired Greenberg Glusker which filed a lawsuit on its behalf to prevent the ruination of the biorepository. Within three days, CPMC asked to stay the litigation and enter into settlement discussions. Three years later, the parties finally entered into a settlement favorable to the foundation. The liver repository was saved and is being relocated at the University of California at San Francisco Medical Center.

***Sharif Rahman and Hasim Rahman, Jr. v. Floyd Mayweather, et. al. (Clark County (Nevada) District Court, Jury) (2015)***

Pierce represented Hasim Rahman Jr. and Sharif Rahman, sons of former heavyweight champion Hasim Rahman Sr., in their lawsuit against Floyd Mayweather Jr., Mayweather Promotions, and Showtime Networks. Undeclared at 50–0, the legendary boxer won 15 major world championships spanning five weight classes from super featherweight to light middleweight. The Rahmans's lawsuit stemmed from sparring sessions at the Mayweather Boxing Club in Las Vegas that were aired on the Showtime "All Access" reality series designed to promote Mayweather's rematch against Marcos Maidana. The brothers alleged that they were forced into unsafe, unsanctioned "doghouse" sparring sessions, with one fight lasting 31 minutes without a break. The lawsuit accused defendants of battery, tortious assault, false imprisonment, negligence, and using the footage without their consent. They also accused Mayweather of lying to the Nevada State Athletic Commission, claiming that the fights were not real, despite them being dangerous in reality. The case settled before trial.

***Sterling v. Stiviano (Los Angeles County Superior Court; judge) (2015)***

Shelly Sterling sued her husband Donald's notorious mistress, V Stiviano, to recover several million dollars of gifts and money that Donald had bestowed on his paramour (including a \$1.8 million house, two Bentleys, a Ferrari, Range Rover, clothing, jewelry, cash, and credit cards). Relying on *California Family Code Section 1100*, Pierce and his Greenberg Glusker team advanced the novel legal theory that Shelly could sue the recipient of the gifts (instead of merely suing her husband) because she had not

consented in writing to these transfers of community property. After a trial, the court ruled in Shelly's favor, ordering that title in the house be transferred to the community and Stiviano pay back over \$800,000.

***Sterling v. Sterling (Los Angeles County Superior Court; judge) (2014)***

Pierce led the Greenberg Glusker team representing Shelly Sterling whose husband Donald Sterling, a co-owner of the Los Angeles Clippers basketball team, was banned for life from the NBA and fined \$2.5 million for his racist comments on an audiotape released by his mistress V Stiviano. The NBA set in motion the process for seizing the team from the Sterlings (who were the team's co-owners through their family trust) and selling the franchise at an auction. Battling both the NBA and Donald, Pierce and his team, representing Shelly as sole trustee of the family trust and after removing Donald as the other trustee, sold the Clippers to former Microsoft CEO Steve Ballmer for the record-shattering price of \$2 billion—nearly four times the price ever paid for an NBA team. Pierce then led the Greenberg Glusker team representing Shelly in a trial in the Probate Court against Donald who opposed the sale. The court ruled in Shelly's favor, finding that she had the legal authority to sell the team and instructed her to close the unprecedented sale.

***Terry Watanabe v. Harrah's Entertainment et. al. (Clark County (Nevada) District Court, Judge) (2010)***

Pierce represented Terry Watanabe in two related actions in Las Vegas. Watanabe was a gambling addict who lost \$300 million at Caesar's Palace and Rio over the course of a couple of years. After selling his company Oriental Trading for several hundred million dollars, Watanabe became known for his lavish, compulsive gambling habits. In 2007 alone, he was reported to have lost \$127 million at Caesars Palace and The Rio (both owned by Harrah's Entertainment) after having gambled a total of \$825 million. Watanabe is widely considered the biggest whale in the history of Las Vegas.

Watanabe had a massive line of credit ("markers"). When he did not pay off a marker for \$15 million, Caesars Palace got the District Attorney to file criminal charges against him for passing a bad check. Harrah's Entertainment also sued him for the unpaid \$15 million.

Pierce pursued an aggressive two-prong strategy. First, he filed a counterclaim against Harrah's Entertainment, claiming that its two casinos had exploited his client's well-known gambling addiction by a host of illegal means such as plying him with prescription pain killers, alcohol, and escorts. Second, he filed a motion to dismiss the indictment, alleging that Nevada's bad check statute was unconstitutional for a variety of reasons. One ground was the longtime cozy relationship between casinos and the District Attorney, which acted like their collection agency and received an "administrative fee" (commission) on everything collected from defendants. The strategy worked: fearful that this major revenue-producing scheme would be invalidated, the District Attorney dismissed the indictment; Watanabe dropped his civil lawsuit against Harrah's; and Harrah's agreed to delay proceeding with its lawsuit while both sides went to binding arbitration to resolve Harrah's \$15 million claim against Watanabe. The arbitration settled

favorably for Watanabe.

***Auerbach Acquisition Associates v. Daily* (Los Angeles County Superior Court; jury) (2009)**

Pierce served as lead trial counsel for the plaintiff in a tortious interference with contract lawsuit against defendant who misappropriated an investment opportunity in a credit card processing company. After a four-month trial, the jury returned a verdict of \$350,000,000 for plaintiff (\$300,000,000 in compensatory and \$50,000,000 in punitive damages). This was the largest jury verdict in California in 2009, and Pierce was named California Trial Lawyer of the Year.

***In re Katrina Canal Breaches Litigation* (Eastern District of Louisiana; judge) (2009)**

Pierce served as lead trial counsel for 300,000 Hurricane Katrina flood victims, State of Louisiana, City of New Orleans, and St. Bernard Parish in Federal Tort Claims Act lawsuit against the United States for the flooding of Greater New Orleans. After a month-long trial, the federal judge, in an historic ruling, found the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers “grossly negligent” in the design, maintenance, and operation of the MR-GO navigation channel which caused numerous levees to fail, resulting in the catastrophic flooding.

***In re California Natural Case Pipeline Antitrust Litigation* (San Diego County Superior Court; jury) (2006)**

Pierce served as lead trial counsel for a class of 12.5 million California natural gas and electricity ratepayers and several municipalities in an antitrust action against El Paso Natural Gas, Sempra Energy, SoCal Gas, and San Diego Gas & Electric for rigging natural gas prices that caused the California Energy Crisis. Pierce secured a \$3.5 billion recovery in settlement after three months of trial—the largest ever class action consumer antitrust recovery.

***Contreras et al. v. Pfizer Inc.* (Los Angeles Country Superior Court; jury) (2004)**

Two wrongful death actions against manufacturer of anti-diabetes drug Rezulin which had admittedly caused liver failures, leading to death in some patients. Pierce defended Pfizer in a month-long jury trial, and he secured a total defense verdict against Thomas Girardi, one of the nations’ leading plaintiffs’ trial lawyers.

***Wakefield v. Pfizer Inc.* (Tulsa County Oklahoma; jury) (2002)**

A wrongful death action was filed Pfizer Inc. by the family of man who took the anti-diabetes drug Rezulin that admittedly had caused in some patients liver failure leading to death. Pierce was hired by the drug manufacturer three weeks before trial in a classic “damage control” situation. Plaintiff asked the jury to award \$60 million in compensatory damages and \$600 million in punitive damages. The jury awarded only \$1.55 in compensatory and \$10 million in punitive damages.

***Lockheed Martin v. United States* (Central District of California; judge) (2000)**

Pierce represented aircraft manufacturer in a lawsuit against the United States alleging that the government was responsible for sharing \$500 million of costs of cleaning up polluted groundwater in Burbank. Employing CERCLA, Pierce secured a ruling that the government was an operator of Lockheed Martin’s aircraft manufacturing plant and

therefore a responsible party under the law. The government paid \$235 million to Lockheed Martin and agreed to be responsible for half of future remediation costs.

***Dryer v. Labatt Brewing Co. (Central District of California; jury) (1997)***

Pierce represented NFL Hall of Famer and TV/Movie star Fred Dryer in a lawsuit against a Canadian conglomerate (owner of Labatt's beer and Toronto Blue Jays) for breach of contract and fraud for failing to make a movie in which he was slated to star. After a three-week trial, the jury returned a verdict of \$2.5 million for Pierce's client.

***Permut v. New Line Cinema (Los Angeles County Superior Court; jury) (1996)***

Pierce defended movie studio in lawsuit by producer for breaching contract to make the movie *Dumb and Dumber* starring Jim Carey. Pierce was hired two weeks before trial. After a four-week trial and during the fourth day of jury deliberations, the case settled favorably for Pierce's client.

***Greenpeace, Inc. (USA) v. Republic of France (U.S. District Court for the Central District of California; judge) (1996)***

Pierce represented the Republic of France, defending a lawsuit by Greenpeace regarding the 1995 seizure of its vessels and arrest of activists protesting nuclear tests in Mururoa, French Polynesia. Claiming that the French Government's acts were illegal, Greenpeace alleged kidnapping, assault and battery, intentional infliction of emotional distress, and other torts. Pierce filed a motion to dismiss, arguing that "act of state" doctrine prevented the court from judging the legality of acts done by a foreign state within its own territory or sphere of influence. (While he spoke French, Pierce argued the motion in English.) Judge Kim Wardlaw granted the motion, holding the Republic of France had immunity pursuant to the Foreign Sovereign Immunity Act and dismissing the complaint with prejudice for lack of subject matter jurisdiction. See *Greenpeace, Inc. (U.S.A) v. Republic of France*, 946 F.Supp. 773 (C.D. Cal. 1996)

***Faye Dunaway v. Andrew Lloyd Weber (Los Angeles Superior Court Judge) (1995)***

Pierce represented legendary Academy Award-winning actress Faye Dunaway (*Network*) in her lawsuit against famed Academy Award-winning composer Sir Andrew Lloyd Webber (*You Must Love Me*) over his firing her from the starring role in the Los Angeles production of the musical *Sunset Boulevard*. The protagonists hurled bitter insults against each other. Weber proclaimed: "Faye Dunaway can't sing." Dunaway countered that her pretextual firing was "a despicable act by an otherwise despicable man."

Dunaway filed claims for defamation, breach of contract, and fraud. She alleged that she was terminated before taking over the lead role from Glenn Close because Webber wanted to cut his financial losses by closing the show, not because her singing was inadequate. Quoting extensively from Pierce's hard-hitting complaint, a negative article in the *Sunday Times of London*—the must-read newspaper for Weber and his circle of influential friends—had the desired impact. A favorable settlement followed.

A humorous post-settlement event is worth mentioning. A settlement term obligated the parties not to disparage each other. In her autobiography, Dunaway handled the chapter on her nasty lawsuit and how she felt about her former adversary in an ingenious way—

she left the pages blank.

***Jon Voight v. Laura Pels (New York State Supreme Court (Manhattan); judge) (1994)***

Pierce represented Academy Award-winning actor Jon Voight (*Coming Home*) in a breach of contract and fraud lawsuit against his business partner Laura Pels in Jon Voight Productions for backing out of a multimillion-dollar movie deal. Voight claimed that Pels came to him wanting to invest in several movies in which he would star, direct, and/or produce. Voight alleged that she sabotaged the partnership because he refused to get romantically involved with her. The parties settled before trial.

***Potter v. Firestone Tire & Rubber Co. (California Supreme Court) (1993)***

Pierce defended Firestone Tire & Rubber Co. in a landmark toxic exposure case brought by four landowners living adjacent to a landfill where the tire manufacturer negligently disposed of its toxic wastes. The landowners were subjected to prolonged exposure to certain carcinogens (benzene, vinyl chloride), and toxic chemicals had contaminated their domestic water wells. While none of the landowners currently suffered from any cancerous or precancerous condition, each faced an enhanced but unquantified risk of developing cancer in the future due to the exposure. Based on several liability theories, the trial court awarded plaintiffs over \$1.3 million in compensatory damages and \$2.6 million in punitive damages.

Pierce persuaded the California Supreme Court to adopt a stringent standard for plaintiffs to recover for emotional distress damages for “fear of cancer” only if based on a significant (reasonable) risk of cancer, not merely speculative fear. The Supreme Court enunciated a two-prong test for recovery. Emotional distress damages attributable solely due to a fear of development of cancer or other serious illness as a result of the injury are recoverable only if plaintiff proves (1) actual exposure to a toxic or comparably harmful substance as a result of defendant’s negligent breach of duty to plaintiff, and (2) it is more likely than not plaintiff will develop the condition because of the exposure. The damages award was modified in light of the holding. The case has had lasting significance in toxic tort litigation and the use of medical monitoring as a remedy. See *Potter v. Firestone Tire & Rubber Co.*, 6 Cal.4th 965 (1993).

***Barillas v. Pfizer Inc. (Orange County Superior Court; jury) (1992)***

A woman sued the manufacturer of the Bjork-Shiley artificial heart valve, which had numerous reported cases of failure, leading to death. Plaintiff claimed extreme emotional distress over her fear that her valve (“a ticking time bomb”) would fail without warning. Pierce defended Pfizer in a two-month trial. While the jury was deliberating, this case and another 450 similar ones were settled on highly favorable terms for Pfizer. The jury reported that it had voted unanimously in favor of Pfizer.

***City of Los Angeles v. State of California (Los Angeles County Superior Court, Judge) (1990)***

Pierce represented the City of Los Angeles in a lawsuit against the State of California to block construction of a \$147 million, 1,450-bed, medium-security prison in East Los Angeles, one of the City’s poorest areas. Relying on the California Environmental Quality

Act, the complaint alleged that the State's Environmental Impact Report had failed to follow mandatory procedures for assessing adverse environmental impacts on the community, considering feasible alternatives, and proposing remedial measures to mitigate those harmful effects. The Superior Court issued an injunction halting the project. The prison was never built.

***Buchwald v. Paramount Pictures* (Los Angeles County Superior Court; judge) (1989-92)**

Pulitzer Prize winning journalist Art Buchwald sued movie studio for breach of contract in misappropriating his treatment to make the mega-hit movie Coming to America starring Eddie Murphy. Paramount claimed that the movie was based on Eddie Murphy's original work. There were three separate trials in the landmark case, and Pierce won all three. The judge found that the movie was in fact based upon Buchwald's treatment; the studio's net profits accounting contract was unconscionable since a movie grossing over \$300 million did not generate any net profits for the profit participants and had a \$19 million deficit; and the court awarded Buchwald and his producer Alan Bernheim \$1 million in damages. Pierce and Los Angeles Times reporter Dennis McDougal co-authored a best-selling book about the case entitled Fatal Subtraction: The Inside Story of Buchwald v. Paramount (Doubleday 1992)

***City of Anaheim v. County of Orange* (Orange County Superior Court; judge) (1989)**

Using the California Environmental Quality Act, Pierce represented City of Anaheim in a lawsuit to prevent the construction of a County jail in the city. After a trial, the court found that the Environmental Impact Statement was legally inadequate and enjoined the jail's construction.

***City of Newport Beach v. County of Orange* (Orange County Superior Court; judge) (1982-86)**

Pierce represented the City of Newport Beach in opposing the expansion of Orange County's John Wayne Airport due to noise pollution. Employing an innovative theory, Pierce filed a complaint alleging violation of the California Environmental Quality Act due to the County's defective Environmental Impact Statement that failed to evaluate the tendency of airports to be used beyond their design capacity. After a lengthy trial, the court agreed and enjoined the airport's expansion. Two more trials ensued, both of which resulted in favorable verdicts against the County. Pierce also secured a federal court injunction and finding of contempt against the County Board of Supervisors. Eventually, the County scaled back the airport's expansion and agreed to strict controls on the number of flights and aircraft noise levels.

***U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission v. Rogers* (Central District of California; judge) (1982)**

Pierce defended alleged gold mine tax shelter promoter in an enforcement action by the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission. Pierce put on a defense that there were in fact operating gold mines in Panama and French Guiana. After trial, Judge Mariana Pfaelzer ruled against the government.

***Flicker v. Arnold* (Los Angeles County Superior Court; judge) (1980)**

Pierce represented Danny Arnold, the co-creator, director, and producer of the hit TV series *Barney Miller*. Pierce obtained a defense verdict in a lawsuit brought by the other co-creator claiming that he had been defrauded in accountings for profits.

***Hamilton v. Ford Motor Co. (District of Columbia District Court; jury) (1978)***

Pierce represented the widow of a husband killed in a car accident. The jury returned a verdict for plaintiff of \$1,000,000—at the time (1978) the largest wrongful death jury verdict in the District of Columbia.

***Masiello v. Warden (District of Connecticut; judge) (1974)***

Pierce represented federal prison inmate in a habeas corpus action alleging that he had been illegally denied parole because of guilt by association with his father “Gentleman Johnny” Masiello, a convicted Mafioso. After a trial, the federal judge ruled that Pierce’s client’s constitutional rights had been violated and ordered his release.

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The foregoing is a list of representative trials. Pierce has also had more than a dozen other jury and judge trials in federal and state court, representing plaintiffs and defendants, in the intellectual property, entertainment, financial, real estate, environmental, technology, banking, white collar, and consumer rights sectors. His clients have included the Republic of France, State of California, NBC, MGM Studios, ConocoPhillips, Texaco, W.R. Grace, Reebok, Adidas, and AIG. Pierce has recovered over \$7 billion for clients in verdicts and settlements. *Variety* has hailed him as “The Billion Dollar Litigator.”

Pierce is one of the most respected and accomplished trial lawyers in the United States. His trial successes have been groundbreaking in numerous fields. Pierce has received numerous awards and honors over the 42 years of his distinguished career. A former law clerk for U.S. Supreme Court Justice Byron R. White, he has been named one of “The 100 Most Influential Lawyers in America” by the *National Law Journal*. For many years, he has been selected as one of the “Top 100 Lawyers in California” by the *Los Angeles Daily Journal*. Recently, he was named “MVP of the Year” by *Law360* and one of “California’s Top Entertainment Lawyers” by the *Los Angeles Daily Journal*. California’s Trial Lawyer of the Year in 2009, Pierce is an elected member of the elite International Academy of Trial Lawyers (only 500 members), the American Law Institute, American Board of Trial Advocates, and American Trial Lawyers Association. He has been recognized by such legal publications as Super Lawyers, Best Lawyers in America, and Chambers and Partners. *Forbes* called him “the new Perry Mason in Hollywood.”

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## Representative Experience

### Business

- Served as lead counsel to Shelly Sterling on the \$2 billion sale of the Los Angeles Clippers to Steve Ballmer
- Served as lead trial counsel in a business tort case involving the theft of an investment opportunity in a credit card processing company, obtaining a \$350 million jury award that resulted in Mr. O'Donnell being named California Trial Lawyer of the Year in 2009

## **Energy**

- From 2000 to 2008, served as lead trial counsel of a team of lawyers who obtained \$3.5 billion settlement from various energy companies in California Energy Crisis antitrust litigation

## **Entertainment**

- Obtained summary judgment for a business management firm in a first-of-its-kind "idea theft" claim filed by a talent manager concerning the eligibility of touring musicians and bands to receive Shuttered Venue Operator Grants ("SVOG"), a COVID-19 relief program established during the pandemic
- In 1995, won the landmark case of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, Inc. v. American Honda Motor Co., Inc., which recognized federal copyright protection of the fictional movie character James Bond
- In 1998, successfully represented Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, Inc. in enjoining Sony Corp. from launching its own competing James Bond movie franchise
- In 2000, following securing a preliminary injunction and an appellate victory, obtained a \$21.5 million trademark infringement settlement for his client in a dispute with Walt Disney Company

## **Environmental**

- Served as lead trial counsel for several hundred thousand victims of Hurricane Katrina – including individuals, the State of Louisiana, City of New Orleans, St. Bernard Parish, and major corporations and universities – in a landmark lawsuit against the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- Successfully defended Lockheed Martin Corp. against 3,200 toxic tort claims in state and federal courts
- In a series of environmental cost recovery cases under CERCLA, won judgments or settlements for clients in excess of \$350 million, including \$230 million for Lockheed Martin against the U.S. government
- Engaged by the South Coast Air Quality Management District to prosecute a civil penalty action against BP Arco for 10 years of alleged pollution violations at its Torrance refinery, securing a record \$106 million settlement for an air pollution enforcement action
- Represented City of Los Angeles, City of Newport Beach, and City of Anaheim in blocking various developments (prisons, airport expansion, and jails) on environmental grounds

## **Family Law Property Litigation**

- Represented wife in battle with husband over a marital estate worth more than \$1 billion
- Represented Academy Award-winning actress in divorce from her prominent

actor/husband

- Represented successfully high net worth husband in dispute with wife over management and control of hedge fund
- Represented successfully Amber Heard in her high profile divorce from Johnny Depp and securing \$7 million for a 15-month marriage
- Represented Shelly Sterling in widely-publicized victory in recovering \$2.6 million in money and property from her husband's mistress
- Disqualified major law firm from representing opposing spouse on grounds of conflict of interest

### **Intellectual Property**

- Successfully represented celebrity stylist Vidal Sassoon against Procter & Gamble
- Successfully represented Ron Isley in an appeal that preserved his \$6.5 million copyright infringement verdict against Michael Bolton
- Successfully represented creators of James Bond, Survivor, Forrest Gump, Mighty Ducks, 42, and other works in securing compensation

### **Labor & Employment**

- Served as counsel for Academy Award winner Faye Dunaway in her lawsuit against Andrew Lloyd Weber over her wrongful termination from the Los Angeles production of "Sunset Boulevard"
- Represented senior executives in the entertainment industry in negotiating their employment and exit agreements

### **Products Liability**

- Lead counsel for Firestone in the landmark "fear of cancer" case in 1993 (Potter v. Firestone Tire & Rubber)
- Lead trial counsel for Pfizer Inc., successfully defending 375 anxiety/emotional distress cases involving allegedly defective heart valves
- Lead trial counsel for Pfizer Inc. in three cases related to the drug Rezulin that led to the settlement of 4,500 claims

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## **Publications**

March 20, 2023

**The sky is not the limit: Professional sports teams' runaway selling prices**

*Sports Business Journal*

August 15, 2018

**Cryptocurrency investor robbed via his cellphone account sues AT&T for \$224 million over loss**

*CNBC*

July 27, 2018

**Pierce O'Donnell named one of the 500 Most Influential People in Los Angeles**

*Los Angeles Business Journal*

July 2, 2018

**Weinstein Co Buyer Lantern Entertainment Accused of Racism, Fraud in \$110 Million Lawsuit**

*The Wrap*

July 2, 2018

**Weinstein Company Buyer Lantern Capital Hit With \$110M Fraud Suit By Producer Marvin Peart; Claims Race Was Why He Was Iced Out Of Deal**

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