



Jan Nielsen Little

KEKER, VAN NEST & PETERS LLP
SAN FRANCISCO

WHITE-COLLAR DEFENSE, COMPLEX CIVIL LITIGATION



Little is best known as top white-collar defense attorney for individuals and companies under federal investigation. Among her current matters, she represents a former senior executive of a financial institution in national criminal and regulatory investigations, and she represents individuals in two federal political corruption matters.

She can't talk about those cases, of course. "I always have a handful going, and if I do my job right, no one ever knows about them," she said.

Still, in August, she and partner John Keker are set to defend a real estate broker in a bank fraud trial that is an offshoot of the political corruption case against Harlan Kelly, the former president of the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission.

She scored an important win in January when U.S. District Chief

Judge Richard Seeborg granted her request to sever the bank fraud count, which concerns refinancing Kelly's home mortgage, from the corruption charges. *U.S. v. Kelly and Makras*, 21-CR-00402-RS (N.D. Cal., filed Oct. 19, 2021).

Little also handles complex civil litigation. For instance, she represents a company that claims Pacific Gas & Electric owes it millions for work it did cleaning up after 2018's devastating Camp Fire. PG&E has countersued raising bribery allegations. *Bay Area Concrete LLC v. Pacific Gas & Electric*, CGC-20-587568 (S.F. Super. Ct., filed Oct. 28, 2020).

"It's a big case with a lot of documents," she said. "We're just getting going on discovery now, but I think it'll be pretty interesting."

This past fall, she participated as local counsel in her first in-person

trial since the pandemic, a partnership dispute over Seattle real estate. The client sat in the jury box, while jurors sat socially distanced in the gallery and roamed the hallways during breaks. "It was very strange, but it was good to be back in the courtroom again," she said.

— DON DEBENEDICTIS



Rachael E. Meny

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AND EMPLOYEE MOBILITY LITIGATION



Meny is proud that women attorneys are more and more often leading trial teams in major civil litigation.

"I think that is a trend that has increased greatly in the last five years... as clients recognize the importance of getting diverse lawyers into first-chair positions," she said. "I definitely have benefited from that in my practice from clients who are willing to say, 'Rachael... should be first-chairing a trial.'"

She first co-lead a trial team in a very high-profile arbitration in 2018 in which she and partner Robert Van Nest won a \$179 million award for Google against infamous self-driving car pioneer Andrew Levandowski. "That was my baby; I did it from the very beginning," she said.

Levandowski next filed for bankruptcy, and Meny headed Google's representation in that action, including the adversary proceeding

brought against Uber. "The plan was I was going to be lead counsel at trial," she said, but the matter settled in April. In re *Levandowski*, 20-30242 (Bankr. N.D. Cal., filed March 4, 2020).

Meny also led a team that won a trial over patent licenses on behalf of a biotech firm against a competitor and Harvard University. *10X Genomics Inc v. 1 CellBio Inc.*, 2018-03355 (Suffolk, Mass., Super. Ct., filed Oct. 29, 2018).

The two-week trial opened just before pandemic lockdowns began. When Meny flew home from Boston afterwards, "there was no one on the plane," she said.

One large portion of her practice over the last few years has been defending gig-economy companies such as Lyft, Inc. and Instacart in misclassification lawsuits brought by drivers. Since the adoption by voters of Proposition 22 in 2020, that work has slowed down. But she is repre-

senting Lyft in similar consolidated litigation first filed by the California attorney general. *Uber Technologies Wage and Hour Cases*, CJC21005179 (S.F. Super. Ct., coor'd Aug. 12, 2021).

Meny also frequently helps clients by investigating and perhaps resolving any potential legal claims prior to litigation. "It's a part of the practice that I really enjoy because you get to learn a lot about a particular business," she said.

– DON DEBENEDICTIS