

# Daily Journal

www.dailyjournal.com

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 2024

## Performance and Psychology

*Domb & Rauchwerger partners use interests in music and the mind to help harmed employees.*

By Shane Nelson

Special to the Daily Journal

Employment litigator Zack I. Domb started playing guitar at 12.

“At some point, I heard Led Zeppelin, and I just started playing eight hours a day,” Domb said. “All I wanted to do when I was a kid was to be Jimmy Page.”

A fan of everything from rock and bluegrass to classical and flamenco, Domb went on to study studio jazz guitar as an undergraduate at USC and later performed professionally.

“At a certain point in time, I decided being a professional musician wasn’t for me,” Domb recalled. “When I started gigging and playing music 10-12 hours a day, I stopped listening to music, and I realized it was becoming a job for me - not a passion.”

Domb completed his legal degree at Loyola Law School in 2009 and went to work shortly afterward at a small employment law firm. Over his 15-year career, Domb has represented plaintiffs and defendants in employment matters, including cases that ended up in trial. And it turns out some of the skills he honed as a musician have been helpful in the courtroom.

“There’s a performance aspect to both,” Domb said. “You have to be able to get people’s attention, and then once you get it, how to maintain it, hold on to it. And if you’re going to get people’s attention, how to say something of value and say something important.”

In the spring of 2022, Domb teamed up with his longtime friend and colleague, attorney Devin E.



Devin Rauchwerger, left, and Zack Domb | Thomas Kurtz / Special to the Daily Journal

Rauchwerger, to launch the plaintiffs-side employment boutique Domb & Rauchwerger LLP in Pasadena.

Home to three attorneys, the firm tackles individual wrongful termination, harassment, retaliation and discrimination cases along with wage-and-hour class actions.

Like Domb, Rauchwerger started his undergraduate studies considering - at least in part - the idea of a career in something other than the law.

“I was actually really torn about whether I was going to go down the legal path or whether I was going to go down the psychology route,” Rauchwerger said. “I’ve always felt

I had a knack for connecting with people. I enjoyed the way the mind works and processes things and dealing with emotions.”

Rauchwerger and Domb were good friends and in the same fraternity in college. Rauchwerger completed his law degree at USC in 2010 and worked with Domb at a small plaintiffs’ employment firm before they went separate ways. But the duo reconnected on the defense side at Fisher & Phillips LLP, where they both made partner before deciding to strike out together on their own in 2022.

“The idea of being able to ac-

tually help employees again was something that appealed to us,” Rauchwerger said. “You can win a case for a defendant, and at the end of the day, they’re only going to be so grateful because they still have to pay you quite a bit of money. ... When you’re on the employee side, you’re helping an individual who is out of a job and who just is really in need of help, and that creates such a good feeling for us.”

Rauchwerger added that he appreciates the opportunity to be a client counselor.

“It can be very psychologically traumatizing. “If all of a sudden you

get fired out of nowhere, particularly if it's wrongful termination, the person is feeling a whole host of emotions," Rauchwerger explained. "So, I view my job not only as obviously being a zealous advocate for my client and maximizing their case but also to help them emotionally through the process."

Rauchwerger and Domb mentioned a \$400,000 settlement they were recently able to secure for a former charter school employee who was fired not long after returning from medical leave. *Amy Lapszynski v. Excelsior Charter Group*, CIVSB2220912 (San Bernardino Super. Ct., filed Mar. 18, 2024).

"The reason I'm so happy with

the result is this was a person who wasn't making much money," Domb explained. "This poor woman had to take several months off, and then when she came back, according to her employer, she just couldn't tie her shoes straight. They started writing her up for nonsense things and fired her. It was so nice to give her a good result because this is a person who absolutely needed help."

Defense attorney Pascal Benyamini wasn't involved with the *Lapszynski v. Excelsior* matter, but he has opposed Domb & Rauchwerger LLP on a few other employment cases.

"We're not always going to agree on the facts," Benyamini said. "We may even disagree on what the facts

mean or the application of the law to the facts. But they're really good lawyers, and they're zealous advocates, and they do it in a very professional way, which isn't something I can say for all the lawyers I come across."

Defense attorney Richard J. Frey, who has opposed Domb in litigation, said he wouldn't hesitate to refer a case to the plaintiffs' lawyer.

"Zack is tough, which I'm not going to say makes him stand out on that side. But he's professional, which in my opinion does make him stand out on that side," Frey explained. "And he's clearly willing to go all in for his clients. I don't give that compliment very often. A lot

of attorneys who go all in for their clients do it unethically. But he's professional."

Like Rauchwerger, Domb mentioned the satisfaction he takes from representing plaintiffs in employment cases.

"By the time we take on a client, the person's gone through hell," he explained. "The best part of the job is that we can help these people and let them know what happened to them was not their fault. It was against the law; it shouldn't have happened. And hopefully, we can change their lives with the outcome we can get them."

---

[news@dailyjournal.co](mailto:news@dailyjournal.co)