



Law Offices of Hal 'Corky' Kessler

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Corky Kessler is a “one stop shop” lawyer for the entertainment industry. More than just a legal advisor, he works with clients to help get their films made. In 2017 and 2019, Corky was named top entertainment lawyer in the United States. He has successfully worked with governors and US congressmen in several states to implement new laws and federal tax incentives for investment in qualifying film and television projects, which led to Section 181 and Section 199 of the American Jobs Creation Act of 2004. Corky was instrumental in working to extend Section 181 for filmmakers, set to expire December 31, 2020 to December 31, 2025. He has also been actively involved in the application of Section 168 of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act which was signed into law December 2017 and became active January 2018. Section 168 of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act outlined the new incentives for film, television, and theater for five years. He has authored a reference book covering such federal and state tax incentives.

Corky is active in establishing and advising various film funds and film funding sources in North America and is expanding internationally. In October 2012, Corky signed a Memorandum of Understanding with private investors from China for a \$200 million co-production deal with the US.

Corky has represented several authors and negotiated publishing deal with several major publishers, including Random House and Doubleday. He has assembled and built winning teams for more than 30 entertainment and other business ventures. Corky has developed, packaged, and executive produced over 20 feature films including *The Sum of Us* starring Russell Crowe, which won the Australian Academy Award for Best Film, *Human Capital* starring Marisa Tomei and Liev Schreiber, and *Certifiably Jonathan* starring Jonathan Winters, Robin Williams, Howie Mandel, Rob Reiner, Jim Carey, Sarah Silverman, and others. His IMDb is located at <https://www.imdb.com/name/nm0004652/>

Corky Kessler is admitted to practice in Illinois, US District Court for the Northern District, Member of the Trial Bar of the US District Court for the Northern District of Illinois, US Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit, Member of the American Bar Association and the Chicago Bar Association.

Speaking engagements, panel discussions and seminars throughout North America and China include:

- **2023** – Working for filmjojo.com and ARWO Studios. .
- **2014 – 2020:** Sundance Film Festival, Park City, UT: Speaking engagements; moderated panel discussions on women’s issues in film.
- **2015 – 2020:** Cannes Film Festival, France: Moderated six industry panels livestreamed worldwide.
- **2013 – 2016:** Toronto Film Festival, Canada: Moderated six industry panels livestreamed worldwide.
- **April 2019:** Honored with the Producer Choice Award for Lifetime Achievement as Best Entertainment Attorney and Executive Producer
- **April 2015:** Speaker on panel at China US Summit, Los Angeles, CA.
- **September 2014:** Toronto Film Festival, Canada: Legal Finance; moderated panel discussion filmed and livestreamed worldwide.
- **April 28, 2014:** Featured speaker at the China US Summit at the Los Angeles Biltmore Hotel.
- **October 13-20, 2012:** Professionals Abroad, Beijing, China: Led a small delegation of entertainment industry professionals to meet with members of the Chinese entertainment industry, including funding

sources, production and distribution companies, casting directors, producers, screenwriters, talent agents and members of government film departments.

- **April 2011:** Beijing International Film Festival, China: Invited by the Chinese government to be a participant in multiple film panels throughout the festival.

Theatrical Plays:

The Nerd, Hauptman, Jump for Joy, The Good Times are Killing Me, Driving Miss Daisy, Shirley Valentine, I'm Not Rappaport, Frankie and Johnny in the Claire de Lune, Steel Magnolias, Don't Dress for Dinner, Hoops.

Executive Producer and/or Attorney - Feature Films:

Certifiably Jonathan: Jonathan Winters, Robin Williams, Howie Mandel, Sara Silverman, Tim Conway, Rob Reiner; *The Sum of Us:* Russell Crowe, Jack Thompson; Distributed by Samuel Goldwyn Co.;

Australian Academy Award *Finding North:* Wendy McKenna, John Benjamin Hickey; Screenplay by Kim Powers; Distributed by Cowboy Booking *Wild Things:* Directed by John McNaughton, written by Stephen Peters; w/ Kevin Bacon, Matt Dillon, Neve Campbell *Legend of Bloody Mary:* Screenplay by Joseph Domingo; currently in distribution phase.

Teary Sockets: screenplay by Scott Anderson; currently in distribution phase

Burning Bodhi: Kaley Cuoco, Sandra Pieterse, Virginia Madsen

Return to Zero: Minnie Driver, Paul Adelstein, Alfred Molina

Natural Selection: screenplay by Robbie Pickering

Oso Bucco: Mike Starr, Illeana Douglas, Christian Stolte

Greater: written by Brian Reindl, life story of Arkansas football player Brandon Burlsworth

Broker Hill: written/directed by Dagen Merrill; distributed by Porchlight Entertainment, starring Luke Arnold, Alexa Vega, and Timothy Hutton

Heart Strings: screenplay by FireFly Film & Video, co-producers Firefly and Jim Pasternak

Abelar: Tales of an Ancient Empire: screenplay by Yancy Butler & Victoria Maurette; produced by Nick Celozzi

The Best of All Worlds: producer Marshall Bear

We Know Not What We Do: producers Aaron Taylor and Elizabeth Baker

Films Currently in Development and Pre-Production:

Stray Hearts: Screenwriter Keri Roebuck Fitzgerald, revisions by Jenny Wingfield, co-producers Dorothea Petrie, William S. Gilmore and Shari Rhodes

Bronzeville: produced by Think Differently Company

A Gringo Walks into a Cantina: Screenwriter/Co-producer Jeff Kehe *Wanted:* producer Linda Bridgen

Angels in the Sky: producer Mike Flint, a feature film about Israel's first Air Force

Miles and Me: biopic on Miles Davis, producer Rudy Langlais

Bob Marley: biopic, producer Rudy Langlais

Captain Blood (remake): producer Rudy Langlais

Shades of Grace: producer Jennifer Tadlock

MegaBall\$: producer Marc Baron (screenplay) and Joe Cirillo

The Allotment: screenwriter Robert Peele

Paradise Village: producer Glenn Withrow

Collusion: producer Glenn Withrow

Kid Combat: producer Chris Helwink

Cubicle: producer Robert Menzies

The Thaw: producer Glenn Withrow

Jupiter 2023: producers William Indich and Susan Indich

Crackin' Greenbridge: producer Alan Jay Spector

Rose Is Not a Flower: producer Patti Price

Apart But A Part: screenwriter Jay Cohen

Queue: screenwriter Jessica Wilson

Fire Lake: screenwriter Alan Jay Spector