

## Rising Star: Gibson Dunn's Ilissa Samplin

By Adam Lidgett

*Law360 (June 3, 2022, 2:02 PM EDT)* -- Gibson Dunn & Crutcher LLP's Ilissa Samplin helped Cablevision Systems Corp. unit Voom HD secure a massive settlement in a contract dispute with Dish Network Corp. and helped AMC win a profit participation case over "The Walking Dead" series, earning her a spot among the media and entertainment attorneys under age 40 honored by Law360 as Rising Stars.

### **HER BIGGEST CASE:**

Nearly a decade ago, Samplin was on a case representing Voom in a suit alleging it lost out on \$2.4 billion in licensing fees after Dish pulled out two years into a 15-year deal in which it had agreed to carry Voom's high-definition television channels.

The case, which went to trial, resulted in a settlement, in which Dish agreed to pay \$700 million to resolve the contract claims. Snyder said the deal was "extremely favorable" to his client.

"It was really big because it was very closely watched in the industry, we were just written up in all the industry press and pages every day," Samplin said.

She said she had the challenge of having the financial and accounting witnesses, who often talk in strict financial terms.

"They really had to come and speak to a lay jury about these accounting concepts but in a way that a jury could understand it," Samplin said.

### **ANOTHER RECENT CASE:**

Samplin represented AMC Networks in a suit in which producers of "The Walking Dead" accused it of cheating them out of profits from the hit show.

In April, Los Angeles Superior Court Judge Daniel J. Buckley granted



**Ilissa Samplin**  
Gibson Dunn

**Age:** 36

**Home base:** Los Angeles

**Position:** Partner

**Law school:** Stanford Law School

**First job after law school:**

Associate at Gibson Dunn & Crutcher LLP in New York

AMC's motion for summary adjudication on the suit's first cause of action — a significant blow — but kept the producers' claim for breach of contract related to an auditing concern.

"It's the most interesting because one, it's fun to be litigating cases about hot issues in entertainment, and two, how the judge separated the case into phases allowing us to prevail on a bench trial and later on summary," Samplin said.

**HER PROUDEST MOMENT:**

Samplin said she was proud to make partner around the time she had her first child. She said she made partner in 2019, the year after her daughter was born.

"It was challenging year," she said. "I had my first child and I was up for partner and I had some big cases going on that year."

"For me that was learning to be a mom at the same time I was trying to transition into a partner role," she added. "And I'm proud of having been able to achieve personal and professional success."

**WHAT MOTIVATES HER:**

Samplin said she's motivated to be a mentor for women to help them succeed in the job.

"I really want to see more women and diverse attorneys in this profession, and I feel that I've had the support both from men and from women throughout my career and it's helped me get to where I am," Samplin said. "And I want to be that mentor for others going forward."

**WHY SHE'S A MEDIA AND ENTERTAINMENT ATTORNEY:**

Samplin has always loved the entertainment industry since she was little, having wanted early on to be an actress before attending law school, she said.

"I love the industry and the law, it's a way to combine those interests, and I just think also entertainment is a very fascinating industry over the past few years because it's constantly evolving, which means the legal issues that apply to the industry are also constantly evolving," she said.

— As told to Adam Lidgett

*Law360's Rising Stars are attorneys under 40 whose legal accomplishments belie their age. A team of Law360 editors selected the 2022 Rising Stars winners after reviewing more than 1,350 submissions. Attorneys had to be under 40 as of April 30, 2022, to be eligible for this year's award. This interview has been edited and condensed.*