

Rising Star: Gibson Dunn's Connor Sullivan

By **Benjamin Morse**

Law360 (August 3, 2026, 4:02 PM EDT) -- Connor Sullivan of Gibson Dunn & Crutcher LLP helped secure a first-of-its-kind defamation victory for OpenAI and persuaded a New York judge to dismiss Sean "Diddy" Combs' \$100 million suit against NBCUniversal, earning him a spot among the media and entertainment attorneys under age 40 honored by Law360 as Rising Stars.

The biggest case of his career:

Sullivan told Law360 the biggest case of his career was representing Tinder founders in their \$2 billion suit claiming the dating app's parent companies deliberately tanked the value of their stock options.

Sullivan said the suit lasted for years and settled the night before closing arguments at trial. His clients secured \$441 million, Sullivan said.

Sullivan described the matter as a complex and intellectually engaging case that implicated a range of legal questions.

"It was a very good example of the overlap between — and this is really what I love most about what I do — the overlap between the media and entertainment business and the technology business," he said.

Tinder exemplified that overlap, Sullivan said, because although it emerged as a viral technology startup, users also experienced it as a form of entertainment.

"It was something that people did to entertain themselves," he said. "It had many of the features of an entertainment property, and many of the kinds of personalities and legal issues that arise in disputes over entertainment properties."

The most interesting case he's worked on lately:

Sullivan pointed to two recent matters that he considered the most

2026





Connor Sullivan
Gibson Dunn

Age: 40
Home base: New York
Position: Partner
Law school: Yale
First job after law school: Clerked for U.S. District Judge Katherine Polk Failla

fascinating as of late.

In the first, he represented NBCUniversal Media LLC, Peacock TV LLC and production company Ample Entertainment in Sean "Diddy" Combs' suit over the documentary series "Diddy: The Making of a Bad Boy." Combs alleged that several statements in the documentary defamed him. Sullivan argued the motion to dismiss in New York state court, where the judge dismissed the complaint in April.

"It was a fascinating case, with complicated questions of defamation law and complicated facts," Sullivan said. "I think the right result was the clear result, and I'm glad that we got that result."

Sullivan also pointed to his representation of OpenAI in what he said was believed to be the first defamation case arising from generative artificial intelligence. Mark Walters, a nationally syndicated radio host who discusses Second Amendment issues, alleged that ChatGPT had defamed him by generating false information accusing him of committing fraud and embezzlement.

Gwinnett County Superior Court Judge Tracie H. Cason granted OpenAI's summary judgment motion in May 2025, finding that the challenged ChatGPT output is not defamatory because it doesn't communicate actual facts.

"It posed a lot of very interesting questions about the intersection between traditional defamation law and these new technologies, and the way people interact with them," Sullivan said. "It was a very satisfying win because it articulated some very important concepts about how tort law and the First Amendment and its protections should apply in the context of these new technologies."

How his practice might change in the next 10 years:

Sullivan said artificial intelligence will likely affect both how attorneys practice and the kinds of questions clients ask them to address. In the media and entertainment space, he expects new technologies to influence how content is produced, distributed and consumed, as well as how people work together and audiences interact with it.

"The ongoing increasing overlap between the media and entertainment industry and the technology industry will continue to accentuate those questions," Sullivan said, "and pose really complicated and exciting new issues that are going to need smart lawyering to answer."

Why he's a media and entertainment attorney:

Sullivan traced his interest in media and entertainment in part to watching Turner Classic Movies with his parents as a child. He came to love film not only as a business, but also as a cultural force that gives people a shared experience and something to gather around.

Once he entered the legal profession, Sullivan said, he discovered that the industry also raised the kinds of complicated questions he found compelling, particularly as entertainment and technology become increasingly intertwined.

"It's incredibly fun to get to think about these kinds of entertainment properties, the people who work in the business, the way they interact with each other and what all of this means for the audiences who love it," Sullivan said. "It's just a very exciting part of the economy to get to be involved in."

--As told to Benjamin Morse. Editing by Patrick Reagan.

Law360's Rising Stars are attorneys under 40 whose legal accomplishments belie their age. A team of Law360 editors selected the 2026 Rising Stars winners after reviewing more than 1,100 submissions. Attorneys had to be under 40 as of April 30, 2026, to be eligible for this year's award.

All Content © 2003-2026, Portfolio Media, Inc.