



## Jesse-Justin Cuevas

Partner

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### Overview

Jesse-Justin Cuevas is an in-demand trial lawyer representing both plaintiffs and defendants in high stakes, complex commercial litigation across the country. Named a Top 100 Lawyer in California by the *Daily Journal* (2024), On The Rise – Top 40 Young Lawyer by the American Bar Association (2023), a Trailblazers Plaintiffs' Lawyers by *National Law Journal* (2022, ALM), and a Rising Star of the Plaintiffs Bar by *National Law Journal's* Elite Trial Lawyers (2021, ALM), Cuevas has tried multiple cases and secured landmark wins and settlements for her diverse portfolio of clients who range from Fortune 100 companies to small businesses and individuals.

Cuevas's skillset is as versatile as the industries she works with. She has successfully litigated cases related to antitrust, breach of contract, consumer and commercial fraud, state and federal False Claims Act, intellectual property, products liability, and trade secrets. Her litigation and trial successes span the consumer goods, cryptocurrency, solar and gas construction, insurance, mortgage, pharmaceutical, and streaming technology industries. The common thread among each of Cuevas's cases is the confidence she instills in her clients and her instinctive and nimble talent for understanding complex subject matters and intelligibly translating them into facts and arguments to judges, juries, and arbitration panels.

#### HIGH PROFILE LITIGATION

Cuevas has tried multiple cases to judgment, each time parachuting into the case shortly before trial is set to begin. Most recently, Cuevas and her team secured one of the biggest trial wins in the country: a \$330+ million Final Award for her client, one of the largest independent power producers in the country, after a full arbitration hearing. Cuevas helped prepare the sprawling case for trial in less than six months from the filing of the complaint. At trial, Cuevas directed her client's Chief Operating Officer and cross-examined

multiple high-ranking executives for the respondents, including the other side's Chief Accounting Officer from whom Cuevas elicited an admission of breach on the witness stand.

Shortly after securing that trial victory, Cuevas and her all-star team secured a first-of-its-kind dismissal of the Federal Trade Commission's antitrust challenge to Intercontinental Exchange, Inc.'s (ICE) proposed \$11+ billion acquisition of Black Knight, Inc., just 108 days after Susman Godfrey entered the case. From the get-go, Cuevas took ownership of the piece of the case relating to the divestiture of Black Knight's Empower and Optimal Blue mortgage technology businesses to Constellation Software—one of the most critical factual issues in the case. Defending ICE from parallel administrative and federal proceedings, Cuevas handled the depositions of several key witnesses—many of which were third parties she could not lead—and elicited some of the most important testimony in the case to defend against the FTC's injunction and administrative actions.

Cuevas also served as counsel to the largest political subdivisions in the largest state in the nation—including the University of California system, the California State University system, and the County of Los Angeles—in a landmark suit against the “Big 4” wireless carriers for over-billing the government. In 2020, a deal worth \$175 million was struck to settle the matter (award net of fees and expenses to be determined) – this is California's second largest False Claims Act settlement in state history outside of the healthcare industry. Read more about the case on [\*Law Street Media\*](#) and [\*Law360\*](#)\* (\*subscription required).

## FIRM LEADERSHIP & COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

When she isn't killing it in the courtroom, Cuevas leads key initiatives at Susman Godfrey and works with multiple community and professional organizations in her Los Angeles community, including several aimed at making the legal industry a more diverse and inclusive place to practice.

At Susman Godfrey, Cuevas is the founder and co-chair of the firm's Mentoring Committee, which she established as an associate in 2021 when she developed and implemented a successful firm-wide associate mentoring program. For her work on the Mentoring Committee, Cuevas was named a Finalist as California Legal Awards' Mentor of the Year in 2022 and a Finalist for *Los Angeles Business Journal's* Mentor of the Year in 2021. Click [here](#)\* to see her feature in California legal publication, *The Recorder*, in connection with the 2022 awards and [here](#) to read about Cuevas's selection as a finalist in 2021 (\*subscription required).

Cuevas also helped develop the Susman Godfrey Prize, an honor awarded annually to 1L and 2L law students of color from eligible law schools who have excelled academically and have impressive overall achievement. On the SG Prize Committee, Cuevas plays an integral role coordinating the selection, review, and awards process for Prize recipients each year. She also devotes

substantial time to mentoring Prize finalists and winners, including moderating an annual federal judicial clerkship panel that helps these impressive and deserving law students navigate the exclusive and often opaque clerkship application process.

Outside of the firm, Cuevas co-chairs the Steering Committee for Just the Beginning Foundation's (JTB) Los Angeles Summer Legal Institute (SLI). JTB is a pipeline organization that works to illuminate the path to law school and a successful legal career for students from underrepresented communities. SLI, JTB's cornerstone youth program, is a free legal immersion program that introduces Los Angeles-area high schoolers to potential legal careers. As Co-Chair, Jesse-Justin plans the curriculum for the week-long program and presents many of its programs. In 2021, SLI won California LAW's Education Pipeline Award.

Cuevas currently is the Ninth Circuit Representative for the Federal Bar Association (FBA) Younger Lawyers Division's (YLD) national board. As Chair of the YLD's Education Committee, Cuevas helps plan and promote the YLD's national programming and liaises with the FBA's Federal Litigation Committee. Cuevas is also a Lawyer Representative to the Ninth Circuit Judicial Conference where, in addition to attending and helping plan annual District and Circuit Conferences, Cuevas serves on the Central District of California's Mediation Panel Selection Committee and assists the Court in vetting applications to serve as a neutral on the District's Court Mediation Panel

## BACKGROUND

Prior to joining Susman Godfrey, Cuevas served as a federal Law Clerk to Chief Judge Albert Diaz of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit and Chief Judge Dolly M. Gee of the U.S. District Court for the Central District of California.

Cuevas received her law degree, *magna cum laude*, from Northwestern University School of Law, where she served as an Executive Editor of the *Northwestern University Law Review* and was inducted into the Order of the Coif. A Los Angeles native, Cuevas grew up in Nashville, Tennessee.

She currently lives in Los Angeles with her husband and dogs

## Notable Representations

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### Qui Tam & Fraud

- **State of California ex rel. OnTheGo Wireless, LLC et al. v. Cellco P'ship DBA Verizon Wireless et al.** (California Superior Court, Sacramento County). Represented the whistleblower and over 30 local government entities in the state of California, (including the CSU system, UC system, and Los Angeles, Riverside, Orange, and San Bernardino Counties) against the nation's largest cellphone providers (AT&T, Verizon,

Sprint, T-Mobile) for overcharging. Cuevas led the defensive side of the case, working closely with clients and preparing them for and defending them in many important depositions. On the offensive side, Cuevas elicited critical admissions that led to a major plaintiffs' ruling. The case settlement for a combined deal valued at \$175 million, which is California's second largest CFCA settlement in state history outside of the healthcare industry. Read more about the case on [Law Street Media](#) and [Law360\\*](#).

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## Consumer Protection

- ***Mark J. Patane, et al. v. Nestle Waters North America, Inc.* (D. Conn.).** Cuevas represents named plaintiffs in their putative consumer fraud class action against Nestlé in connection with its unlawful mislabeling of Poland Spring brand "100% Natural Spring Water." Over 7+ years of litigation, Plaintiffs have survived five dispositive motions, including, most recently, Nestlé's third motion for summary judgment. The Court issued its decision in late December 2024, months after Cuevas argued on behalf of Plaintiffs at the summary judgment hearing before the Honorable Jeffrey Meyer.
  - ***In re: Blackbaud, Inc. Customer Data Security Breach Litigation* (D.S.C.).** Cuevas represents consumers in this multi-district litigation relating to one of the largest data security breaches in American history. Shortly after the court denied plaintiffs' initial motion for class certification, Cuevas parachuted into this high-profile case, in which Susman Godfrey has been appointed interim co-lead counsel, to pen plaintiffs' motion for leave to file a renewed motion to certify a subclass pursuing claims under the California Consumer Privacy Law. [Read more](#) (subscription required).
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## Antitrust

- ***Federal Trade Commission v. Intercontinental Exchange, Inc., et al.* (N.D. Cal.).** Just 108 days after Susman Godfrey was hired and shortly before trial was set to begin, Cuevas helped her team secure a first-of-its-kind dismissal of the FTC's federal and administrative antitrust challenges to client ICE's proposed \$11+ billion acquisition of Black Knight, Inc. To keep pressure on the agency and ready the case for trial, Cuevas and her team took and defended over 50 depositions and reviewed millions of pages of documents. Cuevas managed the divestiture piece of the case, one of the most important factual issues, and elicited critical testimony that helped lead her team to success and allowed the transaction to close.
- ***In re Extended Stay Hotel Antitrust Litigation* (N.D. Ill.).** Cuevas represents several plaintiffs in this consolidated putative class action alleging that software companies Integrated Decisions and Systems, Inc. (IDeaS) and SAS Institute Inc. (SAS) and hotel owner-operators Hilton, Extended Stay America, Sonesta, Wyndham, Hyatt, and Choice have violated federal antitrust laws in connection with their shared use of the

G3 RMS pricing algorithm product in extended stay hotels across the country. [Read more.](#)

- **Tekion Corp. CDK Global, LLC (N.D. Cal.).** Cuevas brings her antitrust chops to the *Tekion v. CDK* matter, in which plaintiff Tekion has brought manufactured antitrust claims against CDK for CDK's enforcement of its private contractual arrangements with CDK's franchise auto dealer customers.

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## Construction Disputes

- **Confidential Construction Arbitration.** Winning over \$330 million for her client after a full arbitration hearing that Cuevas tried less than six months after filing the complaint. Cuevas's client, one of the country's largest independent power producers, alleged breach of contract, fraud, and other claims in connection with a multi-hundred-million-dollar construction project. At trial, Cuevas examined multiple witnesses and even elicited the admission of breach of contract from the other side's Chief Accounting Executive.
- **Zachry Industrial, Inc. v. Golden Pass LNG Terminal LLC (Bankr. S.D. Tex.).** Cuevas represented the lead construction contractor of a \$10+ billion liquefied natural gas export facility in Sabine Pass, Texas, in its lawsuit against Golden Pass, which seeks to avoid a November 2022 Claims Settlement Agreement as a constructive fraudulent transfer under federal bankruptcy and Texas law. Read about the adversary proceeding [here](#).

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## Product Liability & Personal Injury

- **Shellie Lynne West Hodges et al. v. Walmart, Inc. et al.(D.S.C.).** Cuevas helped defend Walmart in a product liability action alleging that a plastic gasoline container manufactured by now-bankrupt Blitz USA was defective and caused plaintiffs' injuries. Cuevas handled several key depositions, including one of the plaintiffs who brought suit.
- **Grubbs v. Walmart Stores, Inc.(D.S.C.).** Cuevas helped defend Walmart in a product liability action alleging that a plastic gasoline container manufactured by now-bankrupt Blitz USA was defective and caused plaintiff's injuries.

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## Intellectual Property

- **Intellectual Pixels Limited v. Sony Interactive Entertainment, LLC(C.D. Cal.).** Cuevas represents the inventor of five foundational patents in the cloud-gaming and streaming graphics applications space in two lawsuits against Sony for patent infringement in Sony's PlayStation Now, Remote Play, and SharePlay products. The cases are currently stayed for *inter-partes*

- ***PMS Systems Corp. v. Honeywell International Inc. et al.* (C.D. Cal.).** In her first case as an associate as Susman Godfrey, Cuevas defended KBRwyle Technology Solutions, LLC in a complex trade secrets action. Cuevas briefed the team's motion to dismiss and argued the motion before Judge Kronstadt in federal court. The case was resolved on confidential terms before the motion was decided.
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## Breach of Contract

- **Confidential Pharmaceutical Arbitration.** In 2022, Cuevas successfully represented claimant, the inventor of a unicorn dermatological product, in a confidential multi-million-dollar arbitration brought against a main player in the pharmaceutical space for breach of its "commercially reasonable efforts" contractual obligations, a notoriously difficult claim to prove. At trial, Cuevas handled claimant's damages expert and cross-examined executives for respondents, eliciting important admissions that helped lead her team to victory. Cuevas and her team prevailed in the David-and-Goliath dispute, securing a complete liability ruling, damages, and costs of suit.
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## Cryptocurrency & Cannabis

- **Confidential Cryptocurrency Case.** Cuevas litigated breach of contract-based claims against a lead player in the cryptocurrency space relating to the failure to issue tokens as agreed in an investor agreement. Secured confidential settlement.
- ***Apothio, LLC v. Kern County, et al.* (E.D. Cal.).** Cuevas represents plaintiff Apothio, an emerging player in the hemp industry, in its billion-dollar lawsuit against Kern County, Kern County Sheriff's Office, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, and multiple state and county officers for their unlawful and unconstitutional destruction of over 500 acres of Apothio's hemp crops in October 2019. The Court partially denied defendants' motion to dismiss and motion for reconsideration, and the parties are currently in the midst of fact discovery.

## Honors & Distinctions

- Top 100 Lawyers in California, *Daily Journal* (2024)
- On The Rise – Top 40 Young Lawyers Award, American Bar Association (2023)
- Plaintiffs Lawyers Trailblazer, *National Law Journal* (2022, ALM)
- Rising Star of the Plaintiffs Bar, *National Law Journal's* Elite Trial Lawyers (2021, ALM)
- Finalist, Mentor of the Year, *The Recorder* (2022, ALM)
- Finalist, Mentor of the Year (2021, *Los Angeles Business Journal*)

- Executive Editor, *Northwestern University Law Review*
- Order of the Coif
- Northwestern University School of Law, Class of 2015 Leadership Award

## *Clerkships*

Honorable Dolly M. Gee, United States District Court for the Central District of California

Honorable Albert Diaz, United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit

## *Education*

**Northwestern University School of Law** (J.D., , 2015)

**New York University** (B.A., , 2009)

- Gallatin School of Individualized Study

## *Admissions*

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### **Bar Admissions**

- California
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### **Court Admissions**

- United States Supreme Court
- U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit
- U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit
- U.S. District Court for the Central District of California
- U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of California
- U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California
- U.S. District Court for the Southern District of California

## *Leadership & Professional Memberships*

### **PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS**

- Director–9th Circuit Representative, Federal Bar Association, Younger Lawyers Division
- Lawyer Representative, Ninth Circuit Judicial Conference
- Member, American Bar Association
- Fellow, American Bar Foundation
- Member, California Lawyers Association – Antitrust and Unfair Competition Law Section

## COMMUNITY GROUPS

- Co-Chair, Steering Committee, Just the Beginning Foundation, Los Angeles Summer Legal Institute
- Board Member, Northwestern Law's Alumni Club of Los Angeles