

For Covington's Adrian Perry, Music Is A Family Affair

By **Theresa Schliep**

Law360 (November 26, 2025, 6:36 PM EST) -- Despite having a famous rock star dad, Covington & Burling LLP partner Adrian J. Perry wasn't all that interested in being a musician as a young child, but he knew as early as 6 years old that he wanted to be a lawyer.

Perry's legal ambitions started as he saw artists in his family navigate the sometimes challenging business side of the industry, a struggle for musicians even as successful as his father Joe Perry, a founding member of the band Aerosmith.

"I had a front-row seat to that, and I remember as a little kid thinking, 'We need a lawyer in this family,'" Perry told Law360.

These problems weren't specific to Aerosmith, according to Perry, but rather were endemic to the music industry as a whole, especially in the 1960s and 1970s. He described it as an educational issue, where artists didn't completely understand their rights and how different legal structures impacted their compensation and their careers altogether.

"My dad's a smart guy, you know?" Perry said. "But no one was telling him the information. He wasn't getting the information. And I think this happens with a lot of musicians."

So Perry was committed to being a lawyer and wasn't interested in picking up the guitar. That is, until he was a preteen, when his feelings on music changed.

"A switch got flipped," said Perry, now 44.

Yet he never lost sight of his commitment to working in the legal field, and has fused working in the law with his passion for music. He's now a New York-based co-chair of Covington's music industry and entertainment and media practices, and he released a new album earlier this month called "Top Down" under the name El Cortina, the moniker for his new act.

Balancing music and his law career isn't new for Perry. His first professional music gig was at a National Association of Music Merchants conference alongside Greg Allman, Butch Trucks and Derek Trucks, all members of the Allman Brothers Band. Perry said he didn't quite appreciate how cool that was at the time.

Before attending Georgetown University Law Center, Perry worked in the music department for

"Saturday Night Live." He also kept playing music and formed a band with his brother, Tony Perry, that was initially called TAB the Band and later Dead Boots.

While in law school and as an associate at Weil Gotshal & Manges LLP, Perry was doing it all — or at least the lawyer-by-day, rocker-by-night thing.

"I'd be in the back of a van, doing diligence or whatever junior associate work" he was handling at the time, he said. "My brother would be driving us between tour stops. I'd be doing conference calls in a dressing room. ... [I'd] hang up the phone, go out on stage, do the sound check, go back and work, then play in front of 10,000 people who are waiting to see Stone Temple Pilots."

His band also opened for Modest Mouse and Jane's Addiction, played shows like South by Southwest and Lollapalooza, and put out four albums.

That band then went on a permanent hiatus in 2015, and Perry said he put his head down and worked to establish his legal career.

Some of his clients have included Peloton, TIDAL, Black Music Action Coalition, Universal Music Group and the family of singer and actor Bing Crosby. He's also developed an expertise in new technologies like virtual reality and artificial intelligence.

Perry does a lot of music licensing, and many of his clients develop products for music distribution or licensing.

"Being a small part of helping the industry innovate and bringing that practical perspective to it, that's really the most fun part of the job," Perry said.

Perry built his legal practice at a time of tremendous change for music, with the advent of streaming services that make music easily accessible to the public, but those services' compensation models for artists have garnered criticism.

Speaking from his experience as a musician, Perry noted that it's never been easy to make a living from music. While it's easier than ever to make music and put it out there for public consumption, breaking through is a different story, he said.

"You see tons of musicians now that are like mini brands," he said.

Perry described his legal role as a bit like "a counselor on entertainment-related projects," work that is necessarily aided by his experience in the industry. In addition to playing music professionally and working at SNL, where his tasks included doing rights clearances, Perry also worked for Sony as an artists and repertoire scout, which is someone who identifies and develops talent for music labels.

"I understand the industry deeply: the personalities, the way things work from all fronts," Perry said. "I can get in the weeds with someone that's really deep in the music space or talk to someone that knows nothing and help them through the basics."

El Cortina, his new solo act, came out of the pandemic, when Perry started playing the guitar again and writing music. He said he missed having a project like this one in his life.

"We played our first show, and I'm not running off to join the circus or anything, but it's nice to have a project in my life where I can write and get things out," he said.

Perry said he took an "old-school approach" to this latest album, describing it as having a Laurel Canyon sound — the Los Angeles neighborhood was a major music scene in the 1960s and 1970s — "with a little bit of New York edge." The album is about 40 minutes with nine songs and was released on Nov. 7 through an independent New York label called Declared Goods.

Like many music enthusiasts, Perry is a fan of classic bands like the New York Dolls and The Rolling Stones. But he's also a fan of Tame Impala and the English band Wet Leg. And he's into Chappell Roan, the pop star who calls herself "your favorite artist's favorite artist." He saw her at Forest Hills stadium in New York, where she did a cover of the song "Barracuda" and gave a "lights-out" performance, he said.

"Chappell Roan, man. She's amazing," he said.

--Editing by Marygrace Anderson.