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Christopher C. Melcher combines high-profile divorce work—such as his current representation of Kanye West in his divorce from Kim Kardashian—with a family law appellate practice and a side career as a legal commentator on local and national media outlets.

“I love the law and love talking about it,” he said on a day in early February when he’d just finished analyzing for one newspaper the prospect that an ex-aide of Prince Andrew would testify in London in the royal family member’s sexual assault case. “At first I restricted my commentary to family law matters, but I saw that a lot of interesting legal issues really need explaining to the public.”

The West-Kardashian divorce took a recent turn when Kardashian slammed West for publicly “attacking” her, alleging he’s obsessed with trying to “control and manipulate” the ongoing litigation. *Marriage of Kim Kardashian West v. Kanye West*, 21STFL01626 (L.A.



Christopher C. Melcher

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Super. Ct., filed Feb. 19, 2021).

“Celebrities generally don’t fight,” Melcher said of the course many follow when they break up. “Normal people fight. We can learn from celebrities that it pays to protect your image.”

The fractious *Kardashian v. West* matter is an outlier, Melcher added. “Like Brangelina [Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie], another power couple, these are exceptions. But Ye speaks well for himself, so I’ll let him do the talking on this case.”

In 2020, Melcher argued before the state Supreme Court in a rare oral appearance by an

amicus counsel to offer his expertise on a vexed question of the interplay between the community property and joint tenancy rights of married couples in disputes with a bankruptcy trustee. In *re Brace*, 9 Cal.5th 903 (SCOCAL, op. filed July 23, 2020).

The high court was answering a certified question from the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals. It held that the community property presumption in the Family Code overrode the record title presumption in the Evidence Code—as Melcher had argued.

“It’s rare for an amicus to get to the lectern,”

Melcher said, “or even mentioned in an opinion. My views were sought because the counsel for the parties in the case were bankruptcy lawyers, and they needed a family law perspective.” A few years earlier, Melcher had successfully brought the community property issue directly to the Supreme Court in a case of his own. In *re Marriage of Valli*, 58 Cal.4th 1396 (SCOCAL, op. filed May 15, 2014).

“I’m always looking for new horizons,” Melcher said. “Being a lawyer is my job, not my identity. My legal commentary work is enjoyable, but it doesn’t pay as well as divorces.

—JOHN ROEMER