

American Roots Run Deep

The Intersection of IP, Music, and Artist Management

In the Southern Heartland, just west of Appalachia, there's a bustling music city called Nashville. Birthplace of the Grand Ole Opry, Country Music Hall of Fame, Ryman Auditorium, and Music Row, and immortalized in countless lyrics, Nashville is home for thousands in the creative community. Among them is creator and talent agent Geoff Turner.

Like so many, Geoff moved to Tennessee chasing a dream. The Illinois native grew up playing percussion in orchestras, jazz ensembles, local bands, and other organizations. While still in college studying for a Bachelor of Arts in Music Business, Geoff played with several local bands. He learned how to book shows and began acting as the tour and marketing manager for one of the groups he performed with because none of the bandmates knew how to bridge the gap from garage band to paying gigs. After graduation, Geoff spent time working in sales, distribution, and music publishing for a variety of organizations, including Warner Music Group. He even owned his own firm, SlamFire Agency.

In March 2015, Geoff found himself working full time for Red 11 Music, an independent booking agency focused on Roots, Americana, and Independent Country. The agency's 40+ artists included Shooter Jennings, Turnpike Troubadours, Muscadine Bloodline, and Giovannie & The Hired Guns. Geoff specialized in concert booking representation and artist development. Then in 2023, Red 11 Music was acquired by William Morris Endeavor (WME), and Geoff transitioned to WME with several members of the Red 11 Music team.

According to its website, "WME is the original advocate for the world's most extraordinary artists, content creators, and talent across books, digital media, fashion, film, food, music, sports, television, and theater. With over 125 years of experience, we work with clients across the full creative spectrum to diversify and grow their businesses, leverage the full potential of their intellectual property, and bring projects to life that define the cultural landscape."

As a talent agent in the live concert and touring industry, Geoff manages touring plans, literary work, and brand partnerships for a growing roster of music artists and bands. He also oversees bookings for WME's overall



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—Geoff Turner



American Roots roster in the Texas and Louisiana markets. Thus, for Geoff and the artists he represents, intellectual property (IP) protections are essential.

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Licensing is one of the many ways creators can leverage their IP to generate income and build assets. In its simplest form, licensing is an agreement that enables both parties to benefit from the IP owned by one or both of them. These licensing agreements can encompass using an artist’s music in a television show, having

an artist appear in a commercial to support a product, letting a biographer write the artist’s story in a book, or adding an artist’s touring logo to a venue’s concert promotion materials.

Without IP rights and protections, creators would struggle to leverage their brand identity and their creative works. There is only one Lynyrd Skynyrd, and it is known for hits such as “Free Bird” and “Sweet Home Alabama.” If it weren’t for IP, the Southern rock band’s brand name, songs, riffs, logos, and more would not have accumulated into the successful entity known and loved across America and around the world.

There are countless roles within the creative community. As a talent agent, Geoff holds a truly valuable position that includes protecting and leveraging his client’s IP—the same IP that drives the creative industries that sustain our economy and connect our culture down to its roots.

