

Matthew S. Axelrod

Partner

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Washington, D.C.

Matt is a nationally recognized white collar defense lawyer with deep criminal, national security, and export enforcement experience. Matt's practice focuses on internal investigations, crisis management, and white collar criminal defense for U.S. and multinational companies.

Matt is the only person to have served as both the Assistant Secretary for Export Enforcement at the U.S. Department of Commerce's Bureau of Industry and Security (BIS) and Principal Associate Deputy Attorney General at the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) — a role described in the *New York Times* "as the most demanding job in all of DOJ." His over 25 years of combined government enforcement and white-collar defense experience are why clients consistently rely on Matt to help them navigate their most sensitive and complex matters. Matt co-chairs the firm's Sanctions and Export Enforcement practice, where he works closely with clients to conduct internal investigations, evaluate compliance programs, advise on voluntary self-disclosures, and defend against government-facing investigations.

Immediately before joining Gibson Dunn, Matt served as the Senate-confirmed Assistant Secretary for Export Enforcement at BIS, where he led the team responsible for enforcing the country's export control laws. Matt's leadership was transformative — he revamped the agency's export enforcement policies (including on voluntary self-disclosures), issued numerous compliance guidance memos for industry, and was the architect of the Disruptive Technology Strike Force, which paired federal law enforcement agents with federal prosecutors around the country to conduct export investigations. During Matt's tenure, BIS brought a record number of criminal and administrative enforcement actions, including the highest standalone administrative penalty in the agency's history.

Matt also spent over thirteen years at the Department of Justice, including serving twice as Principal Associate Deputy Attorney General. Alongside the Deputy Attorney General, Matt oversaw DOJ's entire workforce, including the prosecutors and agents in the U.S. Attorney's Offices, the Criminal Division, the National Security Division, and the FBI. Matt also provided oversight of all significant corporate enforcement resolutions, managed countless crises, and engaged with Congress and the White House on DOJ's behalf. Matt initially joined DOJ in 2003 as an Assistant United States Attorney in the Southern District of Florida, where he conducted nineteen felony jury trials and prosecuted some of the office's most high-profile cases, including the conviction of two founders of the Cali Cartel.

Matt also served as Special Counsel in the White House Counsel's Office, where he advised on national security and domestic issues.

Previously, Matt led the Global Business Crime & Investigations practice at another major international law firm, where he conducted internal investigations and represented individuals and entities under investigation by DOJ, SEC, and other agencies. While there,



Capabilities

White Collar Defense and Investigations
Aerospace and Defense
Crisis Management
International Trade Advisory and Enforcement
National Security
Sanctions and Export Enforcement
Tech and Innovation

Credentials

Education

Yale University - 1997 Juris Doctor
Amherst College - 1992 Bachelor of Arts

Admissions

District of Columbia Bar
Massachusetts Bar

Clerkships

USDC, Connecticut, Hon. Janet C. Hall,
1998 - 1999
US Court of Appeals, 2nd Circuit, Hon.
Ralph K. Winter Jr., 1997 - 1998

his work included:

- Appointed as Independent Compliance Consultant for a global construction company following a DOJ and EPA settlement involving Clean Air Act violations.
- Represented a global infrastructure company in a DOJ criminal fraud and False Claims Act investigation.
- Conducted an internal investigation concerning bribery allegations at a global telecommunications company.
- Represented an engineering company in a corruption investigation by the Inter-American Development Bank.
- Represented senior corporate executives in various DOJ and SEC FCPA investigations.

Matt is a sought-after speaker at conferences and industry events around the world and has been frequently quoted in publications like the *Wall Street Journal*, the *New York Times*, *Reuters*, and the *Financial Times*.

Matt graduated from Amherst College and Yale Law School, where he served as Notes Editor of the *Yale Law Journal*. Following law school, he clerked for the Honorable Ralph K. Winter, Jr. on the United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit, and for the Honorable Janet C. Hall on the United States District Court for the District of Connecticut.

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