Michael Farhang

Partner

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T: +1 213.229.7005
Los Angeles



Capabilities

White Collar Defense and Investigations
Anti-Corruption & FCPA
Anti-Money Laundering
Litigation
National Security
Private Company M&A Disputes
Securities Enforcement
Securities Litigation

Credentials

Education

Harvard University - 1995 Juris Doctor
Harvard University - 1992 Bachelor of Arts

Admissions

California Bar
Texas Bar

Clerkships

USDC, Central District of California, Hon. William J. Rea, 1995 - 1996

Michael M. Farhang is a former federal prosecutor and a partner in the Los Angeles office of Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher. He is a member of the firm's White Collar Defense and Investigations and Securities Litigation Practice Groups. Michael is an experienced litigator and trial attorney who has earned recoveries totaling nearly $70 million for private equity and corporate clients pursuing fraud, contract, and M&A-related claims. He specializes in private M&A litigation matters, including rep and warranty, earnout, and working capital disputes, as well as the defense of companies, directors, and executives in DOJ and SEC investigations and in shareholder class actions, derivative suits and other commercial litigation. Michael has tried more than 25 cases in government and private practice.

Michael has been recognized as a leading lawyer by *Chambers,* which described him as “fantastic and very strong” in his representation of clients. *Chambers Latin America* has described him as “a go-to figure for international operations compliance,” having ranked him in Latin America-wide: Fraud (2016) and Latin America-wide: Corporate Crime & Investigations (2019-2022). *The Legal 500 - Latin America* has ranked Michael as a leading lawyer in the Compliance and Investigations category (2021-2024). He was also profiled in an edition of *Latin Lawyer*'s Anti-Corruption Survey for his experience handling FCPA matters in Latin America. In 2015, the *Los Angeles Business Journal* named Michael to their “Most Influential Lawyers: White Collar and Cyber Crime” list, which recognizes 27 “stellar attorneys in Los Angeles,” and he is frequently named a Southern California Super Lawyer in the field of white collar criminal defense (2005-2006, 2012-2024). Michael has also been recognized as a leading litigator by *The Best Lawyers in America*® since 2010 and received recognition for his “high caliber work in Criminal Defense: White Collar,” and has been named as a California “Litigation Star (2026)” by *Benchmark Litigation*.

Michael’s civil litigation practice includes commercial, securities and M&A-related litigation, and he has specific subspecialties in post?M&A fraud claims and shareholder derivative and class action litigation. His civil litigation experience also includes commercial disputes involving claims of common law and federal and state securities fraud, breach of fiduciary duty, trade secrets, unfair trade practices, and breach of contract. In the white collar area, Michael regularly represents corporate and individual clients and has specific subspecialties in Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA) and Anti-Money Laundering (AML) matters and Latin American corporate investigations. Michael has conducted investigations and compliance work relating to FCPA, AML, and OFAC issues in ten countries and regularly leads investigations for clients conducted in Spanish.

Michael’s representative civil and white collar criminal engagements include the following:

- Lead litigation counsel in *Swipe v. Krauss, et al.*, in Delaware Chancery Court, an action pursuing representation and warranty, fraud, and indemnification claims on behalf of a private equity client against a group of sellers arising from a private

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M&A transaction.

- Secured a $21 million damages award in an M&A-related fraud case on behalf of a private equity client that purchased a California-based manufacturing company. Michael led the investigation that uncovered fraud by the seller of the acquired company and co-tried the successful arbitration that resulted in the award for Gibson Dunn's private equity client.
- Represented Vivendi S.A., a French multinational media company, and several affiliated directors in civil shareholder class action and derivative litigation in Delaware's Court of Chancery relating to a more than $8 billion stock repurchase transaction with Activision Blizzard, Inc., a California-based software and gaming company.
- Represented Jacobs Engineering, a leading international engineering and construction company, in civil securities litigation involving one of the early shareholder derivative suits based on the Say-On-Pay provisions of the Dodd-Frank Act. The shareholder action was dismissed with prejudice at the pleading stage.
- Served as one of the lead lawyers on the Gibson Dunn defense team that obtained the complete dismissal with prejudice of the federal and state securities litigation involving allegations of stock option backdating in *In re Computer Sciences Corporation Shareholder Derivative Litigation*, CV 06-5288-MRP (C.D. Cal.), and *In re Computer Sciences Corporation Options Litigation,* Case No. 353316 (L.A. Super. Ct.), litigation in which Gibson Dunn represented Computer Sciences Corporation, its senior management, and its Board of Directors.
- Secured a $21 million damages award in an M&A-related fraud case on behalf of a private equity client that purchased a California-based manufacturing company. Michael led the investigation that uncovered fraud by the seller of the acquired company and co-tried the successful arbitration that resulted in the award for Gibson Dunn's private equity client.
- Represented a number of corporate directors of Moneygram International, Inc., a publicly held money transfer company, in subprime-related shareholder derivative litigation in California state court.
- Led defense of DOJ and SEC investigations for Fortune 500 multinational company regarding whistleblower claims of alleged bribery and FCPA violations relating to Latin America operations. DOJ and SEC declined any enforcement action with respect to Gibson Dunn’s client.
- Led defense of SEC investigation for publicly traded semiconductor company regarding whistleblower allegations of securities fraud. SEC declined enforcement with respect to Gibson Dunn’s client.
- Represented Brazilian energy company PetrÓleo Brasileiro S.A. (“Petrobras”) with respect to U.S. government investigations and coordinated DOJ and SEC resolutions relating to internal controls, books and records, and financial statements issues arising out of Operation Car Wash (“Lava Jato”).
- Advised Walmart regarding its 2018 acquisition of a $16 billion majority stake in India’s Flipkart Private Ltd., as profiled in *Law360* and other publications. The Flipkart transaction has been described as the largest e-commerce acquisition in history .
- Led the investigation and successful pursuit of fraud and RICO claims by a corporate buyer against the seller of a California-based health products company in an M&A transaction. The claims were settled shortly after the complaint was filed, resulting in a settlement worth in excess of $20 million for Gibson Dunn's client.
- Served as one of the lead lawyers on a Gibson Dunn team assisting the FCPA counsel to the first non-U.S. compliance monitor in connection with the largest-ever FCPA settlement, an engagement that includes work in numerous countries (including in Latin America and Europe) and involved substantial Spanish-

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language witness interviews.

- Conducted a significant internal inquiry for a corporate client relating to OFAC sanctions enforcement issues, an inquiry that involved work in the U.S., Europe and Asia.

Between 1996 and 2003, Michael served with the United States Department of Justice as a federal prosecutor. Michael was hired by the Department through the Attorney General's Honor Program. Between 1996 and 1999, he served with the Criminal and Tax Divisions at the Department headquarters in Washington, D.C. and handled counterterrorism, death penalty, criminal tax, and money laundering matters.

From 1999 to 2003, Michael served as an Assistant United States Attorney with the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Central District of California, where he specialized in white collar fraud prosecutions (including securities, mail, wire, and tax fraud) in the Major Fraud section, and handled numerous investigations, trials, evidentiary hearings, and Ninth Circuit appellate matters. Michael was a recipient of the U.S. Department of Justice's Special Achievement Award and served in Iraq on behalf of the Department in 2003 as part of a 13-member legal team (consisting of federal judges, prosecutors, and public defenders) working with the Coalition Provisional Authority on reconstruction of the Iraqi judicial system.

Publications Include:

- “Cybersecurity and the Future of SEC Enforcement,” *Los Angeles and San Francisco Daily Journals* (June 5, 2019)
- “Why Law Firms Must Have a Compliance Plan for PE Clients” *Law360* (featured) (May 17, 2019)
- “Looking Back and Ahead at the False Claims Act,” (with D. Wong Yang, J. Zelenay, and S. Twomey), *Los Angeles and San Francisco Daily Journals* (February 14, 2019)

Michael graduated Phi Beta Kappa from Harvard College, receiving an A.B. *magna cum laude* in Government and Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations in 1992. He received his Juris Doctor *cum laude* from Harvard Law School, where he was a Developments/Comments Editor on the *Harvard International Law Journal*. Michael served as a judicial law clerk to the Honorable William J. Rea, U.S. District Judge, Central District of California, in 1995-1996. Michael is a member of the California Bar and is admitted to practice in the Central District of California and the Ninth Circuit.

Michael is a frequent speaker and published author on a variety of M&A-related, white collar and securities litigation issues and regularly presents on these topics at national conferences and through webcasts. He has served as a Lecturer in Law at USC Gould School of Law, where he has co-taught a course on federal criminal law issues. He also is a past member of the California State Bar’s Federal Courts Committee and the Executive Committee of the Los Angeles County Bar Association’s Litigation Section. Michael has previously served as a member of the boards of directors of both the Children’s Law Center, a nonprofit child advocacy organization that represents all of the nearly 33,000 children in Los Angeles and Sacramento Counties who come under the jurisdiction of the juvenile dependency courts, and the Los Angeles Center for Law and Justice, a legal aid organization serving communities in East Los Angeles and elsewhere.

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