

Legal Symposium to Explore Groundbreaking Terror-Financing Case



Trial lawyer [Mark Werbner](#) of Dallas litigation firm [Sayles Werbner](#) will address Texas lawyers about his decade-long quest to hold the Arab Bank responsible for providing financial support to U.S.-designated terror organizations.

Werbner will discuss *Linde, et al. v. Arab Bank PLC* in a presentation titled, “Fighting Terror-Financing in the Courtroom,” during the State Bar of Texas Litigation Update Institute’s 34th annual course Jan. 11–12, 2018.

In 2014, a jury in New York sided with Werbner, finding Jordan-based Arab Bank responsible for providing financial services to Hamas for 24 terror attacks during the “Second Intifada” in Israel and the Palestinian territories. The verdict was the culmination of a lawsuit filed in 2004 to obtain justice for nearly 300 American victims and their families. The case marked the first liability verdict against a foreign bank for violating the Anti-Terrorism Act.

[Interview: Mark Werbner discussing Arab Bank case](#)

Currently under review by the U.S. Supreme Court is *Jesner, et al., v. Arab Bank*, a related case that would clarify if the Alien Tort Statute (ATS) applies to corporations under the 1789 U.S. law.

The *Linde* verdict earned Werbner the 2016 Trial Lawyer of the Year Award from Public Justice, which honors attorneys who made the greatest contribution to the public interest through their work in precedent-setting, socially significant cases.

His work has also been consistently recognized in top legal publications, such as The Best Lawyers in America.

Lawyer is the First Guy Computer Hackers Call When the FBI Shows Up

Six years ago, former Manhattan lawyer Tor Ekeland traded in his fat paycheck for a not-so-lucrative private practice as one of a handful of defense lawyers who specialize in computer crimes.

[Mother Jones](#) profiles the 48-year-old, who says his boring corporate job led to alcoholism.

Reporter [A.J. Vicens](#) writes that Ekeland has strong feelings about the perceived nefarious intent of the Computer Fraud and Abuse Act. Hackers “scare people. They make them feel vulnerable; there’s a hysteria about it.”

Ekeland has defended hackers against charges ranging from probing the defenses of municipal websites to conspiring to access federal email accounts.

[Read the Mother Jones article.](#)

Fired Ex-Partner Crashes Firm's Holiday Party and Kills Ex-Boss

A former partner of a California law firm showed up at the firm's holiday party and killed his ex-boss before turning the gun on himself, reports the [Long Beach Press-Telegram](#).

Police named John Alexander Mendoza, 58, as the man who shot two colleagues, one fatally.

The incident occurred at the party held for Perona, Langer, Beck, Serbin and Harrison. Mendoza's name had been removed from the firm's name after he was fired in recent days.

[Above the Law](#) also reported on the incident: "Mendoza reportedly told all lower-level staff members to leave the building before he opened fired upon senior managing partner Major A. Langer and Ronald Beck, who ran day-to-day operations at the firm. Langer was shot in the upper body and died at the scene, while Beck was shot in the leg and had a bullet graze his stomach."

Mendoza was found dead at the scene with a self-inflicted gunshot wound.

[Read the Press-Telegram article.](#)

Martin Shkreli's Former Lawyer May Join Him in Prison for Helping to Defraud Investors

Evan Greebel, former lawyer of “Pharma Bro” Martin Shkreli, was convicted Wednesday by a federal jury of conspiring with his ex-client to defraud investors, reports [Newsweek](#).

Greebel, “who was an outside counsel to Shkreli’s former company, Retrophin Inc, was found guilty of conspiring to commit wire fraud and securities fraud when he helped Shkreli steal \$11 million from a pharmaceutical company to pay back investors after the former pharma bro lost their money in risky investments,” writes [Christina Zhao](#).

Prosecutors accused Greebel of conspiring with Shkreli by helping him devise sham settlement and consulting contracts to pay back investors, using Retrophin assets.

[Read the Newsweek article.](#)

Unsealed Court Docs: Flamboyant Lawyer's Alleged Death Threats, 'La Cosa Nostra' Connections



Flamboyant lawyer Richard Luthmann may fancy himself a champion of the little guy, but federal prosecutors say he is little more than a “violent criminal and fraudster” who bilked customers in a scrap-metal, had a victim threatened at gunpoint, and took advantage of a blind client in a bid to hide the scheme,

[reports SIlive.com](#).

The FBI arrested the Staten Island lawyer on a slew of charges, including kidnapping, kidnapping conspiracy, money laundering, brandishing a firearm to commit a crime, aggravated identity theft and extortion conspiracy.

[Vice reports](#) that Luthman is “facing federal charges for allegedly running a fake scrap metal empire that involved setting up a blind man as the fall guy and extorting people at gunpoint. In fact, according to the 11-count indictment in that case, the bow-tie-wearing Luthmann may prove to be one of the most colorful—and dangerous—criminals in recent New York City lore.”

Read reports on the case:

[SIlive.com](#)

[Vice](#)

[New York Post](#)

Fugitive Lawyer Back in U.S. After Arrest at Pizza Hut in Honduras

A lawyer who spent six months on the run after pleading guilty in a \$500 million Social Security fraud scheme is back in Kentucky after he was caught outside a Pizza Hut in Honduras, [reports CBS News](#).

Eric Conn pleaded guilty in March to stealing from the federal government and bribing a judge to fix Social Security fraud cases, but a federal judge released Conn on \$1.25 million bail. Conn then absconded.

Honduran authorities captured Conn and handed him over to the FBI for a private plane ride back to Lexington, Kentucky. The lawyer who billed himself as “Mr. Social Security” was sentenced in absentia last summer to a 12-year prison term – the maximum possible.

[Read the CBS News article.](#)

Ex-Akin Partner Guilty of Trying to Sell Secret U.S. Whistleblower Lawsuits

Reuters [is reporting](#) that a former partner at a major law firm in Washington pleaded guilty on Wednesday to charges that he tried to sell copies of sealed whistleblower lawsuits against corporations that he obtained while working at the U.S. Justice Department.

Reporter [Nate Raymond](#) writes that Jeffrey Wertkin was working at Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP when he was arrested in January trying to sell an undercover federal agent one of the lawsuits while wearing a wig as a disguise, according to court papers.

As a former employee of the Justice Department, he had access to lawsuits filed by whistleblowers against companies on the government's behalf to recover taxpayer funds paid out based on fraudulent claims. Prosecutors said he copied several whistleblower complaints and then tried to sell them for a "consulting fee."

[Read the Reuters article.](#)

Ex-WellCare General Counsel Gets Six Months in U.S. Prison

A former general counsel of insurer WellCare Health Plans Inc. has been sentenced to six months in prison for making a false statement to Florida's Medicaid program as part of what prosecutors called a \$35 million healthcare fraud scheme, [Reuters reports](#).

A U.S. district judge in Tampa sentenced Thaddeus Bereday, who was indicted in 2011 along with four other former WellCare executive. The former GC pleaded guilty to a false statement charge in June, according to court records.

Reuters reporter [Nate Raymond](#) writes that Bereday, 52, was also sentenced to three years of supervised release during which he must spend one year in home confinement, prosecutors said. He was also ordered to pay a \$50,000 fine.

[Read the Reuters article.](#)

Perkins Coie Adds NY

Governor's Office Special Counsel Adam H. Schuman

Perkins Coie announced that Adam H. Schuman has joined the firm's White Collar & Investigations practice group as a partner in the New York office.

Schuman has experience as a former general counsel, federal prosecutor, law firm attorney and federal law clerk. He joins the firm from the New York State Executive Chamber, where he served as Special Counsel for Public Integrity for Governor Andrew M. Cuomo.

In a release, the firm said:

A seasoned litigator with more than 25 years' experience, Adam has been at the focal point of some of the most highly publicized investigations and cases in the country, including serving as lead prosecutor in a securities fraud and money laundering trial arising out of the boiler room depicted in the film "The Wolf of Wall Street," managing as senior in-house counsel the defense of Standard & Poor's against multiple domestic and international government investigations and private litigations coming out of the 2008 financial crisis and, as a member of Governor Cuomo's senior staff, advising the Executive Chamber on ethics, risk and compliance matters. As a result of Adam's efforts as a federal prosecutor, he was awarded the Director's Award for Superior Performance from the U.S. Department of Justice.

"Adam is a highly respected and experienced litigator and trial attorney," said Markus Funk, Chair of Perkins Coie's White Collar & Investigations practice. "His prosecution and high-stakes defense background, coupled with his in-house and public sector experience, is an ideal match with our culture of professional excellence. We are excited to have

him on our team.”

Before joining the Governor’s office in 2016, Adam began his career in public service as an Assistant U.S. Attorney in the Eastern District of New York. He then spent 12 years at McGraw-Hill/Standard & Poor’s, including as Executive Managing Director and Chief Legal Officer. The year prior to his tenure with the Governor’s office, Adam served as General Counsel for New York State Homes and Community Renewal, where he oversaw a legal team of more than 100 attorneys. Before that, Adam was a lawyer with the New York firms Paul Weiss and Corbin Silverman & Sanseverino and served as a law clerk to U.S. District Judge Loretta A. Preska in the Southern District of New York.

“Adam is admired by his peers nationally and in the New York legal market, and he brings an impressive list of credentials,” said Keith Miller, Managing Partner of Perkins Coie’s New York office. “As a former federal prosecutor, his addition complements the strategic growth of our New York office.”

Adam will focus his practice on representing and counseling companies through criminal and civil investigations and complex government, regulatory and compliance matters, including investigations by the U.S. Department of Justice, the Securities and Exchange Commission, the Commodity Futures Trading Commission, Senate and House committees and State Attorneys General. He earned his J.D., cum laude, from New York University School of Law and received his B.A., with Honors, from Swarthmore College.

Judge Rebukes Manafort's Lawyer for Sidewalk Speech

Bloomberg Law [reports](#) that the judge overseeing Paul Manafort's tax and money-laundering case in Washington had a stern warning for his lawyer: Stop with the sidewalk speeches.

"This is a criminal trial and not a public-relations campaign," U.S. District Judge Amy Berman Jackson said at a hearing Thursday, according to reporters Andrew Harris and Tom Schoenberg.

The judge, threatening to impose a gag order, told the lawyers to do their "talking in the courtroom, and the pleadings, and not on the courthouse steps."

[Read the Bloomberg article.](#)

Mueller Pierced Manafort's Attorney-Client Privilege Once, May Try the Tactic

Again



Paul Manafort

Image by [Disney | ABC Television Group](#)

A little-noticed court filing unsealed this week as part of special counsel Robert S. Mueller III's ongoing probe could have big consequences for his other targets – showing he's willing to use suspects' lawyers to provide evidence against them, according to [The Washington Post](#).

An opinion by U.S. District Court Chief Judge Beryl A. Howell found that one of Manafort's former lawyers could be compelled to testify to the grand jury. She found a "crime fraud" exception to the attorney-client privilege, writing:

When a person uses the attorney-client relationship to further a criminal scheme, the law is well established that a claim of attorney-client or work-product privilege must yield to the grand jury's investigatory needs.

[Above the Law reports](#) (sourcing the National Law Journal) that the attorney in question is Melissa Laurenza, partner at Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld whose practice focuses on campaign law and lobbying registration.

[Read the Washington Post article.](#)

With Killer Still on the Loose, Associates of Slain Kansas Lawyer Are Fearful

Within minutes of attorney Tom Pickert's murder Wednesday morning at his Kansas City-area home, his colleagues in a recent case started worrying about their own safety, reports [The Kansas City Star](#).

One lawyer had assisted Pickert in an effort to secure assets from the defendant in a multi-million dollar civil case that Pickert and his partner had won in July. Now, he said, he doesn't walk the dog or get the mail since Pickert's death.

Reporters Glenn E. Rice and Donald Bradley quote the victim's associate: "We became pretty religious about setting the alarm system at home and I started looking over my shoulder. But I'm still going to the office. I'm not letting this change my life."

And a judge in a civil case where Pickert secured a \$5.7 million judgment sealed records of the case to prevent jurors from being identified.

Pickert, 39, was fatally shot just after he returned to his home in Brookside early Wednesday after walking his children to school.

[Read The Kansas City Star's article.](#)

[Join Our LinkedIn Group](#)

Fired Associate Takes Plea Deal In Biglaw Extortion Charge

A former Dentons associate who was fired and then allegedly threatened to leak sensitive information taken from the email account of a managing director of the firm has taken a plea deal on a lesser charge to avoid spending more than two decades behind bars.

[Above the Law](#) reports that Michael Potere accepted the deal that included dismissal of an underlying indictments that included a charge of extortion. That charge carried a possible sentence of up to 20 years in prison.

“This summer, Potere was arrested and indicted on charges of extortion and attempted extortion affecting interstate commerce, as well as transmitting threatening communications with intent to extort,” according to reporter [Staci Zaretsky](#). “At the time, the ex-Biglaw associate was represented by a public defender and faced up to 22 years in prison.”

[Read the Above the Law article.](#)

[Join Our LinkedIn Group](#)

Wilmington Trust \$60M Settlement Gets Criminal Charges Dropped

Wilmington Trust Corp., the only financial institution to be criminally charged in connection with the federal bank bailout program, reached a \$60 million settlement with prosecutors Tuesday just as the corporation and four former top executives were set to go to trial on bank fraud charges, the [Associated Press reports](#).

After the bank reached a settlement, U.S. District Court Judge Richard Andrews postponed the trial for the former executives until March, finding they currently were not prepared to move forward without the bank as a co-defendant.

“Prosecutors accused Wilmington Trust, through its senior executives, of concealing the truth about the bank’s deteriorating commercial real estate loan portfolio from bank regulators, investors and the Securities and Exchange Commission,” writes reporter Randall Chase.

[Read the AP article.](#)

Tree Trimming Firm Pays Biggest Fine in U.S. Immigration Case

A tree trimming company has been handed the largest penalty imposed in a United States immigration case, totaling \$95 million, after pleading guilty to employing illegal immigrants, the U.S. Attorney's Office said.

[Reuters reports](#) that Asplundh Tree Experts Co., which trims trees and clears brush for power and gas lines across the country, hired employees who provided fake identification documents from 2010 to 2014, the U.S. Attorney's Office in Philadelphia said.

The prosecutor said the company's managers were "willfully blind" as supervisors and foremen hired illegal immigrants, writes [Brendan O'Brien](#).

[Read the Reuters article.](#)

[Join Our LinkedIn Group](#)

Alabama Lawyers, Coal Executive Indicted On Bribery Charges

The Associated Press [is reporting](#) that two attorneys with a prominent Alabama law firm and a coal company executive have been indicted on charges of bribing a state legislator to oppose an environmental cleanup plan, federal court documents showed Thursday.

Two partners in prominent Alabama law firm Balch & Bingham have been placed on indefinite leave after named on charges including conspiracy and bribery. They are Joel Gilbert and Steven McKinney, both of whom handled environmental litigation for the firm.

AP reporter Jay Reeves writes that Drummond Co. vice president David Roberson, 66, was charged with the same crimes.

“The three are accused of bribing former state Rep. Oliver Robinson, who pleaded guilty earlier this month to accepting \$360,000 in payments,” according to the AP report.

[Read the AP article.](#)

[Join Our LinkedIn Group](#)

Top-Tier College Coaches, Adidas Rep Charged With Bribing Players



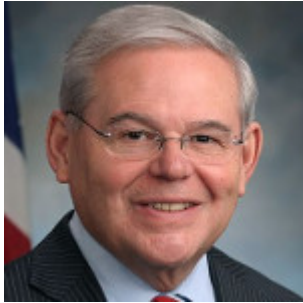
Bloomberg [is reporting](#) that top-tier college basketball programs were thrown into turmoil Tuesday as federal prosecutors unveiled criminal charges against 10 coaches, managers, financial advisers and representatives of sportswear companies including Adidas AG, accusing them of making illicit payments to cash in on the vast riches generated at the sport's highest levels.

“The alleged schemes include illicit payoffs to steer young athletes to powerhouse schools and into clothing contracts and financial advisory deals,” write [Christian Berthelsen](#) and [Bob Van Voris](#). “Among those charged were current and former coaching staff members at Oklahoma State University, the University of Arizona, the University of Southern California and the University of South Carolina.”

The case followed allegations that an executive at an apparel company bribed students to attend universities where the company sponsored athletic programs.

[Read the Bloomberg article.](#)

Federal Judge Excoriates Sen. Menendez Prosecution Team



The judge overseeing the bribery trial of Sen. Robert Menendez ripped into prosecutors Thursday for trying to focus on what he called “tabloid” details – an unusual description for dry testimony about a series of emails about a hotel reservation, reports [The Washington Post](#).

“U.S. District Judge William Walls stopped testimony for 20 minutes in which he tongue-lashed prosecutors for their painstaking recounting of emails used to book a luxury hotel in Paris for the New Jersey Democrat in 2010,” writes reporter [Devlin Barrett](#). “The three-day hotel stay is a central part of the Justice Department’s case.”

At one point, the judge sent the jury out of the courtroom and then began chewing out Justice Department lawyers.

“Whether these defendants engaged in bribery does not depend on whether the senator chose a more expensive room. We’re not talking about Days Inn,” he said.

[Read the Washington Post article.](#)

[Join Our LinkedIn Group](#)

DOJ Fraud Section Assistant Chief Laura Perkins Joins Hughes Hubbard

[Hughes Hubbard & Reed](#) announced that Laura N. Perkins has joined the firm as a partner in its Anti-Corruption & Internal Investigations practice and White Collar & Regulatory Defense group.

Perkins was most recently an Assistant Chief for Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA) enforcement in the Fraud Section of the Department of Justice's Criminal Division. In her career at DOJ, she led or supervised hundreds of FCPA investigations and tried nearly two dozen cases involving a variety of frauds and other federal crimes.

In a release, the firm says:

In addition to her FCPA credentials, Perkins is an experienced trial lawyer and investigator who brings extensive insider knowledge of how DOJ investigates and prosecutes criminal cases and what DOJ expects from internal investigations, cooperating companies, and corporate compliance programs.

As an Assistant Chief of the FCPA unit, Perkins supervised and directed hundreds of complex investigations and prosecutions of companies, business executives, and others for violations of the FCPA and associated statutes. She assisted in the management of the FCPA unit and the FCPA program, formulating enforcement priorities and policies, determining whether potential violations warrant criminal investigation and prosecution, advising domestic and foreign law enforcement and regulators on questions of law and departmental policy, and coordinating and conducting training for domestic and foreign partners.

Perkins was closely involved in the development of the FCPA pilot program, which was designed to motivate companies to voluntarily self-disclose FCPA-related misconduct, fully cooperate with the Fraud Section, and remediate flaws in their controls and compliance programs.

She worked closely within the Fraud Section to develop internal policies regarding the training and oversight of corporate monitors in order to ensure that companies develop compliance programs that meet DOJ's expectations. By the end of her tenure at the Fraud Section, Perkins was supervising a majority of the section's corporate monitorships.

Perkins was previously a senior counsel in the Criminal Division's Office of the Assistant Attorney General; prior to that she was a senior trial attorney in the Fraud Section. As senior counsel to the Assistant Attorney General, she advised the Assistant Attorney General and other DOJ leaders and assisted in developing policies for the Criminal Division with regard to economic criminal prosecution. She has extensive experience as a trial lawyer – both at DOJ and in private practice. At DOJ alone, she handled nearly two dozen federal jury trials and bench trials, prosecuting FCPA, complex securities fraud, accounting fraud, health care fraud and other federal criminal cases.

Perkins represented the United States in international fora regarding global anti-corruption efforts, including in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, and worked closely with foreign authorities to investigate and prosecute cross-border criminal cases.

Samsung Lader Jay Y. Lee Given Five-Year Jail Sentence for Bribery



Image by [KBS](#)

A South Korean court on Friday convicted Lee Jae-yong, the heir to the Samsung business empire, of bribery and embezzlement and sentenced him to five years in prison, in a dramatic break with the country's history of dealing light penalties to major business figures, [The New York Times](#) reports.

Reporters Jeyup S. Kwaak and Paul Mozur write that the verdict presents new challenges for the huge Samsung organization.

"The court ruled that Mr. Lee and four other Samsung executives paid \$6.4 million in bribes and other inducements to ensure that the country's disgraced former president, Park Geun-hye, supported a complicated corporate deal that strengthened Mr. Lee's grip on Samsung Electronics, the conglomerate's crown jewel," according to the *Times*.

[Read the NYT article.](#)

[Join Our LinkedIn Group](#)