

Criminal Defense and Government Investigations

Founded in 1967 by legendary defense attorney Edward Bennett Williams, Williams & Connolly was one of the first major law firms in the United States with a significant criminal defense practice. Since then, as the business and regulatory environments have grown ever more complex, and as government enforcement has become increasingly aggressive and pervasive, the firm has retained its position as one of the premier white collar defense law firms in the world.

The Vault Guide to the Top 100 Law Firms ranked Williams & Connolly as the #1 White Collar Defense Practice in the United States. *The Legal 500* noted that the firm has been “at the forefront of the white collar bar since its inception over 50 years ago,” and that “it is well regarded for its ‘fearsome litigation skills’ which ensures that it is regularly the first port of call for clients engaged in high-stakes matters.” Fourteen different firm partners have been recognized as leaders in the white collar bar by *Chambers USA*, *Best Lawyers in America*, *Euromoney’s Guide to the World’s Leading White Collar Lawyers*, *Super Lawyers*, *Washingtonian* magazine and *Legal 500*. More than 25 different firm partners have represented white collar defendants in criminal trials.

Williams & Connolly has represented individuals, public and private corporations, and other entities in government and internal investigations, trials, and appeals throughout the United States and abroad. Its work has spanned a wide array of subject matters, including securities and financial fraud, insider trading, antitrust, healthcare fraud, environmental, tax, Foreign Corrupt Practices Act, public corruption and export controls, among other areas. Our lawyers have experience dealing with diverse investigating authorities, including U.S. Attorneys’ Offices throughout the United States, all sections of the Department of Justice – including Public Integrity, Antitrust and Fraud – investigative committees of the U.S. Congress, the Securities and Exchange Commission, the Commodity Futures Trading Commission, various Inspectors General and state attorneys general, among others. The firm has been involved in international work throughout North America, as well as in Europe, Asia, Central and South America, and Africa.

For a more detailed description of selected substantive practice groups, please see the areas below on our website:

- [Anti-Money Laundering](#)
- [Congressional Investigations](#)
- [Criminal Antitrust](#)
- [Economic Sanctions](#)
- [Environmental](#)
- [False Claims Act & Qui Tam](#)
- [Foreign Corrupt Practices Act \(“FCPA”\)](#)
- [Health Care Fraud](#)
- [Public Corruption](#)
- [Securities Enforcement](#)

- State Attorneys General Investigations
- Tax

Individual Representations

Williams & Connolly has a long history of representing individuals who are under investigation or otherwise ensnared in the criminal process, either in the United States or abroad. Over the years, the firm has successfully guided CEOs, board members, general counsels and senior executives of some of the world's largest corporations, elected officials, cabinet secretaries, senior White House officials and a host of other professionals through complex investigations. While a large number of clients and cases garner significant public attention, often involving pitched battles against teams of government lawyers and agents, many of Williams & Connolly's greatest successes have come when charges were never brought, involving investigations that have never become public and cannot be identified.

A representative sampling of some of the firm's most public cases over the years include:

- ***United States v. Stevens*** – U.S. Senator Ted Stevens was indicted less than 100 days before he was to stand for re-election. The case was dismissed when it was revealed that prosecutors hid evidence from the defense that contradicted the prosecution's principal theory. *The American Lawyer* described Williams & Connolly's work on the case as "one of the best criminal defense performances in memory."
- ***United States v. Nicholas*** – Broadcom co-founder and former CEO and Chairman Henry Nicholas retained the firm to defend him after he was indicted for stock options backdating and related offenses. The case was dismissed in pre-trial proceedings after misconduct of a government prosecutor was brought to light.
- ***United States v. Cioffi*** – Former Bear Stearns hedge fund manager Ralph Cioffi was represented by the firm at trial in what the New York Times called "an early test of the government's ability to win convictions tied to the subprime mortgage-related investments that banks sold during the housing boom." The November 2009 acquittal on all counts was described by the *Times* "as a major setback for the Justice Department."
- ***Smith v. Cain*** – The firm represented Juan Smith, a death row inmate, before the U.S. Supreme Court. The Court overturned his conviction, holding that the New Orleans District Attorney's office violated Mr. Smith's right to due process by failing to disclose favorable statements made by eyewitnesses before trial.
- ***Plame Leaks Investigation*** – The firm represented Vice President Dick Cheney and former White House Press Secretary Ari Fleischer in Special Prosecutor Patrick Fitzgerald's investigation into press leaks identifying Valerie Plame as an agent of the Central Intelligence Agency.

During that same period, Williams & Connolly lawyers have represented and continue to represent cabinet officials involved in high-profile Washington, D.C. investigations, corporate executives involved in investigations related to the 2008 Financial Crisis, bank executives facing inquiries related to the ongoing LIBOR investigations, executives ensnared in investigations related to the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act, and executives and government officials facing numerous other criminal processes.

The firm has also handled some of the most intensely followed individual criminal cases over the last several decades, including:

- ***Representation of President Bill Clinton*** – President Bill Clinton turned to Williams & Connolly to defend him in the so-called Whitewater Investigation, and the first impeachment trial of a sitting president in over 125 years.

• **United States v. Cisneros** – The firm represented former Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Henry Cisneros in a decade-long investigation and criminal litigation brought by an Independent Counsel.

• **United States v. North** – Firm lawyers represented former National Security Council staff member Lieutenant Colonel Oliver L. North in the so-called Iran/Contra Congressional hearings and in subsequent criminal proceedings. The convictions were vacated and/or reversed on appeal.

Corporate Representations

Williams & Connolly represents some of the world's largest public companies. The firm has represented pharmaceutical companies, high-technology companies, manufacturers, commercial banks, global investment banks, health care companies, agricultural processors, construction firms, media conglomerates, accounting firms, law firms, pension funds and an array of other entities in government investigations and criminal litigations throughout the world. The firm has extensive experience representing entities that have significant public contracts and those in highly-regulated businesses, where significant collateral consequences such as debarment and licensing complications can flow from the pending investigations.

Representative corporate matters include:

- Global financial services company in money laundering investigation.
- Multinational investment bank in an antitrust investigation relating to the sale of municipal derivatives.
- International accounting firm in a federal grand jury investigation into tax shelter transactions.
- Major public health care company in a multi-agency criminal investigation into alleged accounting and securities fraud, and related alleged kickback schemes.
- Fortune 500 media conglomerate in Foreign Corrupt Practices Act investigation.
- Am Law 100 law firm in public corruption investigation.
- International manufacturing company in price-fixing and bid-rigging investigation.
- Fortune 75 technology company in Federal Trade Commission investigation.
- Multi-billion dollar pension fund in public corruption investigation.
- International commodities company in Foreign Corrupt Practices Act investigation.
- Fortune 300 manufacturing conglomerate in insider trading investigation.
- Fortune 25 company in SEC investigation regarding accounting matters.
- International engineering company in public corruption and false claims investigation.
- Fortune 100 pharmaceutical company in off-label promotion and false claims investigation.