

Michael Culhane Harper

Partner

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OVERVIEW

Michael Culhane Harper is a partner in the White Collar Defense and Investigations practice group. A former federal prosecutor, he is a trilingual white-collar lawyer with deep global experience representing individuals and corporations in high-stakes matters involving US laws with extraterritorial reach, including the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA), the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA), the Bank Secrecy Act (BSA), and the False Claims Act (FCA). He regularly advises clients on export controls, sanctions, trade and tariff issues, antitrust investigations and enforcement, anti-money laundering, government procurement, and complex financial fraud.

Michael's practice focuses on government investigations, securities enforcement, internal investigations, and white collar defense representations. His practice also involves counseling clients on anti-corruption and anti-money laundering compliance programs.

Prior to joining K&L Gates, Michael spent over seven years as a prosecutor in the FCPA Unit at the Department of Justice, where he spearheaded some of the most significant and complex international bribery and money laundering cases against publicly traded and privately held companies, board members and executives, finance professionals, lawyers, and high-level foreign government officials. His investigations spanned the globe and involved extensive interactions and negotiations with multiple domestic authorities, including the US Securities and Exchange Commission, as well as prosecutorial and regulatory authorities abroad, including Austria, Brazil, Colombia, Panama, Singapore, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom. Michael's DOJ investigations resulted in criminal charges against more than 20 individuals, four corporate resolutions, and total criminal penalties and forfeiture in excess of US$1 billion.

Michael has handled matters in multiple US Attorney's offices across the country, including SDNY, EDNY, EDVA, SDFL, SDTX, EDMO, N.D. Cal, and S.D. Cal.

Prior to public service, Michael spent seven years working for a global law firm, most of which was spent in the firm's São Paulo, Brazil office. He has extensive experience throughout Latin America and speaks Portuguese and Spanish.

Michael serves on the McCain Institute's Human Rights & Freedom Program Advisory Council. The program's mission advocates for a strong American foreign policy that protects and advances fundamental rights worldwide.

ACHIEVEMENTS

- Recognized by *The Legal 500 United States* as a Recommended Lawyer for Corporate Investigations and White-Collar Criminal Defense, 2026

PROFESSIONAL / CIVIC ACTIVITIES

- Advisory Council Member, McCain Institute Human Rights & Freedom Program, 2024-present

SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

- Speaker, "Keynote Interview with U.S. State Department," ACI's Forum on Cartels, TCOs & Compliance, 2026
- Panelist, “Reading the Prosecutorial Tea Leaves: What the DOJ's FCPA Case Pipeline and Go/No-Go Decisions Reveal About the Road Ahead,” ACI's 42rd Annual Conference on FCPA and Global Anti-Corruption, 2025
- Speaker, “The New FCPA Landscape: What In-House Counsel Need to Know,” In-House Connect, 2025
- Speaker, “Navegando las Prioridades Cambiantes del Gobierno de los Estados Unidos: Cómo Gestionar Mayores Riesgos de Cumplimiento en México y Optimizar las Investigaciones de Cumplimiento a través de Analítica e Inteligencia Artificial” (Navigating the Changing Priorities of the U.S. Government: How to Manage Increased Compliance Risks in Mexico and Optimize Enforcement Investigations through Analytics and Artificial Intelligence), the Mexican Bar Association – Nuevo León Chapter and TransPerfect legal – Mexico, 2025
- Panelist, “Ethical Issues in Compliance and Investigations,” PLI's The Foreign Corrupt Practices Act and International Anti-Corruption Developments, 2025
- Panelist, “Significant Legal Developments in the Northeast Region,” American Bar Association's 40th White Collar Crime Institute, 2025
- Panelist, “Behind the Scenes of a DPA, Monitorship and the Aftermath: First-Hand Accounts of the Real-Life Trials and Tribulations -- and Compliance Lessons Learned,” ACI's 41st Annual Conference on FCPA and Global Anti-Corruption, 2024
- Panelist, “Cumplimientos Transfronterizo y Aplicación de Normas Antisoborno” (Cross-Border Compliance and Anti-Bribery Enforcement), TransPerfect Legal, 2024
- Speaker, “Financial Fraud Enforcement and Related Best Practices,” International Bar Association's Annual Conference – Mexico, 2024
- Speaker, “Big Picture Insights on the Most Pressing Liability Risks Affecting Brazilian Industry, Anti-Corruption, Integrity and Beyond,” ACI's 13th Summit on Anti-Corruption, Integrity & ESG – Brazil, 2024

- Panelist, “Recent DOJ Guidance: When the Department Speaks What Is It Really Saying?,” PLI's The Foreign Corrupt Practices Act and International Anti-Corruption Developments, 2024
- Panelist, “Ephemeral Messaging: Making Sense of Government Guidance for your Company”, TRACE International, 2024
- Panelist, “Trends and Pitfalls of FCPA Investigations”, Transperfect Legal, 2024

EDUCATION

- J.D., Georgetown University Law Center, 2009
- B.A., Boston College, 2005

ADMISSIONS

- Bar of California
- Bar of District of Columbia
- United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit

LANGUAGES

- Portuguese
- Spanish

THOUGHT LEADERSHIP *POWERED BY HUB*

- 2 November 2026, New Framework, Two Paths: Navigating DOJ and HHS's Newly Released Civil and Criminal Health Care Self-Disclosure Initiatives
- 8 September 2026, Venezuela's Reopening: Investment, Infrastructure, and Technology Opportunities in a Rebuilding Latin America
- 24 August 2026, DOJ's National Fraud Enforcement Division Announces Its Enforcement Priorities
- August 2026, Global Data Protection Insights
- 8 July 2026, Supreme Court's Chatrie Decision Extends Fourth Amendment Protection to Location Data, Raising Stakes for Digital Privacy and Data Governance
- 3 June 2026, Latin America in Focus: Trump Administration Bolsters Regional Focus by Designating Brazilian Organized Crime Groups as SDGTs and FTOs
- 13 March 2026, DOJ Adopts a Uniform Corporate Enforcement and Voluntary Self-Disclosure Policy

- 2 March 2026, Declinations in Weeks: SDNY's New Voluntary Self-Disclosure Regime
- 16 February 2026, Narco Traffickers in the Classroom—and Whistleblowers at the Gate
- 28 July 2025, Trump DOJ Elevating Criminal Prosecution of Tariff Evasion
- 12 June 2025, The FCPA is Back—What Companies Need to Know About DOJ's New America-First Enforcement Priorities
- 15 May 2025, Clearer Carrots and More Restrained Sticks: Key Updates to DOJ Corporate Enforcement Policies
- March 2025, The Corporate Enforcement Landscape and the Bondi DOJ: Change, Continuity, and Predictions
- 12 February 2025, President Trump Orders FCPA Freeze; DOJ Announces Major Policy Realignment De-Emphasizing Corporate Investigations and Enforcement
- February 2025, Asset Management Regulatory Year in Review 2024
- 26 September 2024, AI, Whistleblowers, and Data Analytics - Updated DOJ Compliance Guidance
- 5 August 2024, Department of Justice Launches First-Of-Its-Kind Corporate Whistleblower Awards Program
- 3 July 2024, Jarkesy's Impact on Agency Enforcement Proceedings: Potential Implications for the SEC and Beyond
- April 2024, US Anti-Corruption and Cartel Enforcement Update: Recent Trends, Key Developments, and New Tools
- 15 March 2024, Dialing for Dollars: US Department of Justice Announces New Whistleblower Pilot Program
- 20 February 2024, Why Corporations in the United Kingdom are Now More Likely to Face Criminal Prosecution for their Employees' Actions
- 26 December 2023, Criminalizing the "Quo:" The New Foreign Extortion Prevention Act Targets the Demand Side of Bribery

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

- "From Corruption to Cartels: A Shifting Focus of DOJ Enforcement for Companies Operating in Latin America," *Small Wars Journal*, 30 May 2025
- "Clearer carrots and more restrained sticks: Key updates to DOJ corporate enforcement policies," *Thomson Reuters' Westlaw Today*, 27 May 2025
- "The Department of Justice Wants You to Call. And It Wants You to Put Its Number on Speed Dial," *The Journal of Federal Agency Action*, September-October 2024
- "4 Questions On Groundbreaking New Foreign Bribery Law," *Law360*, 16 January 2024

NEWS & EVENTS

- 29 September 2025, K&L Gates' White Collar Team Shortlisted for *Global Investigations Review* Awards
- 18 September 2025, The New FCPA Landscape: What In-House Counsel Need to Know, Hosted by In-House Connect
- 15 November 2024, K&L Gates Named Among the Top 30 Investigations Firms Worldwide by *Global Investigations Review*
- 28 August 2024, Ephemeral Messaging: Making Sense of Government Guidance to Craft a Company-Wide Policy, Hosted by TRACE International
- 5 December 2023, K&L Gates Adds Pair of Justice Department Lawyers in Washington, D.C., Office

MEDIA MENTIONS

- 2 October 2026, *Global Investigations Review* | Memo casts Fraud Division as corporate enforcement heavyweight, lawyers say
- 2 April 2026, *The Washington Times* | Come clean, avoid legal wrath: DOJ expands corporate self-disclosure program

OTHER MEDIA MENTIONS

- Featured, "ACI-FCPA Conference Speaker Preview Series – Michael Harper on Reading the Tea Leaves for FCPA Enforcement Going Forward," *Compliance Podcast Network*, 6 November 2025
- Quoted, "Can a gutted FCPA Unit keep up on enforcement?" *Global Investigations Review*, 25 July 2025
- Quoted, "Updated DOJ corporate enforcement policy promises "clear path" to declinations," *Global Investigations Review,* 14 May 2025
- Quoted, "Companies could use FCPA review to trim compliance costs, lawyers say," *Global Investigations Review*, 28 February 2025
- Mentioned, "Former coal exec asks to postpone trial due to Trump pause on FCPA enforcement," *Global Investigations Review*, 21 February 2025
- Mentioned, "McCain Institute Human Rights & Freedom Program Adds Michael Harper to Its Advisory Council," *McCain Institute*, 18 November 2024
- Quoted, "Trafigura resolution shows DOJ is looking deeper into past misconduct," *Global Investigations Review*, 23 April 2024
- Quoted, "SAP Bribery Case Shows US Mercy to Cooperating Recidivist (1)," *Bloomberg Law*, 11 January 2024

- Quoted, "Veteran foreign bribery prosecutor heads to private practice," *Global Investigations Review*, 5 December 2023

AREAS OF FOCUS

- White Collar Defense and Investigations
- Anti-Bribery and Anti-Corruption
- Anti-Money Laundering (AML)
- Financial Institutions Special Situations
- Internal Investigations
- International Trade, Investment Controls, and National Security
- Securities Enforcement / Financial Regulatory Enforcement

INDUSTRIES

- Life Sciences

REPRESENTATIVE EXPERIENCE

Private Practice

- Obtained rare post-indictment deferred prosecution agreement for the former CEO and Board Chairman of Russia's largest privately held banking group after making widespread challenges to the government's evidence and obtaining a suppression order in a criminal enforcement matter brought by DOJ's KleptoCapture Task Force and the US Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York alleging violation of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA).
- Representing an international finance executive who was indicted for allegedly operating an unlicensed money transmitting business and making false statements to a bank. The matter is being prosecuted out of the Northern District of California.
- Leading government-facing investigation for national retail company in connection with a US Customs and Border Protection investigation into potential customs duties violations.
- Conducted anti-corruption due diligence, as well as anti-corruption and compliance reviews and risk assessments, for multinational publicly traded companies across industries.
- Prepared anti-corruption compliance policies and procedures, including training materials and third-party agreements, for multinational publicly traded companies across industries.

DOJ Experience

- Led the DOJ's investigation and prosecution in a landmark FCPA enforcement action against a publicly traded global telecommunications company for FCPA violations in Asia, Africa, and the Middle East, resulting in a guilty plea and a coordinated resolution with the SEC. The matter was prosecuted in the Southern District of New York.
- Led the DOJ's investigation and prosecution of a Colombian investment bank for FCPA violations, resulting in a deferred prosecution agreement in the US, the first-ever coordinated resolution with authorities in Colombia, as well as a coordinated resolution with the SEC. The matter was prosecuted in the Eastern District of New York.
- Led the DOJ's investigation and prosecution of a Brazil-based investment company for FCPA violations, resulting in a parent-level guilty plea, as well as a coordinated resolution with the SEC. The matter was prosecuted in the Eastern District of New York.
- Member of the trial team in securing guilty verdicts against the former National Treasurer of Venezuela and her husband for their roles in a multibillion-dollar bribery and money laundering scheme. The matter was prosecuted in the Southern District of Floria.
- Lead trial lawyer in securing guilty verdict for bank fraud, mail fraud, and aggravated identity theft against a defendant in a loan fraud scheme. The matter was prosecuted in the Eastern District of Virginia.