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TOP WHITE COLLAR LAWYERS 2021



Robbins joined Buchalter about 17 months ago to launch the firm's white-collar and investigations practice group. "I came over to create one from scratch," he said. "That was the inducement, to create something that hadn't been there but that there was a lot of opportunity to do."

A former federal prosecutor who also spent several years with a litigation and white-collar defense boutique, Robbins said his first task was meeting colleagues in the firm's several offices — which he had to do remotely.

"A big part at the beginning was getting to know the firm and the resources they already had." Although Buchalter had never had a white-collar group, it had many attorneys in related areas, such as FTC investigations, SEC matters and RICO litigation, as well as large banking and health care groups experienced with fraud in those areas.

His goal was to show those attorneys how he and they could use federal white-collar criminal experience in both civil and government investigation cases, he said.

That's important because the line between civil and criminal matters has become more porous, Robbins said. White-collar cases especially often have parallel civil litigation running simultaneously, he said.

For instance, he represented a defendant this summer in a De-

partment of Justice civil fraud case and parallel criminal investigation accusing a transnational technology company of defrauding consumers of millions of dollars through unauthorized bank charges. Robbins obtained a no-liability settlement for his client about a month after the case was filed. *U.S. v. Internet Transaction Services Inc.*, 2:21-cv-06582 (C.D. Cal., filed Aug. 13, 2021).

Among his recent criminal matters, he represented investment adviser Ash Narayan, who was charged with defrauding several prominent professional baseball and football players out of millions of dollars. Robbins persuaded the court to impose a sentence well below the guidelines range.

On the civil side, he is defending artificial intelligence company Mycroft AI against racketeering charges that it had hacked computers and cyber-harassed the law firm representing a "patent troll" that had sued *Mycroft. Tumey LLP v. Mycroft AI Inc.*, 4:21-cv-00113 (W.D. Mo., filed Feb. 24, 2021).

And he leads the defense of the world's largest maker of water slides against a \$200 million racketeering and antitrust suit filed by a competitor. *Pacific Surf Design v. White-Water West Industries*, 3:20-cv-01464 (S.D. Cal., filed July 29, 2020).

Meanwhile, he has expanded his white-collar group with the addition of two former federal prosecutors,



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bringing that total up from zero to three. "The goal is to have this be one of the go-to white-collar practices on the West Coast."

— Don DeBenedictis