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TOP WHITE COLLAR LAWYERS 2022



JOSHUA M. ROBBINS

BUCHALTER APC

IRVINE

WHITE COLLAR & INVESTIGATIONS

Joshua M. Robbins created Buchalter's white collar and investigations practice group from scratch about two and a half years ago, and he is very proud of how it has grown from zero to eight excellent attorneys in that short time.

He is also proud of the diverse matters he and the group take on. "We actually sometimes do work on the plaintiffs' side representing victims of crimes or whistleblowers," he said.

Just last month, he argued against a motion to dismiss on behalf of local citizens who've brought a RICO action against the city of Bainbridge Island, Washington, and two former officials. He is co-lead counsel along with a Seattle partner. Bringing such a lawsuit "is a little different from what most people do in white collar practices," he said. "We're actually getting to use our prosecution experience."

The plaintiffs accuse the former mayor of pushing the city to buy property for a court and police facility from an entity with which he had financial ties. "Now the city is on the hook for millions and millions of dollars in overruns because of what we allege to be this really corrupt arrangement," Robbins said. *Bainbridge Taxpayers Union v. Medina*, 3:22-cv-05491 (W.D. Wash., filed July 6, 2022).

He also represents some whistleblowers. In one case, his client is a former compliance officer at a cryptocurrency company who alleges money-laundering violations by the company. In another, he is assisting former executives at a top tech company working with a Justice Department investigation into possible bribery.

On the other side, Robbins won a defense verdict last year in a \$10 million whistleblower-retaliation suit on behalf of an addiction treatment center. After a five-week trial, the jury deliberated for about an hour. "The jury did not believe [the plaintiff]," he said. "We had pretty strong evidence to refute the claims." The case is now on appeal. *Neeble-Diamond v. Hotel California by the Sea*, 30-2019-01058756 (O.C. Super. Ct., filed March 20, 2019).

In a purely civil case, he leads the defense of the world's largest maker of water park rides in a \$200 million RICO and antitrust lawsuit brought by a competitor. He and his team blocked the RICO cause of action but are scheduled to try the other claims next year. *Pacific Surf Design v. WhiteWater West Industries*, 3:20-cv-01464 (S.D. Cal., filed July 29, 2020).

Then there are matters that are both criminal and civil. Robbins is defending a national COVID-19 testing business in investigations by the federal government and by several state attorneys general, as well as in private lawsuits.

Like that matter, sometimes he has to cope with civil government investigations, criminal investigations and civil lawsuits all at the same time. "I do a lot of that kind of parallel proceeding juggling," Robbins said.

— DON DEBENEDICTIS