



Matthew S. Adams

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Matthew is Co-Chair of the firm's White-Collar Criminal Defense & Regulatory Compliance Practice Group and an experienced criminal and civil trial attorney. He has a diverse national practice focusing on criminal defense, regulatory compliance and complex commercial litigation.

Known for his courtroom advocacy skills and meticulous attention to detail, he is an indispensable ally to clients ranging from individuals and small businesses to multinational corporations, who turn to him for practical, thorough guidance through treacherous legal minefields. Whether they have been indicted, named targets of a grand jury investigation or are embroiled in a "bet the company" commercial dispute, clients count on Matthew as a "go to" lawyer when it matters the most.

Recently, Matthew has become well versed in the U.S. Department of Justice's crackdown on fraud and abuse involving government funding distributed under the Paycheck Protection Program and other CARES Act initiatives aimed at supporting businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic. He provides compliance advice to companies that have received emergency funding and represents companies whose loans or grants have come under scrutiny or been referred for prosecution.

Matthew is particularly knowledgeable in e-discovery, digital forensics, data privacy, social networking and cybersecurity. His clients routinely rely upon him to advance their interests through the use of high-tech, digital evidence such as e-mails, text messages, internet IP address and intrusion analysis, metadata and cellular tower triangulation – just a few of the novel forms of evidence with which Matthew has demonstrated proficiency over the course of the last decade.

Outside the courtroom, Matthew holds elected office, serving as a councilman on the Scotch Plains, NJ, Township Council, the town's municipal governing body. He was appointed to a then-vacant seat in April 2021 and later elected in a special election in November 2021.

Matthew also is President-elect of the Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers of New Jersey and a former trustee with the Essex County, New Jersey Bar Association. A bar leader, Matthew is at the forefront of novel legal issues, and frequently appears as amicus in trial and appellate courts grappling with issues of first impression and other high impact litigation.

Find more detail on each of the focus areas of Matthew's practice by following the links below.

[Criminal & Regulatory Defense](#)

Meticulous, zealous and ethical, Matthew defends individuals and entities that face state or federal criminal charges, regulatory or enforcement actions or are the target of an investigation by enforcement agencies or regulatory bodies at all levels of government.

He co-founded and leads the firm's **COVID-19 Compassionate Release Task Force**, which assists nonviolent offenders in jails and prisons across the U.S. who are at increased risk from the disease, with requests for compassionate release, bail, early parole and medical furloughs.

Commercial Litigation

Matthew represents individuals and businesses in the prosecution and defense of complex civil actions. Entrepreneurs, startups, closely held businesses and *Fortune* 100 companies rely on Matthew's pragmatic business sense and effective litigation skills to prevail in their commercial disputes.

Technology & Cybersecurity

Technology is a two-edged sword. Matthew keeps at the cutting edge, helping companies investigate and respond effectively to cyberattacks in compliance with local, state, federal and international data breach notification regulations, and defending clients who have been accused of hacking, data theft or cybercrimes. In the same vein, he protects individuals' privacy rights against technology-fueled prosecutorial overreach while strategically employing innovations in the realm of digital forensics and other emerging methods to build and defend cases, often breaking new legal ground.

Internal Investigations & Compliance

Matthew conducts comprehensive internal investigations for companies of all sizes that face existential crises involving potential internal wrongdoing, or intense regulatory scrutiny of their operations. He employs sharp investigative skills developed in his white-collar defense practice — working closely with professionals such as accountants and digital forensics experts — to identify the facts, present them clearly and provide actionable advice that helps clients minimize liability, preserve their reputations and meet their legal and regulatory obligations.

Crisis Management

Matthew provides sophisticated crisis management services to companies and individuals facing investigations and civil or criminal liability. Drawing on his extensive white-collar defense and regulatory compliance experience, he helps clients design crisis response plans and oversees their implementation to ensure they are carried out strategically to advance his clients' interests.

Community Involvement

Matthew prioritizes public service, dedicating his time outside the office to causes that improve lives and make a difference in the overall quality of life in his community. He is currently an elected member of the Scotch Plains, NJ, Township Council, bringing new perspectives and energy to the town's municipal governing body while working to move his community forward.

Services

- Litigation
- White-Collar Criminal Defense & Regulatory Compliance
- Cannabis Law
- Directors' & Officers' Liability & Corporate Governance
- E-Discovery
- Financial Services Industry
- Health Law
- Privacy & Data Security
- Securities Industry
- Latin America

Bar Admissions

- New Jersey
- New York

Court Admissions

- U.S. Supreme Court
- U.S. Court of Appeals, Second Circuit
- U.S. Court of Appeals, Third Circuit
- U.S. Court of Appeals, Eleventh Circuit
- U.S. District Court, District of New Jersey
- U.S. District Court, Eastern District of New York
- U.S. District Court, Northern District of New York
- U.S. District Court, Southern District of New York
- U.S. District Court, Northern District of Ohio

Education

- Seton Hall University School of Law (J.D., 2007)
- Rutgers University (B.S., 2004)

Memberships

- Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers of New Jersey
- National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers
- American Bar Association
- New Jersey State Bar Association
- Essex County Bar Association
- Monmouth County Bar Association
- New Jersey State Bar Association
- New York County Lawyer's Association
- New York State Bar Association
- Federal Bar Association
- Litigation Counsel of America, Fellow

Elected Public Office

- Councilman, Township of Scotch Plains New Jersey

Board of Directors

- Essex County Bar Association (Former Trustee)
- Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers of New Jersey (President)
- New Jersey State Bar Association - Criminal Justice Section (Trustee)

Honors & Awards

- **Selected to the list of Fellows of Litigation Counsel of America (2024)**
This award is conferred by Litigation Counsel of America. A description of the selection methodology is [available here](#). No aspect of this advertisement has been approved by the Supreme Court of New Jersey.
- **Selected to the "Best Lawyers in America" list for Criminal Defense - White Collar in Morristown, NJ (2024)**
This award is conferred by Best Lawyers. A description of the selection methodology is [available here](#). No aspect of this advertisement has been approved by the Supreme Court of New Jersey.
- **Selected to the list of attorneys ranked by Chambers USA for Litigation: White-Collar Crime & Government Investigations in New Jersey (2022, 2023)**
This award is conferred by Chambers & Partners. A description of the selection methodology is [available here](#). No aspect of this advertisement has been approved by the Supreme Court of New Jersey.
- **Selected to the Benchmark Litigation list of 40 & Under Northeast for White Collar Crime in New Jersey (2022)**
This award is conferred by Euromoney Institutional Investor PLC. A description of the selection methodology is [available here](#). No aspect of this advertisement has been approved by the Supreme Court of New Jersey.

- **Selected to the "Super Lawyers - Rising Stars" list for Criminal Defense: White Collar in New Jersey (2013-2023)**
This award is conferred by Thomson Reuters. A description of the selection methodology is [available here](#). No aspect of this advertisement has been approved by the Supreme Court of New Jersey.
- **Selected to the "Super Lawyers" list for Criminal Defense: White Collar in New Jersey (2023-2024)**
This award is conferred by Thomson Reuters. A description of the selection methodology is [available here](#). No aspect of this advertisement has been approved by the Supreme Court of New Jersey.

Criminal & Regulatory Defense

Facing down a governmental investigation of any type can be terrifying, so choosing the right lawyer who mixes equal parts empathy, skill and tenacity is paramount. Matthew is committed to protecting his clients' rights and ensuring the presumption of innocence, regardless of the nature of their alleged offense. Known as a tenacious trial advocate, Matthew considers his biggest victories to be cases in which clients came under investigation, but were never prosecuted. While all cases vary and none is predictive, those cases receive no headlines or fanfare, simply Matthew's painstaking attention to detail and zealous advocacy.

He has represented a wide range of clients in a diverse array of criminal and regulatory defense matters, including, but not limited to:

- Financial institutions in connection with criminal investigations by the U.S. Department of Justice, with parallel regulatory components
- Individuals and companies accused of money laundering
- Companies ensnared in investigations for alleged compliance failures with U.S. Department of State and Department of Defense regulations
- Physicians accused of health care fraud and narcotics trafficking
- Individuals investigated for or charged with bank fraud
- Lawyers accused of aiding and abetting their clients in criminal activities
- Government officials at all levels who are targets of public corruption and official misconduct investigations
- Individuals investigated for and charged with commercial bribery and engaging in alleged kickback schemes
- Individuals charged with the criminal theft of trade secrets and economic espionage
- Professional licensees facing administrative actions to revoke their licenses, and other disciplinary sanctions, across a wide array of professions
- Corporate executives investigated for securities fraud and insider trading
- Tax controversy matters
- Professional athletes facing highly publicized arrests and prosecutions where their notoriety has amplified the impact of the charges
- Police officers accused of misconduct, including civil rights violations
- Companies investigated for homicide in the aftermath of fatal industrial accidents
- Political appointees and private business people accused of bid rigging and other unlawful public procurement activities
- Individuals accused of computer hacking and other forms of cyber intrusions
- Individuals accused of conspiracy to commit extortion and other alleged racketeering activities
- Individuals investigated and charged with the possession and/or distribution of digital contraband
- Securities brokers and other financial professionals facing enforcement actions by the SEC and FINRA and corresponding referrals to criminal authorities

Companies across a wide array of industries frequently also call upon Matthew to conduct internal investigations, a natural derivative of his diverse criminal and regulatory defense practice. In these matters, Matthew must triage and react on behalf of his corporate clients – often while managing the coordinated efforts of other complementary professionals such as accountants and digital forensics experts companies across a wide array of industries to allegations such as embezzlement, fraud, trade secret misappropriation, compliance issues, and executive misconduct.

Matthew's most recent internal investigation engagements have included:

- A manufacturer under scrutiny by the U.S. Department of Justice for alleged violations of the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act

- A talent agency that sustained a multimillion-dollar theft by its outside bookkeeper
- Service industry clients facing allegations of labor, employment and safety code violations
- A manufacturer accused of the unlawful importation of raw materials for use in the manufacturing process

He has also handled cases for indigent defendants on behalf of the Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers – New Jersey (ACDL-NJ), a leading professional organization established for the purpose of advancing issues impacting the criminal defense bar and its clients. Matthew was elected a Trustee of the ACDL-NJ in 2015 and is now President-elect. He is active with the ACDL-NJ's Amicus and Lawyers Assistance committees, helping to shape the evolution of criminal jurisprudence and defending other criminal defense lawyers from prosecutorial misconduct.

Commercial Litigation

Matthew represents business entities of all types in complex commercial litigation. Clients value his pragmatic, detail-oriented approach to representation. Whether prosecuting a civil case or defending an action that could imperil a business, Matthew is a tireless advocate, known for his candor with clients and ability to view discrete events as part of a larger picture.

In the civil litigation arena, he has experience with:

- Impact litigation challenging legislative action with adverse consequences to a particular business or group of businesses
- Partnership and other business entity break-ups
- Breach of contract cases
- Minority shareholder oppression claims
- Consumer fraud cases
- Commercial class actions
- Disputes surrounding intellectual property rights
- Claims arising from restrictive covenants
- Civil RICO matters
- Defamation claims, including cases involving the use of the internet, social media, and other technology-driven media
- Collections actions
- Environmental cases seeking the apportionment of responsibility for hazardous materials remediation efforts
- Employment issues, including, but not limited to, whistleblower, wrongful termination, constructive discharge, sexual harassment, discrimination, and wage and hour violations
- Unfair competition and deceptive advertising matters
- Credit defaults
- Commercial landlord/tenant disputes
- Construction disputes
- Real estate controversies
- Director/officer claims
- Warranty claims.

Matthew's commercial litigation clients have included entrepreneurs, startups, *Fortune* 50 businesses, financial institutions and a wide array of other individuals and entities across a broad spectrum of industries.

Technology & Cybersecurity

Technology is pervasive, presenting businesses and individuals with a combination of risk and opportunity. Matthew is adept at defending clients against technological threats while using innovations to their advantage.

Matthew's clients rely on him to protect their fundamental rights and extend traditional legal concepts to situations where the law trails progress. He strategically builds and defends cases through digital forensics and other non-traditional forms of evidence, including where the use of such evidence breaks new legal ground in the courts and other forums in which he appears.

Matthew has significant experience and is a recognized leader in emerging issues involving the intersection of the law and technology, in both civil and criminal contexts, including:

- E-discovery
- Digital privacy
- Social networking
- Cybersecurity

Cybersecurity

Data breaches and network intrusions are growing in frequency, posing serious business risks to companies in all industries. Matthew brings his technological knowledge and investigative experience to bear in helping clients determine the cause of hacking incidents, track down the perpetrators and respond appropriately in compliance with local, state, federal and international breach response regulations. A steady hand in high-pressure situations, Matthew helps clients respond strategically and effectively when the stakes are high.

In the aftermath of a breach, Matthew helps clients interface with privacy regulators such as the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), Financial Industry Regulatory Authority (FINRA) and the New York Department of Financial Services (NYDFS), in order to avoid or minimize fines and penalties.

Because of his familiarity with technology and depth of experience in white-collar defense matters, Matthew is also a highly effective advocate for clients accused of hacking, data theft and/or other cybercrimes. He is a frequent presenter and sought-after authority on a wide range of issues involving the legal implications of technology and the proper use of digital evidence. He instructs law students, attorneys and corporate leaders on matters at the intersection of the law and technology.

Digital Privacy & E-Discovery

Matthew has published and appeared in articles and commentaries for media outlets including ESPN, CBS, Above the Law, Law360 and *The New Jersey Law Journal* on technologically oriented legal topics. Reporters frequently turn to Matthew for legal analysis when a breaking news story involves the legal implications of digital technologies, such as the investigation of the San Bernardino terrorist attacks and digital forensics issues that arose over the FBI's efforts to access one attacker's mobile phone.



Each spring semester, Matthew returns to his *alma mater*, Seton Hall University School of Law, to participate in the school's e-discovery course. A practice-based elective offered to second and third year law students, the course is aimed at educating soon-to-be members of the bar on the intricacies of the preservation, collection, and use of electronic evidence against the backdrop of the school's core substantive curriculum.

He has also served as co-chair of the New Jersey State Bar Association Privacy Law Section. He has co-chaired the Privacy Law Section's task force on proposed legislation in the New Jersey legislature banning warrantless seizures of cell phone data and creating other protections to individual rights made necessary by the way that technology has reshaped the way that people live and work.

Internal Investigations & Compliance

Companies of all sizes facing an existential crisis involving potential internal wrongdoing — or intense regulatory scrutiny of their internal operations — need an experienced outside attorney with sharp investigative skills to unearth the facts, present them clearly and provide actionable advice. Clients in a wide array of industries depend on Matthew to conduct comprehensive internal investigations when they are dealing with serious allegations of internal malfeasance, illegal or unethical activity.

Matthew employs skills developed in the course of his diverse criminal and regulatory defense practice to ascertain the facts and provide a detailed plan of action. In these matters, Matthew must triage and react on behalf of his corporate clients — often while managing the coordinated efforts of other complementary professionals such as accountants and digital forensics experts — to serious matters such as potential violations of the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act, embezzlement, kickbacks, bribery, fraud, trade secret misappropriation, sexual harassment, regulatory compliance issues and executive misconduct.

When an investigation is complete, Matthew provides clear advice to company boards and executives on next steps that should be taken to mitigate liability, preserve their companies' reputations and otherwise comply with legal and regulatory obligations.

Matthew's most recent internal investigation engagements have included:

- A manufacturer under scrutiny by the U.S. Department of Justice for alleged violations of the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act
- A talent agency that sustained a multimillion-dollar theft by its outside bookkeeper
- Service industry clients facing allegations of labor, employment and safety code violations
- A manufacturer accused of the unlawful importation of raw materials for use in the manufacturing process

Crisis Management

Companies and individuals that are the subject of an investigation or are facing civil or criminal liability can't afford to take chances with crisis management. They need an experienced attorney who can offer sophisticated counsel that mitigates legal exposure, as well as reputational risk.

In his role as a white-collar defense attorney, Matthew has helped many clients navigate high stakes crises that put their very future in doubt. His work in regulatory compliance has given him a detailed understanding of the complicated issues companies face when confronted with serious, existential challenges. Matthew provides clients with sophisticated crisis management advice, overseeing outside communications professionals and ensuring individuals and entities facing significant liability or potential prosecution put out a unified message, speaking clearly with one voice in a way that advances their interests, rather than digging themselves a deeper hole.

Amicus Work

Matthew has played a leading role in advancing the law, preserving the integrity of the judicial system and protecting civil rights in New Jersey through his representation of the Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers of New Jersey (ACDL-NJ) as amicus in multiple precedent-setting legal cases.

Matthew's amicus work has included leading the ACDL-NJ in its high-profile constitutional challenge to the New Jersey's virtual grand jury and virtual jury selection programs, which were created in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. In the case, the ACDL-NJ argued that the court system overstepped its authority in creating the new program, which sets new technology requirements for grand jury service.

In July 2020, the New Jersey Superior Court's Appellate Division ruled in favor of the ACDL-NJ in a case in which Essex County prosecutors attempted to subpoena a defense attorney to testify against his client before the grand jury in a murder investigation. Matthew argued in the ACDL-NJ's amicus brief, that allowing prosecutors to force defense attorneys to testify

against their clients would have a chilling effect on their Sixth Amendment right to counsel. Matthew also prevailed in August 2019 on behalf of the ACDL-NJ as amicus in a similar case filed in Bergen County Superior Court in which prosecutors attempted to force a defense attorney to testify before a grand jury in a case involving a defendant accused of attempting to flee prosecution.

In January 2020, Matthew presented arguments to the Jersey Supreme Court in *State of New Jersey v. Andrews*, a pre-trial appeal on the cutting-edge issue of whether authorities can compel a criminal defendant to disclose the password to a mobile device so they can search its contents. Matthew led a team of Fox attorneys who filed an amicus brief in the case on behalf of the Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers of New Jersey (ACDL-NJ). The case was taken up to the U.S. Supreme Court.

Community Involvement

Matthew is committed to utilizing his skills to better his community and his profession.

He holds leadership roles in the legal community, serving as a trustee of the Essex County Bar Association, the largest bar association in New Jersey, and as President-elect of the Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers of New Jersey, the preeminent specialty bar association representing criminal defense attorneys in New Jersey.

Matthew also serves on the Advisory Board of the Union County Vocational-Technical High School's Academy for Law & Justice, a four-year sequence of courses that prepares students for public service, both as professionals in law, government, and criminal justice, and as proactive, knowledgeable citizens.

Scotch Plains Township

In January 2021, Matthew was appointed to the Planning Board for the Township of Scotch Plains, a volunteer position in which he served on the Downtown Revitalization Subcommittee.

Matthew was subsequently tapped in April 2021 to complete an unexpired term on the Township Council, the town's municipal governing body. During a special election in November 2021, he was then elected to serve out the remainder of the term.

Illegal Gun Buy-Back Program

In 2018, the president of the Essex County Bar Association appointed Matthew to spearhead a fundraising and public safety outreach program aimed at taking guns off the streets of New Jersey's third-most populous county. It was no small task, but an endeavor that he took great pride in pursuing through a public-private partnership.

The March 30, 2109 "no questions asked" gun buyback program — a partnership between the Essex County Bar Association and the Essex County Prosecutor's Office and other law enforcement agencies — paid out \$41,000 in private funds to take more than 330 guns off the streets of Newark and surrounding communities.

"The proliferation of guns is an ongoing problem in Essex County and beyond. This is a unique collaboration between law enforcement and a private, nonprofit organization to reverse that trend," said Acting Essex County Prosecutor Theodore N. Stephens II in a statement.

"Taking unwanted, illegal, and unsafe guns off the street through programs like this contributes to public health and safety," Matthew said. "With full amnesty and no questions asked thanks to the leadership of the Essex County Prosecutor's Office, members of the community are incentivized to come forward and do the right thing."



Veterans Advocacy

Matthew shares Fox Rothschild's commitment to veterans, and has provided pro bono legal work to support the efforts of the veterans' legal clinic the firm developed at the Lyons, New Jersey, VA facility.

Over the years, he has been a vocal advocate for robust criminal justice reform programs for veterans. For example, in January 2017, Matthew testified before the New Jersey Assembly Military and Veterans' Affairs and Appropriations committees, urging state lawmakers to expand the scope of then pending legislation to establish a program in New Jersey to divert eligible service members away from the criminal justice system and into appropriate case management and mental health services. At the hearing, he challenged legislators to expand the scope of the bill to reach a broader swath of the veteran community and take advantage of available federal resources.

Matthew spoke at a January 2017 press conference with lawmakers and veterans advocates on then pending proposed legislation that created a diversion program for veterans, video below:

On May 1, 2017, then New Jersey Governor Chris Christie signed legislation sponsored by Sen. Jeff Van Drew (D-1st) to create a "Statewide Veterans Diversion Program" aimed at helping veterans and active military by diverting them from the criminal justice system and into appropriate case management and mental health services as early as possible following an interaction with law enforcement. In the lead-up to the bill's passage, Matthew provided a passionate voice behind an even more expansive program than was ultimately signed into law, and authored a widely circulated op-ed piece entitled "[Fierce Urgency of Getting Veterans Diversion Right in New Jersey.](#)"

After the May 2017 bill signing, Matthew continued his fight for veterans' criminal diversion by participating in a county-by-county effort to create local programs that expand the diversionary goals of the statewide program through the exercise of prosecutorial discretion.