



Thomas F. Rybarczyk

Partner

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About

A former senior federal prosecutor and Chief of the Public Corruption and Civil Rights Section in the Central District of California, Tom Rybarczyk is a proven trial attorney who directed high-profile investigations and prosecutions in the nation's largest federal district. Based in Kelley Drye's Los Angeles office, Tom draws on nearly a decade of investigative, prosecutorial, and extensive courtroom experience to help companies, individuals, and boards navigate complex civil litigation, government investigations, and significant reputational challenges.

During his tenure as an Assistant United States Attorney in the Central District of California, Tom rose to serve as Chief of its Public Corruption and Civil Rights Section. In that role, he led a team of elite prosecutors handling some of the nation's most complex corruption, fraud, tax, and civil rights matters while coordinating with U.S. Department of Justice leadership in Washington, D.C., and federal, state, and local law enforcement partners across the region.

As a federal prosecutor, Tom tried numerous felony cases to jury verdict, prepared for many other trials that resolved on the eve of jury selection, and argued several appeals before the Ninth Circuit. This courtroom experience has made him a battle-tested advocate with the judgment to know when to fight and when to resolve a matter short of trial in his client's best interests.

Drawing on his extensive experience prosecuting and supervising complex, white-collar investigations, Tom leverages his prosecutorial experience to provide clients with informed, strategic counsel on issues spanning public corruption, bribery, wire and mail fraud, money laundering, tax fraud and evasion, campaign finance violations, obstruction of justice, Foreign Agents Registration Act (FARA), Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA), and False Claims Act matters. His deep understanding of how prosecutorial discretion is exercised and how enforcement priorities are set—both at the local and national level—enable him to provide clients with critical insights, identify risks before they escalate, and develop defense strategies that position clients for the best possible outcomes.

Tom's background sets him apart as an advocate. Before becoming a federal prosecutor, Tom started his legal career at a prominent international law firm in Chicago where he gained a substantial grounding in complex civil litigation and government investigations from the defense side. A clerkship with the Honorable Michael S. Kanne of the United States Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit sharpened his appellate skills and legal analysis. And his years as a reporter covering

public corruption, organized crime, and law enforcement at a major metropolitan newspaper honed his ability to investigate facts, evaluate evidence, and craft persuasive narratives that resonate with judges and juries.

Experience

Government Experience

- Prosecuted university dean and sitting Los Angeles City Councilman and former Los Angeles County Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas in one of California's most high-profile public corruption cases. Secured guilty plea from university dean and convictions of Ridley-Thomas after a four-week trial.
- Led the sprawling investigation into a sophisticated cannabis permit bribery scheme that resulted in the guilty pleas of five public officials and the CEO of a cannabis cultivation company.
- Co-led the campaign finance, wire fraud, and falsification of records prosecution of a federal congressional candidate and others in the district's first felony prosecution for misusing campaign funds. Secured congressional candidate's wire fraud conviction.
- Served as co-lead counsel in structuring prosecution against federal law enforcement officer. Secured trial convictions and successfully defended the convictions on appeal.
- Lead counsel in the prosecution of a real estate developer who bribed a high-level county official to secure approvals for his projects and then later obstructed investigation. Secured guilty plea to bribery conspiracy and successfully defended his sentence on appeal.
- Lead counsel in the prosecution of a \$5 million elder fraud scheme involving timeshare relief companies that targeted hundreds of victims. Secured guilty pleas and wire fraud convictions against all six defendants.
- Lead counsel in the prosecution of the district's first-ever bribery prosecution related to legalized cannabis cultivation and distribution. Secured a guilty plea and convictions on bribery and criminal tax charges.
- Secured felony campaign finance-fraud conviction of an insurance executive who made illegal conduit campaign contributions to obtain a coveted government appointment.
- Trial and lead appellate counsel in prosecution of multiple defendants for assaulting two federal prison guards. Argued before the Ninth Circuit and successfully defended trial convictions and sentences on appeal.
- Led prosecution of a corrupt Los Angeles County Sheriff deputy who smuggled heroin into jails for Mexican Mafia detainees in exchange for cash. Secured his guilty plea to drug trafficking charges.
- Oversaw election security and integrity for the 2020, 2022, and 2024 elections as the appointed District Elections Officer for the Central District of California.

Private Practice Experience

- Represented a Fortune 100 company in a complex, multi-year FCPA investigation.

- Represented a Fortune 500 company in an environmental compliance investigation.
- Represented a publicly-traded company in federal securities fraud and derivative lawsuits.

Related Services

White Collar, Investigations and Compliance

Litigation

Commercial Litigation

Consumer Class Action Defense

False Claims Act Defense

Campaign Finance and Political Law

Education

University of Wisconsin Law School, J.D.

- magna cum laude
- Wisconsin Law Review, Articles Editor

University of Illinois, B.S.

- Print Journalism

Admissions

California

Illinois