

Jeffery B. Vaden

Partner

jeff.vaden@bracewell.com

HOUSTON

+1.713.221.1501



At the US Attorney's Office, Jeff Vaden was responsible for directing criminal prosecutions and grand jury investigations in areas including US export controls and sanctions, bank fraud, public corruption, immigration, money laundering, counterterrorism and national security. His honors include the Director's Award for Superior Performance in 2008, the Immigration and Customs Enforcement Assistant Secretary's Award in 2007 and the 20th Anniversary National Award, Organized Crime and Drug Enforcement Task Force in 2002.

He has worked on domestic and international matters with federal law enforcement and investigative agencies, including the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Drug Enforcement Administration, Department of Health and Human Services Office of Inspector General, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Internal Revenue Service, Department of Commerce-Bureau of Industry and Security, Department of Homeland Security, Department of Labor Office of Inspector General, Department of the Treasury, Department of Housing and Urban Development, US Postal Service Office of Inspector General, Secret Service, US Marshal's Service and the Diplomatic Security Service.

In addition to his legal practice, he chairs the firm's Engagement & Community Development Committee.

Industries

[Energy](#)

[Healthcare](#)

[Technology](#)

Practices

[Environment, Lands and Resources](#)

[Financial Institutions](#)

[Government Enforcement & Investigations](#)

[Healthcare & Life Sciences](#)

[Incident Prevention & Response](#)

[Litigation](#)

[Environmental Litigation &](#)

[Enforcement Defense](#)

[FCPA](#)

Experience

FBI special agents

- represented individual FBI special agents facing administrative disciplinary actions brought by the FBI's Office of Professional Responsibility and the US

Department of Justice Department of the Inspector General, as well as shooting investigations by the Inspection Division

Global geophysical services company

- obtained a declination from the DOJ's Fraud Section in relation to an investigation of allegations of FCPA violations in Iraq

Individual

- currently representing an executive in a FCPA matter related to the Unaoil investigation

Individual

- currently representing in a Federal Bureau of Investigation health care fraud investigation in the Southern District of Texas

Chief operating officer

- US Department of Veteran's Affairs OIG-CID investigation where client was the only executive of the health care company not indicted and convicted

Physician

- represented individual in regard to a \$32 million Medicare and Medicaid Fraud investigation by the US Department of Justice Healthcare Fraud Strike Force. Resolved with pretrial diversion.

Pharmacy and its owner

- Drug Enforcement Administration and Internal Revenue Service drug diversion, money laundering and health care fraud investigation

Regional fuel transportation company

- Environmental Protection Agency grand jury investigation in the Western District of Texas. The investigation closed without any enforcement action

As prosecutor

- lead counsel in an export controls and sanctions investigation of a multinational oil field services company, which included collaboration with DOJ's Fraud Section and the SEC on potential Foreign Corrupt Practices Act violations, as well as coordination with a parallel proceeding with the Department of Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control*
- led the successful prosecution for illegal sales of US-origin computer equipment to Syria under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act and coordinated a parallel administrative action and export denial order for the business*

BRACEWELL

- led an investigation and successful prosecution of a real estate broker for money laundering in a mortgage fraud case involving “straw purchasers,” fraudulent appraisals, false tax returns and the laundering of drug proceeds*
- lead counsel in a narco-terrorism case involving the AUC (Autodefensas Unidos de Colombia), a designated Foreign Terrorist Organization and its efforts to obtain weapons in exchange for cocaine. The case included the first defendant ever extradited from Colombia on terrorism charges*
- successfully prosecuted an individual attempting to sell an explosive device to an undercover agent posing as an Al-Qaeda operative*
- trial co-counsel in the largest loss-of-life alien-smuggling incident in modern United States history*

** Work completed prior to Bracewell*

Credentials

Education

- University of Houston Law Center, J.D., 1994
- The University of Texas at Arlington, B.B.A., 1990

Bar Admissions

- Texas

Affiliations

- State Bar of Texas
- Houston Bar Association
- American Bar Association
- Houston Lawyers Association
- Crime Stoppers of Houston, Board of Directors, 2013
- Texas Bar Foundation, Fellow
- ABA White Collar Crime Committee, South Texas Region Co-Chair, 2016

Recognition

Savoy Magazine

- Most Influential Lawyers in Corporate America, 2024

Chambers USA

- Texas Litigation: White Collar Crime & Government Investigations, 2017 – 2025

The Legal 500 United States

- Dispute Resolution – Corporate Investigations and White Collar Criminal Defense, 2017 – 2020, 2023 – 2025
- Energy: Regulatory, 2013

The National Black Lawyers

- Top 100, White Collar Criminal Defense, 2015

BL Rankings

- *Best Lawyers*, Criminal Defense: White-Collar, 2018 – 2025

Lawdragon, Inc.

- *Lawdragon 500 Leading Litigators in America*, White-Collar and Investigations, 2024 – 2025
- *Lawdragon 500 Global Leaders in Crisis Management*, Enforcement, Investigations, Incident Response, 2025

US Department of Justice

- Executive Office for United States Attorneys, Director's Award, 2008

Immigration and Customs Enforcement

- Assistant Secretary Award, 2007

Organized Crime and Drug Enforcement Task Force

- 20th Anniversary National Award, 2002

US Attorney's Office

- Performance Award, 2001, Sisyphus Award, 2005

Resources

When the Government Comes Knocking – A Conversation With Jeff Vaden

Podcast

Biden Administration Prioritizes Increased and Broadened Anti-Corruption Enforcement

Update

Government Enforcement and Investigations Year-In-Review: The Administration Has Moved Its Pieces into Place

Update

Lifting the Fog on the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act: Enforcement and Compliance Trends to Watch in San Francisco

Update

Guiding Your Company Through Trump's New Latin America Enforcement Policy

Update

Trump Administration Makes First Round of Cartel Foreign Terrorist Organization Designations with Focus on Mexico and Venezuela

Update

Trump Administration Efforts to Eliminate Cartels Pose Heightened Risk for Financial Institutions

Update

Publications & Speeches

- "FEPA's Role in Boosting FCPA Prosecutions in 2025: Dissecting the Landscape of Enforcement and Risk," Foreign Corrupt Practices Act Houston, January 23, 2025.
- Co-panelist, "Is Sanctions the New FCPA? Defending and Investigating Allegations Brought Under US Sanctions Laws," NACDL West Coast White Collar Conference, June 21, 2024.
- Co-panelist, "National Security, Economic Espionage and Sanctions: The Challenges of a Flattening World," ABA National Institute of White Collar Crime, March 6, 2019.
- Co-panelist, "Financial Crimes Outside the US: Money Laundering, Exports & Sanctions Enforcement," NACDL 8th Annual West Coast White Collar Conference, June 21, 2018.

- Co-panelist, "Under the Bus: Ethical Considerations in Corporate/White Collar Cases; Representing Corporations and Individuals," Southern District of Texas, Bench Bar Conference, November 3, 2017.
- Co-panelist, "The Art of the Snitch: Defending Them; Attacking Them," NACDL West Coast White Collar Conference, July 23, 2017.
- Co-panelist, "Liability for Cross-Border Activity: Increasing Enforcement of Economic Sanctions and Export Control Laws," ABA National Institute of White Collar Crime, March 8, 2017.
- Co-panelist, "Advising the GC on the Strategies, Issues and Themes in the Trial," ABA First Annual Foreign Corrupt Practices Act Mock Trial Institute, November 17, 2016.
- Co-panelist, "Avoiding Indictment: The FCPA & Prosecutorial Discretion," Business Crimes for Civil and Criminal Lawyers CLE, October 13, 2016
- "DOJ Announces First Declinations After Implementing FCPA Pilot Program," *Corporate Compliance Insights*, June 22, 2016.
- "Critical Moments & Critical Decisions: Conducting and Defending Congressional & Internal Investigations," South Asian Bar Association Conference, May 14, 2016.
- "What to Do When the Government Comes Knocking," Association of Corporate Counsel, Houston, January 14, 2014.
- "Foreign Corrupt Practices Act Compliance," Bilateral US-Arab Chamber of Commerce Insight Series, November 20, 2013.
- "In-House Complexities of Internal Investigations," Society of Corporate Secretaries & Governance Professionals, November 13, 2013.
- "Government Enforcement of Export Controls and Economic Sanctions: Perspectives From a Former Prosecutor," American Petroleum Institute's International Trade & Customs Conference, March 18, 2013.
- "Detecting Corruption in Your Local Operations: How to Conduct Effective Risk Assessments in High-Risk Markets," American Conference Institute's FCPA Boot Camp, January 24, 2013.
- "Foreign Corrupt Practices Act: Emerging Trends, Compliance and Ethical Issues," Houston Bar Association, July 26, 2012.