

## Rising Star: Mayer Brown's Matthew J. Alexander

*Law360 (August 28, 2018, 2:49 PM EDT)* -- Matthew J. Alexander of Mayer Brown LLP has guided some of the world's largest multinational corporations through enforcement proceedings and internal probes, including Las Vegas Sands Corp.'s \$7 million deal to shake a Foreign Corrupt Practices Act investigation, earning him a spot as one of five white collar attorneys under 40 recognized by Law360 as Rising Stars.

### **WHAT GOT HIM HOOKED ON WHITE COLLAR DEFENSE:**

Working as a paralegal at Kirkland & Ellis LLP before deciding to go to law school, Alexander recognized that he wanted to pursue a practice area that was both high-stakes and fast-paced. He said that the experience of working with FCPA and white collar lawyer Larry Urgenson reaffirmed his decision to study law and pursue white collar defense.

"I was hooked immediately," Alexander said about working on criminal matters with potentially life-changing consequences. "The way a white collar matter is structured, the way an investigation is set up, there's an energy, complexity and interrelatedness to the media coverage, the intensity with which you have to dive in and immediately get hold of a deep understanding of how your client does business."

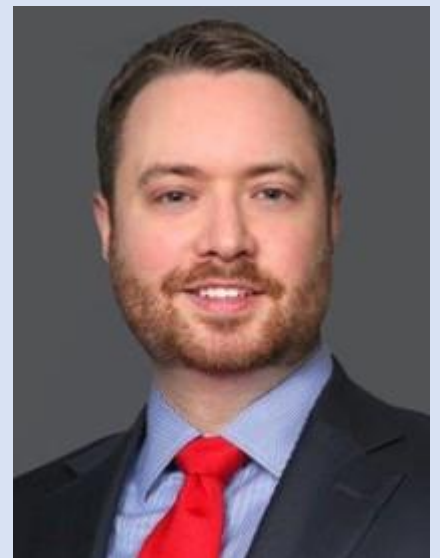
### **HIS BIGGEST CASE:**

Alexander and Urgenson led the Mayer Brown team that took over as counsel for Las Vegas Sands Corp. in a 2017 U.S. Department of Justice investigation into whether it violated the FCPA with payments to a business consultant who promoted its work in China and Macau.

"It sometimes felt like you were quasi in-house counsel," Alexander said about his team joining the investigation just as a newly-appointed general counsel was settling in at Sands.

In what he described as a "complex and high-stakes" case, Alexander

**RISING**  
 ★★★★★  
**STAR**



**Matthew J.  
 Alexander  
 Mayer Brown**

**Age:** 36

**Home base:** Washington, D.C.

**Position:** Partner

**Law school:** Georgetown University Law Center

**First job after law school:** Associate at Kirkland & Ellis LLP

worked to get a deal in which the casino giant agreed to pay a nearly \$7 million penalty, striking a nonprosecution agreement with the DOJ. Sands admitted that it paid about \$5.8 million to the business consultant without any real business purpose and that its executives had failed to use a system of accounting controls to make sure the payments were legitimate.

“Taking a highly regulated company and understanding how sensitive they are to government enforcement investigations, there are a lot of complexities that have to be accounted for, both in how you assess the investigation and how you conduct the representation,” Alexander said.

One of his most critical “value adds” is scoping, he said, describing a process for prioritizing elements of a case.

“How do we triage this matter in a way that will maintain the client's credibility?” he said. “How deep are you going to need to go to satisfy the enforcement authority that’s investigating you?”

***ON HOW WHITE COLLAR DEFENSE WILL CHANGE:***

Describing the current moment as the “age of empowerment for both the media and whistleblowers,” Alexander said high-profile investigations into individuals and corporations, often driven by media investigations, are on the rise, making it more likely that bad actors will be exposed.

“We are long past the period, and it does not look like we’re ever going back, to where the DOJ and [U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission] had the only seats on the other side of the table,” Alexander said.

This makes for more complex investigations in which self-disclosure is an option for many clients, he said.

***WHAT MOTIVATES HIM:***

While many of Alexander’s legal successes end up in the headlines, what motivates him most are the private moments.

“When you've helped guide an individual through a process that is unfamiliar to them, it can be scary and have potential consequences that would reshape the path of their life,” Alexander said. “To help guide them through that and bring them to the other end, it’s particularly rewarding.”

— *As told to Kevin Stawicki*

*Law360's Rising Stars are attorneys under 40 whose legal accomplishments belie their age. A team of Law360 editors selected the 2018 Rising Stars winners after reviewing more than 1,200 submissions. This interview has been edited and condensed.*

All Content © 2003-2018, Portfolio Media, Inc.