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Languages spoken
Russian | English



About Tom

Tom Firestone is global chair of the firm's Government Investigations & White Collar Practice Group.

He is recognized as a leading expert on transnational crime and represents companies and individuals in high-profile and sensitive cases before the Department of Justice (DOJ), the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC), the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), and other US agencies and international institutions. His cases often involve the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA), the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA), the Bank Secrecy Act (BSA), the Foreign Agents Registration Act (FARA) and civil and criminal forfeiture statutes. Among other successful results, he has obtained OFAC delistings for several sanctioned Russian individuals and entities, the cancellation of several Interpol notices, declinations in FCPA cases from the DOJ and the SEC and a declination in a large international online gambling case.

Tom previously worked as an assistant US attorney in the Eastern District of New York, where he specialized in the investigation and prosecution of transnational organized crime. While with the DoJ, he also served as the resident legal adviser and acting chief of the Law Enforcement Section at the US Embassy in Moscow, and twice won the US State Department Superior Honor Award. He has testified as an expert on transnational organized crime and money laundering before the US Senate Judiciary Committee and the UK House of Lords, and as an expert on Russian law in US civil and criminal cases. He has been recognized by Best Lawyers in America in the area of white collar criminal defense for several years in a row and is fluent in Russian.

Experience

- Successfully represented several Specially Designated Nationals (SDNs) in litigation against DOJ and OFAC, resulting in their delisting.
- Served as lead counsel to a company under monitorship in one of the largest FCPA cases in US history.
- Served as advisor to a former prime minister of an East European country in the largest corruption case in the country's history.
- Represented a former US ambassador in espionage investigation conducted by the DOJ National Security Division.
- Represented an FBI agent in the Durham investigation into the origins of the Trump-Russia investigation.
- Conducted internal investigations and compliance risk assessments for US and European companies in various countries, including Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, China, India, Kazakhstan, Korea, Kyrgyzstan, Nigeria, Pakistan, Paraguay, Russia, Ukraine and Uzbekistan, as well as represented companies before the DOJ and SEC in connection with many of these matters.
- Negotiated a US$65 million plea agreement on behalf of a large Asian engineering company in connection with fraud in a US Department of Defense contract.
- Represented a New York hedge fund before OFAC in connection with receipt of a large investment from a sanctioned Russian oligarch.
- Represented a Bulgarian oligarch and family members in Interpol proceedings and obtained cancellation of all Interpol notices.
- Obtained a declination from the DOJ National Security Division in a FARA case involving a prominent US academic.
- Drafted and filed an application in the European Court of Human Rights on behalf of a European businessman charged with fraudulent bankruptcy.
- Served as a US support lawyer for a European monitor in connection with a deferred prosecution agreement with the DOJ.
- Served as the lead US prosecutor in the extradition of a Russian government official facing charges for money laundering.
- Prosecuted a 30-defendant Eastern European organized crime case.
- Prosecuted a 17-defendant Russian organized crime case.
- Prosecuted a racketeering case involving a US$1 billion fraud in the audiotext and internet pornography industries perpetrated by a well-known organized crime family.
- Served as a member of official Ukrainian commissions to select Ukraine's Special Anti-Corruption Prosecutor and Head of Ukrainian Asset Recovery Agency.
- Worked with the Russian parliament and presidential administration to draft new laws on human trafficking and cooperating witnesses; and provided law enforcement technical assistance in other former Soviet countries, including Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Moldova and Latvia.

Credentials

Education

- Harvard Law School, J.D., *cum laude*, 1993
- University of California at Berkeley, M.A., 1987
- Harvard College, B.A., *magna cum laude* with highest honors, 1986

Admissions

- District of Columbia, 2018
- New York, 1993

Memberships & Affiliations

- Board member, ABA Rule of Law Initiative (ROLI)
- Member, Council on Foreign Relations
- Director, US-Russia Foundation
- Member, Edward Bennett Williams Inn of Court
- Member, National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers

Recognitions

- Named to the 2027 *Lawdragon 500 Leading Litigators in America* guide
- Named to the 2026 *Lawdragon 500 Leading Global Investigations Lawyers* guide
- *The Best Lawyers in America* 2022-2027: White Collar Criminal Defense
- Superior Honor Award, US Department of State, 2004 and 2010
- Outstanding Performance Award, US Department of Justice, 2008 and 2009
- Special Award for Advancing US-Russian Cooperation in Antitrust Enforcement, presented by Russian Federal Anti-Monopoly Service, 2010
- Best Professor Award, Pericles American Business Law Education Project, Moscow, awarded for class on "Corporate and White Collar Crime," 2009 and 2010
- American Bar Association Section of International Law Award for Best Stand-Alone Program, "Resolution of Russia-Related Business Disputes: The Next Wave," 2009
- Award for Advancing US-Russian Cooperation, Moscow Oblast Advocates Chamber, 2008

Expertise

Services

- Sovereign Advisory
- Government Investigations & White Collar

Publications & Speaking Engagements

Publications

- Author, "Herring and Anti-Corruption," *BriberyMatters*, April 11, 2024.
- Quoted, "Congress pushes Whistleblower Rewards bill to nab enablers of sanctioned oligarchs," *New York Post*, June 26, 2023.
- Quoted, "Blinken Calls Russian Counterpart to Demand Release of Evan Gershkovich," *Wall Street Journal*, April 2, 2023.
- Quoted, "Who Is Marc Fogel? American Who Remains in Russia for Medical Marijuana After Griner Release," *TIME*, December 10, 2022.
- Quoted, "The Other American Jailed in Russia on Marijuana Charges," *Politico*, December 10, 2022.
- Author, "Russia's American Hostages: The Marc Fogel Case," *The National Interest*, October 18, 2022.
- Author, "U.S. Government Puts Businesses on Alert: Beware of North Korean IT Workers," *Employee Relations Law Journal*, Vol. 48, No. 2, Autumn 2022.
- Quoted, "Russian court likely to convict, sentence Brittney Griner on drug charge. Then what?" *ESPN*, June 30, 2022.
- Quoted, "Evasive practices risk ensnaring companies in Russia sanctions," *Legal Dive*, June 28, 2022.
- Quoted, "U.S. State Department Declares That Brittney Griner Has Been 'Wrongfully Detained' in Russia," *Wall Street Journal*, May 3, 2022.
- Quoted, "Is Brittney Griner a political hostage in Russia? We may find out soon," *Yahoo! Sports*, April 17, 2022.
- Quoted, "Sanctions Flurry Keeps National Security Lawyers on Edge," *Law.com*, April 14, 2022.
- Quoted, "Here are all the women who have won Vladimir Putin's black heart," *New York Post*, April 6, 2022.
- Quoted, "New 'Russian asset tracker' tallies $17.5B worth of oligarchs' wealth," *New York Post*, March 21, 2022.
- Author, "Targeting the Oligarchs: What Does it Mean?" *Bloomberg Law*, March 17, 2022.
- Quoted, "Banks face complex compliance risks as they attempt to exit Russia," *Compliance Week*, March 16, 2022.
- Quoted, "Russia's Sberbank blasts bid for asset freeze in $1 bln U.S. case," *Reuters*, March 16, 2022.
- Quoted, "Anxiety about Brittney Griner's freedom mounts amid Russia- Ukraine conflict," *The Hill*, March 12, 2022.
- Quoted, "Brittney Griner's Circle Turns to a Common Strategy: Silence," *New York Times*, March 11, 2022.
- Quoted, "Brittney Griner Faces a Long Journey Through the Russian Legal System," *Wall Street Journal*, March 11, 2022.
- Quoted, "Brittney Griner is detained in Russia. Putin's war in Ukraine could put the US basketball star in even more danger," *Australian Broadcasting Company*, March 10, 2022.

- Quoted, "The low-profile, high-powered race to free WNBA star Brittney Griner from Russian custody," *Washington Post*, March 10, 2022.
- Quoted, "Why banks that finance yachts and jets for Russian oligarchs could be in uncharted waters," *Insider*, March 10, 2022.
- Guest, "Deadline White House," *MSNBC*, March 8, 2022
- Quoted, "For Brittney Griner, chilly US-Russia relations are 'not a good environment to negotiate.' So what's her best option?" *Yahoo! Sports*, March 8, 2022.
- Guest, "Outside the Lines," *ESPN*, March 7, 2022.
- Quoted, "Compliance Hot Spots: Frantic Week for Sanctions Lawyers after Ukraine Invasion + DOJ Starts Russia Task Force + 'Inexcusable' Discovery Failures in FCPA Trial," *Law.com*, March 2, 2022.
- Quoted, "Economic restrictions are having a devastating effect on Russia – but may have a harder time reaching Russian wealth in U.S.," *The Washington Post*, March 1, 2022.
- Quoted, "Demand for Sanctions Expertise Spikes as US Imposes Swift Response to Russian Ukraine Invasion," *The National Law Journal*, February 25, 2022.
- Author, "DOJ Decision on Bannon Prosecution Will Involve Nuance," *Law360*, October 28, 2021.
- Author, "The Future of Drug Decriminalization After Oregon," *Law360*
- Author, "Virus, 'Tiger King' Point to Need for Wildlife Trafficking Law," *Law360*, June 11, 2020.
- Author, "COVID and Marijuana Legislation: Lessons of History," *Benzinga*, May 8, 2020.
- Author, "DOJ Should Issue No-Action Letters For Marijuana Industry," *Law360*, May 1, 2020.
- Author, "Protecting Against Corruption In State Cannabis Licensing," *Law360*, October 29, 2019.
- Author, "Legal Risk and Opportunity in the Cannabis Industry: What Every Director Needs to Know," *NACD Directorship Magazine*, NACDonline.org, September 2019.
- Author, "Navigating Political and Anti-Corruption Risks," *NACD Directorship Magazine*, NACDonline.org, July/August 2019.
- Co-author, "Two to Tango: Attacking the Demand Side of Bribery," *The American Interest*, December 17, 2018.
- Co-author, "The Global Magnitsky Act," *Criminal Law Forum*, 2018.
- Co-author, "New Law in Poland Could Open Corporate Expenses and Contracts to Public View," *FCPA Blog* July 5, 2018.
- Author, "Does Ukraine Need an Anti-Corruption Court?" *Atlantic Council Ukraine Alert*, August 25, 2016.
- Author, "The FCPA and the Rule of Law Abroad," *The Foreign Service Journal*, June 2016.
- Author, "Real or Bogus: How to Evaluate Foreign Criminal Charges," *The British Journal of White Collar Crime*, Vol.1, No. 1, 2016.
- Author, "Cleaning Up Atlantis: How to Put a Kleptocracy on the Road to Transparency," *The American Interest*, November 2015.

- Co-author, "Overcoming 'Crony Communism': Is EU Membership the Key?" *ABA CJS WCCC Newsletter*, Summer/Fall 2015.
- Co-author, "Ukraine Enacts Sweeping New Anti-Corruption Law," *FCPA Blog*, July 30, 2013.
- Author, "New Russia Law Goes Beyond FCPA, Bribery Act," *FCPA Blog*, March 5, 2013.
- Author, "Trial By Jury and the Rule of Law in Russia," *International Law News*, Fall 2011.
- Author, "Business, Corruption and Pretrial Detention in Russia," *International Law News*, Spring 2011.
- Author, "Armed Injustice: Abuse of the Law and Complex Crime in Post-Soviet Russia," *Denver Journal of International Law and Policy*, Fall 2010.
- Author, "Criminal Corporate Raiding in Russia," *The International Lawyer*, Vol. 42, Issue 4, 2008.
- Author, "Corporate Criminal Liability in the United States," *St. Petersburg Law Institute Annual Review*, 2008 (published in Russian).
- Author, "Jury Trials and Multi-Defendant Cases," *Lex Russica*, No. 6, 2007 (published in Russian).
- Author, "Testimony of a Criminal Defendant Under U.S. and Russian Law: A Comparative Analysis," *Biznes v. Zakone*, No. 4, 2007 (published in Russian).
- Author, "'Prosecution of Jury Trials,' Actual Problems of Criminal Justice: Questions of Theory, Legislation and Implementation," *Moscow State Law Academy*, 2007 (published in Russian).
- Author, "What Russia Must Do to Fight Organized Crime," *Demokratizatsiya: the Journal of Post-Soviet Democratization*, Winter 2006.
- Author, "U.S.-Russian Cooperation in Combating International Terrorism," *Legislation and Counter-Terrorism: Materials from an International Conference in the State Duma of the Russian Federation*, 2004 (published in Russian).
- Author, "U.S. Efforts to Combat Human Trafficking," *Zhenshchina Plus*, January 2004.
- Author, "The Russian Connection: Sex Trafficking into the United States and What the United States and Russia Are Doing About It," *USA Bulletin: International Organized Crime*, September 2003.
- Author, "Mafia Memoirs: What They Tell Us About Organized Crime," *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice*, August 1993.
- Author, "Leningrad's Right-Wing Alternative to Gorbachev," *The Christian Science Monitor*, February 1990.
- Author, "Glasnost: Debate, Seminar or Sermon?" *Berkeley-Stanford Working Papers*, Spring 1989.
- Author, "Four Sovietologists," *The National Interest*, Winter 1989.
- Author, "Trust Not and Verify," *Claremont Review of Books*, 1987.
- Co-author, "A Primer in Soviet Government," *The Claremont Institute,* 1987.

Speaking Engagements

- Panelist, "Strategic Vision and Corporate Foresight: Interests, Actors, and Dilemmas," The Russia Program, January 20, 2026.

- Panelist, "Russia in a Time of War: How to Investigate, Enforce Judgments & Handle Problem Clients," OffshoreAlert Miami, April 24, 2023.
- Guest, "After Griner's release, focus turns to dozens of Americans detained abroad," CNN Situation Room, December 9, 2022.
- Guest, "Griner Released in Prisoner Swap with Russia," NewsNation, December 9, 2022.
- Guest, "Griner Prisoner Swap," Bloomberg Sound ON Podcast, December 8, 2022.
- Guest, "Get all the Americans out: Legal advisor weighs in on Brittney Griner prisoner swap," FOX 32 Chicago, December 9, 2022.
- Guest, "Merchant of Death Viktor Bout released from prison in exchange for Brittney Griner," CBS News, December 8, 2022.
- Guest, "Russian Court Rejects Brittney Griner's Appeal," MSNBC, October 26, 2022.
- Guest, "Griner worried about next week's appeal," CNN, October 18, 2022.
- Guest, "Brittney Griner's verdict expected 'very soon,'" CNN's The Lead With Jake Tapper, August 3, 2022.
- Guest, "WNBA star Brittney Griner appears in Russian court," ABC News, August, 2, 2022.
- Guest, "WNBA star Brittney Griner back in Russian court after guilty plea," CNBC, July 14, 2022.
- Guest, "What Happens Next For WNBA Star Brittney Griner?" Cheddar News, July 14, 2022.
- Guest, "Brittney Griner pleads guilty in Russian court as pressure grows for her release," ABC News Nightline, July 7, 2022.
- Guest, "WNBA Star Brittney Griner Pleads Guilty to Drug Charges" CNN's The Lead With Jake Tapper, July 7, 2022.
- Guest, "Wild star's status in jeopardy after report out of Russia," The Morning News with Vineeta Sawkar, July 7, 2022.
- Guest, "Kirill Kaprizov is not the first Russian athlete who's faced military service questions," Fox 9 KMSP, July 6, 2022.
- Guest, "Balance of Power: What to Expect in Brittney Griner Trial," Bloomberg, July 6, 2022.
- Guest, "How Brittney Griner Might Get Out Of Russia," The Lead, May 4, 2022.
- Guest, "Latest on WNBA star Brittney Griner's wrongful detention in Russia," ABC News, May 4, 2022.
- Guest, "US classifies Griner as wrongfully detained in Russia," CNN, May 3, 2022.
- Guest, "Concerns for WNBA star held in Russia," CNN, April 12, 2022.
- Guest, "Outside the Lines," ESPN, March 21, 2022.
- Speaker, "Targeting Russian Oligarchs," George Mason University Terrorism, Transnational Crime and Corruption Center, March 8, 2022.
- Guest, "'A Very Tight Line': Should Law Firms Continue Doing Business In Russia," Legal Speak by Law.com, March 4, 2022.
- Speaker, "The Problems with Minsk and Corruption: How to Help Ukraine," Atlantic Council Seminar, June 22, 2016.

- Speaker, "The New Cold War: Fighting Corruption in Eastern Europe," ABA Section of International Law Spring Meeting, April 13, 2016.
- Speaker, "Criminal Charges and Third Party Due Diligence," TRACE International Webinar, March 16, 2016.
- Speaker, "Is Banking Secrecy Dead?" ABA Section of International Law Spring Meeting, April 30, 2015.
- Speaker, "Corruption in the Courts," ABA Section of International Law Conference on Dispute Resolution in Russia and the CIS, September 12, 2011.
- Moderator, "The FCPA and Russian Competition Law," Roundtable with Federal Anti-Monopoly Service Chief Igor Artemyev, September 2, 2011 (in Russian).
- Speaker, "Corruption on the Ground in Russia," American Conference Institute Conference on Corruption in Emerging Markets, June 14, 2011.
- Panelist, "Legal Reform and the Courts in Russia," U.S.-Russia Business Council 3rd Annual Russia Legal Forum, June 9, 2011.
- Speaker, "The U.S. Foreign Corrupt Practices Act," Russian Presidential Academy of State Service Conference on Combating Corruption: Legislative Innovations in Russia and Foreign Law, May 31, 2011 (in Russian).
- Speaker, "The U.S. Foreign Corrupt Practices Act," Moscow State University Criminal Law Congress, May 26, 2011 (in Russian).
- Speaker, "The U.S. Foreign Corrupt Practices Act," Moscow Times Conference on Anti-Corruption Legislation: International Application and Russian Practice, May 25, 2011 (in Russian).
- Speaker, "The U.S. Foreign Corrupt Practices Act," Russian Presidential Academy of State Service Anti-Corruption Training Course, March 23, 2011 (in Russian).
- Speaker, "How to Detect Corruption Schemes in Russia," American Conference Institute Russia and CIS Summit on Anti-Corruption, March 16, 2011.

About our firm

One of the world's strongest integrated law firms, providing insight at the point where law, business and government meet. We deliver commercially focused business solutions by combining our legal, lobbying and political capabilities and invaluable connections on the ground to a diverse mix of clients, from long-established leading corporations to emerging businesses, startup visionaries and sovereign nations. More than 1,500 lawyers in over 40 offices across four continents provide unrivaled access to expertise.