

[Sidley Austin; White-Collar Defense](#)

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Body

Sidley Austin partner David Hoffman's investigation into the American Psychological Association's ties to the United States' post-9/11 interrogation program was unusual from the start.

The APA announced the launch of the investigation and committed to making the results of Hoffman's work public. That was a rare position for a client to stake out, since neither Hoffman nor the APA knew what he would find, said Hoffman, the co-leader of Sidley's white-collar group in Chicago.

And unlike most situations in which Sidley's white-collar group is tapped to help a client respond to a crisis, the controversy over the APA's relationship with the U.S. Department of Defense had been brewing for years. Hoffman was hired by the APA to conduct an independent investigation, but there were members of the psychology community who were deeply distrustful of the organization, so Hoffman said he had to first build their trust before he could proceed.

Hoffman's report came out in July 2015. It found that APA officials "colluded" with the Defense Department to issue ethics guidelines that would not restrain the interrogation program. The APA responded with an apology and proposals for a series of reforms to minimize future conflicts of interest and establish firmer guidelines that promoted human rights and welfare.

Hoffman said that given his past work as a federal prosecutor and inspector general for the city of Chicago - along with his colleagues' similar breadth of familiarity with both sides of the courtroom and the negotiating table - the firm's Chicago lawyers bring a high level of credibility to white-collar matters.

"We have the combination of experiences relating to courtroom work and investigations that I think make us a trusted and known and respected commodity in Chicago and I think around the country," Hoffman said.

The eight white collar-focused partners in Sidley's Chicago office pull from a pool of about 60 litigation associates, who aren't assigned to a particular practice. That structure enables the white-collar team to respond quickly to significant and time-sensitive client matters, said Chicago litigation practice head John Gallo, who also co-leads the firm's white collar group.

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Gallo is part of the Sidley team that represents former House of Representatives Speaker Dennis Hastert, who was charged last year in federal district court in Chicago with trying to evade bank reporting requirements. Hastert pleaded guilty in October to one of the charges and is scheduled for sentencing on April 8. Gallo declined to discuss the case.

The white-collar practice represents Neiman Marcus Group as it responds to fallout from a cybersecurity breach, including an investigation by state attorneys general. Neiman Marcus general counsel Tracy Preston said in an email interview that Sidley brings "strong talent and a deep bench."

"They work with a high level of professionalism and are consistently responsive to our needs - regardless of time/location," Preston said. "All of the offices work seamlessly together and as a client, you feel you are being served with the best."

Sidley's white-collar practice also represents online fantasy sports site DraftKings. The firm filed a lawsuit in December in Cook County, Illinois, Circuit Court seeking to prevent Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan from banning the daily fantasy-sports services that DraftKings offers, which Madigan declared illegal under Illinois law. That case is being briefed.

"KEYS TO SUCCESS"

"Define early with your client the internal investigation's scope and goals, although they'll evolve. Investigations cause disruption and anxiety at the company. Be sensitive to this and -proactively help your client address it. Present your advice about -potential disclosures to the government in terms of the risks and benefits of different options. Context matters." -David Hoffman

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