

40 UNDER 40

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a survey celebrating the next generation of
top investigations specialists.

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Selecting the final 40 was by no means easy. In January, we were inundated with strong applications from specialists under the age of 40 from all over the world, including Brazil, India, China, Russia and Australia. Those seeking to enter the 40 had to detail their experience in investigations and provide references from colleagues and clients attesting to the quality of their work, and to provide reasons why these individuals are worthy of the recognition.

To select the 40, we considered a range of factors, including the applicant's experience, the quality of their references and the jurisdiction they work in. Our final 40 have worked on major recent cases, including investigations into Airbus, Mobile TeleSystems and Barclays-Qatar. Colleagues and in-house lawyers provided references eulogising their work.

There were, however, several highly impressive investigations specialists who did not make the cut. Many have CVs most practitioners could only dream of at their age, and leaving them out was tough.

Here, we showcase our final 40 investigations practitioners and demonstrate why they are deserving of this recognition.

We present a diverse group: the individuals practise across 13 jurisdictions and work for 40 different employers, including law firms, consultancies and major companies. There are 21 men and 19 women in our final 40.

In the survey, they discuss their biggest cases and who has inspired them. Their current colleagues relay funny anecdotes, including about one nominee who ate a live octopus during a witness interview and another who is nicknamed "the chairman" by enforcement authorities. Finally, others who have worked with them, including former colleagues and clients, give an insight into the qualities these 40 high-flyers possess that made them worthy of inclusion.



Meaghan Kelly

39
SIMPSON THACHER
& BARTLETT
Counsel
Washington, DC

A SIGNIFICANT CASE I'VE WORKED ON:

One of my big cross-border cases was heating up around the time I got married. My husband and I were flying back from enjoying endless saganaki and assyrtiko in Greece on our honeymoon and, on our layover elsewhere in Europe, I deplaned to go meet my team for urgent local interviews and to prepare for high-stakes local regulator meetings (yes, still married to this very supportive husband). On another trip, I flew to conduct intense but brief interviews in the Middle East, where we were on the ground for less time than we were in the air. Travel anecdotes aside (though plentiful in the investigations world), some of my defining moments have been several recent (private) victories where the SEC has declined to pursue a case after investigation – the culmination of great teamwork in thorough fact-finding coupled, importantly, with insightful and persuasive advocacy to convince the government not to bring a case.



I have been incredibly impressed with Meaghan on every matter I have worked on with her at the firm. She is very skilled at coordinating complex multi-jurisdictional matters and is always one step ahead. Her attention to detail is extraordinary, but is never at the expense of sound strategic thinking and sharp legal analysis. In addition to having clients who adore her, Meaghan is also an outstanding manager and leader and often sought after as a mentor by our more junior lawyers.

STEVE CUTLER

GLOBAL HEAD OF GOVERNMENT AND INTERNAL
INVESTIGATIONS PRACTICE
SIMPSON THACHER

AN IMPORTANT PERSON IN MY CAREER:

One early influence was my dad taking me to the Supreme Court to hear oral arguments. Though I was young, I could sense the deep preparation the lawyers had done in advance, but also that it was crucial for them to be nimble on their feet. This mindset (being well-prepared but equally prepared to go off script) is key in investigations, from conducting witness interviews to presenting to the government. I remember one of the first witness interviews I conducted as a junior lawyer involved a witness for whom the client gave us incorrect title and department information; 10 seconds into speaking with him, my outline became entirely moot. It turned out to be one of the most interesting fact interviews I have ever conducted as well as very useful. This cemented for me the importance of being able to adapt and respond, the key to which is active listening. More broadly, I've learned that you must "listen" to both the facts and the witnesses to develop the best and most tailored advocacy possible. Being a thoughtful listener while being a staunch advocate for the client was instilled in me, among much other wisdom, by my great mentor and friend, Peter Bresnan.



I am flattered to be considered one of Meaghan's mentors. I was fortunate to work closely with Meaghan during my time at Simpson Thacher on several high-stakes international investigations, including matters involving financial fraud, bribery and insider trading. In particular, she was instrumental on a significant cross-border matter for a bank, which involved a multi-year SEC investigation and congressional testimony. Not only is Meaghan a superb lawyer, she is an excellent and collaborative colleague. Meaghan brings unmatched intelligence, unwavering drive and creative client-driven solutions to every matter. I see nothing but tremendous success in her future.

PETER BRESNAN

GLOBAL HEAD OF LITIGATION AND INVESTIGATIONS

EFG BANK