



Kobre & Kim adds top five

Angela Bilbow - 25 May, 2018

Disputes and investigations boutique Kobre & Kim has significantly grown its global practice with the addition of five former government lawyers who will be based in London, Shanghai, Seoul, New York and Washington, DC.

Five ex-United States government lawyers have been hired by **Kobre & Kim** in the US, United Kingdom, China and Korea.

Sean Buckley joins in New York after spending nearly a decade working as a prosecutor at the **Department of Justice (DoJ)** in the Southern District of New York, where he held a number of positions including, assistant US attorney in the criminal division and deputy chief and then co-chief of the terrorism and international narcotics unit. Earlier in his career, he also spent time in private practice at **Willkie Farr & Gallagher**.

At Kobre & Kim, he will focus on asset forfeiture, money laundering and sanctions work.

In Washington, DC, **Scott Hulsey** will work in the firm's global investigations and monitorship practice.

Hulsey most recently held the position of chief compliance officer at **GE Energy Connections** in Atlanta, and before that worked at the DoJ for over 20 years, culminating in him serving as assistant deputy attorney general, under former acting attorney general **Sally Yates**, in Washington until 2016.

London-based **Jonathan Huth** will arrive at Kobre & Kim from **HSBC Bank** in August, where he worked as an associate general counsel in the bank's global internal investigation group. Prior to this, he was a senior trial attorney at the US **Commodity Futures Trading Commission (CFTC)**.

Huth's skillset includes investigations into complex financial instruments, as well as cryptocurrencies, which has been a recent focus of the CFTC and of the US **Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC)**, which continues to target ICOs and blockchain-related activity.

In the Shanghai office, which the firm opened in October 2017, former prosecutor **Wade Weems** will join pending approval by the Chinese Ministry of Justice.

Weems, currently practising in Washington, was more recently a trial attorney in the DoJ's national security division, and has held a number of other roles within government, both in the US and Iraq, while he has in tandem served under the US Marine Corps in active duty, civil affairs and as a reserve officer. He also spent time at a white-collar firm **Williams & Connolly** between 2002 and 2006.



Also pending government approval, this time in Seoul, Korea, is **Daniel Lee**, who is currently based in New York.

Lee has spent in career in government, in roles across Iowa, Hawaii, California and Texas, where he was most recently assistant US attorney in the Western District of Texas, focused on prosecuting matters relating to financial fraud, money laundering, health care fraud and public corruption.

In a statement, **Steven Kobre**, a co-founder of the firm, said: “We have and continue to hire talent to address growing demand for our firm’s international government enforcement defence and investigations services,” while fellow co-founder **Michael Kim** added the practice “has two aspects not commonly found in many other firms – one, our team is located throughout the world offering local capabilities and language skills and two, we focus on fulfilling only a client’s specialised needs while working cooperatively with the client’s existing regular outside counsel”.

Among its work, the firm is acting for the liquidators of Guernsey-incorporated Carlyle Capital Corporation in their pending billion-dollar appeal against the **Carlyle Group**, after Guernsey’s Royal Court cleared the defendants at first instance in September 2017 of all substantive issues in a long-running dispute spanning more than 187 claims. The appeal is expected to be heard in Guernsey later this year or in early 2019 and **Mourant Ozannes** has been instructed to act locally for the liquidators.

In 2017, Kobre & Kim hired **Farrington Yates** in its New York bankruptcy disputes team from **Dentons** in March. In April that year, **Mark Griffiths** joined the London bankruptcy disputes team from **Proskauer Rose**, and in June, it recruited former DoJ deputy chief **Hartley West** in San Francisco, California.

Elsewhere, recent former US government prosecutor hires include **Michael Birnbaum**, who has been appointed as a partner at **Morrison & Foerster** in New York, having spent 11 years at the SEC, more recently as a senior trial counsel. In Boston, former DoJ veteran **William Weinreb** joined **Quinn Emanuel Urquhart & Sullivan** after more than 20 years in government service.