

William E. Ridgway

Skadden

Partner, Chicago

Litigation; White Collar Defense and Investigations;
Cybersecurity, Privacy and Sensitive Technologies; Web3 and Digital Assets



T: 312.407.0449
william.ridgway@skadden.com

Education

J.D. Stanford Law School, 2006
(with distinction; Articles Editor,
Stanford Law Review)

B.S., Stanford University, 2003
(with distinction)

Bar Admissions

Illinois

California

U.S. District Court for the Northern
District of Illinois

U.S. Court of Appeals for the
Second and Seventh Circuits

William E. Ridgway is a former federal prosecutor and experienced trial and appellate lawyer whose practice focuses on white collar crime, cybersecurity, data privacy and national security matters and complex civil litigation.

Mr. Ridgway represents businesses, their boards and executives in government investigations and enforcement proceedings, internal investigations and civil litigation. He also advises clients on cybersecurity incident preparation and response and national security issues, in addition to a variety of matters related to cryptocurrency, blockchains and digital assets.

Mr. Ridgway has led investigations on behalf of a variety of clients across a wide range of industries. He regularly represents corporate and individual clients in investigations led by the U.S. Department of Justice, the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission, the Commodity Futures Trading Commission, state attorneys general, and other U.S. and foreign regulators. These matters have involved investigations concerning financial fraud, cybersecurity and data breaches, trade secret theft, public corruption, health care fraud, antitrust violations, tax fraud, market manipulation (including spoofing) and the False Claims Act.

Mr. Ridgway was named one of *Crain's Chicago Business's* 2023 Notable Litigators and Trial Attorneys and 2021 Notable Gen X Leaders in Law, in addition to being selected to *Global Investigations Review's* 2020 40 Under 40 list of the world's leading investigations lawyers and one of Lawdragon's 500 Leading Lawyers in America. *Chambers USA* recognized Mr. Ridgway as an "up and comer" who is "increasingly called upon to represent clients in high-stakes white-collar proceedings, regularly handling complex investigations and cybersecurity matters." Clients commented in the publication that Mr. Ridgway is "so smart, so creative and incredible on his feet" and "is detail-oriented, a phenomenal writer and is excellent in court." He also was named to *Cybersecurity Docket's* 2023 Incident Response 50 as one of the "50 best data breach response lawyers in the business" and to its 2022 Incident Response 40 list, as well as one of *Who's Who Legal: Investigations's* 2022 Future Leaders.

Prior to joining Skadden, Mr. Ridgway was an assistant U.S. attorney in the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Illinois, where he served as the deputy chief of the National Security and Cybercrimes Section. In this role, he oversaw and managed all of the office's cybercrime, data breach and intellectual property cases. During this time, Mr. Ridgway also held the positions of national security cyber specialist, computer hacking and intellectual property coordinator, and digital currency coordinator, handling cryptocurrency-related matters.

In his eight years as a federal prosecutor, Mr. Ridgway tried numerous cases and handled a wide range of high-profile cybercrime and intellectual property matters, including the prosecution of an international cybercrime ring responsible for stealing over \$100 million, as well as prosecutions of the leaders of two prominent hacking groups for hundreds of cyberattacks that targeted businesses, nonprofits and government bodies around the globe. Mr. Ridgway also led the prosecution of the operators of one of the world's largest online piracy rings. Other notable matters in which Mr. Ridgway was involved include several national security cases, as well as the prosecutions of a prominent Chicago restaurateur for corporate fraud, a leader of the Mexican Zetas cartel and his associates for money laundering, and an international document fraud ring for racketeering and murder.

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Mr. Ridgway also argued a number of cases on appeal before the 7th and 2nd Circuits, including appeals involving matters of national security, the First Amendment and online freedom of speech, and the extraterritorial reach of the racketeering statute.

Mr. Ridgway has received numerous awards and recognition throughout his career, including the Director's Award for Superior Performance from the Executive Office for United States Attorneys for prosecuting an international racketeering enterprise (2015) and the Chicago Crime Commission's Stars of Distinction Award for the prosecution of criminal enterprises operating in Chicago (2009 and 2010). He also was selected as a Leadership Greater Chicago Fellow in its 2017 class.

Mr. Ridgway also has been a lecturer at University of Chicago Law School since 2011, where he teaches a class on cybercrime.

Experience

Deputy Chief of National Security and Cybercrimes Section for the Northern District of Illinois (2014-16)

Assistant U.S. Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois (2008-14)

Law Clerk, Hon. Richard A. Posner, U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit (2007-08)

Law Clerk, Hon. Vaughn R. Walker, U.S. District Court, Northern District of California (2006-07)

Speaking Engagements

"True Detective: Audits, Inquiries & Investigations," FIA Annual Law & Compliance Division Conference, May 10, 2019

"Managing Corporate Cybersecurity Risk," University of Chicago Law School General Counsel Roundtable Program, May 18, 2018

"You Got Hacked," Annual Law & Compliance Division Conference, May 4, 2018

"Cybersecurity: Understanding the Emerging Threats and Regulatory Trends," AGLF Annual Conference, May 3, 2018

"Anatomy of a Cyber Attack," ADT, October 12, 2017

"How Companies Should be Addressing Insider Cyber Threats," Lawline, August 29, 2017

"Cybersecurity: Understanding the Emerging Threats and Regulatory Trends Through Real World Scenarios," Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP, April 27, 2017

"Understanding and Defending Against Cyber Attacks: What You Need to Know and Do," Knowledge Group Webcast, April 18, 2017

"Corporate Investigations," Sandpiper Partners LLC, November 2, 2016

"Cyber Risk to Third Parties," Sandpiper Partners LLC, April 19, 2016

"Digital Currency and the Block Chain: Law Enforcement's Efforts at Controlling and Regulating It," ABA Annual Conference, April 16, 2016

"Unlock This: Current Issues in Technology and Criminal Practice," Federal Bar Association, April 13, 2016

"Cybersecurity Regulations: What You Need to Know," Inside Counsel SuperConference, May 12, 2015

"The GC's Role in Cybersecurity Efforts in the Face of Ongoing Threats from Foreign Hackers," National Law Journal Chicago Regulatory Summit, November 14, 2014

"Cyber Response: Preparing In-House Counsel for the Inevitable Hack," Northwestern Law School Annual Corporate Counsel Institute, October 3, 2014

"Misuse of Internal Communication & Customer Information," Chicago Law Bulletin White Collar Crime and Corporate Governance Conference, April 17, 2014