

# 40 UNDER 40

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a survey celebrating the next generation of  
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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.



## Mahmoud Baki Fadlallah

35  
AKIN GUMP STRAUSS  
HAUER & FELD  
Partner  
Dubai

### A SIGNIFICANT CASE I'VE WORKED ON:

One of my favourite investigations was when I was a junior lawyer. It started when a customer accused an aerospace client of ours of stealing a very sensitive item controlled for missile technology reasons. At first glance, this was an allegation of theft, but the sensitivity of the item triggered export controls and sanctions issues as well, given that the customer was threatening to involve US authorities. After numerous interviews and a review of CCTV footage, we determined that the item was not stolen, but rather a clerical error led to it being omitted from the outbound shipment invoice to the customer. That was the easy part. We still had the difficult task of proving a negative to the customer. To do this, I remember crawling through the belly of an aircraft with engineers taking apart the various items in the shipment. We then sent a video to the customer showing that the consolidated shipment it had received from my client – which was weighed by an independent third-party freight forwarder – could not have weighed as much as it did without the allegedly stolen item in there. Magically, the item turned up at the customer's premises shortly thereafter and the investigation was resolved without any regulatory scrutiny.



Mac is always innovating to make legal practice more interesting, multidimensional and enjoyable to his colleagues and clients. I was in the room when he led a seminar in the UAE on the sensitive topic of US politics and trade shortly after the last election. It was a diverse audience with no shortage of varying and strong viewpoints. Undaunted, Mac kicked off the event by asking the hundreds of attendees to download an app to their phones that prompted them to answer a series of questions he designed in real time (eg, "Who would you have voted for – Donald Trump or Hillary Clinton?"). The app tabulated the results on a screen in front of the audience as they responded, while Mac commented and extemporaneously led them through the answers with good humour and insight. The crowd loved it and it completely energised the room for the panels and topics that ensued.

**THOMAS MCCARTHY**  
INTERNATIONAL TRADE PRACTICE HEAD  
*AKIN GUMP*

### AN IMPORTANT PERSON IN MY CAREER:

Kevin Wolf (former US assistant secretary of commerce for export administration) has definitely had the biggest impact on my career. To start, he was among the first to believe in my aptitude as a lawyer – he hired me out of law school at our old firm, and did so outside the firm's typical on-campus hiring channels. He then insulated me from the lay-offs that severely affected the legal industry during the financial recession. At that time, I was a first-year lawyer without many specialised skills. I remember meeting with Kevin as we were hearing news reports of massive lay-offs at other firms, and offering up all the reasons why I should be laid off. He rightly, and politely, told me to shut up and stop being stupid. Thankfully, things turned around in our industry. Kevin joined the Obama administration and shortly thereafter I joined Akin Gump, where Kevin continued to mentor and guide me. Things came back full circle in 2016 when I was part of the team that hired Kevin into Akin Gump.



Mac is the most well-rounded attorney I know. He perfectly balances the acumen, curiosity, foresight and judgement it takes to be superlative counsel. Mac guided our company through a lengthy high-stakes period when the difficult landscape changed daily. Mac was available around the clock to help us navigate every micro-step and to assuage even our smallest concerns with a voice of calm, measured counselling. Our company not only survived the situation but thrived due to Mac's leadership, creativity and sound judgement.

Mac is also a source of innovation. He designed and helped implement a tool that yielded immediate efficiencies and stronger compliance in a heavily regulated area. He is also a gifted teacher who helped train our employees on various regulatory compliance matters. He adds value not only on legal matters but also to business operations.

Mac not only became a trusted adviser to me immediately, he became a friend. He cares about his clients and the people who work for those clients, and understands the human element of legal practice. He treats every company employee with the respect they deserve, be they labourers or C-suite executives. I am a better lawyer for having known and learned from Mac.

**LYNSEY BARRON**

FORMER INVESTIGATIONS AND COMPLIANCE COUNSEL

*UPS*