



Avni P. Patel

PARTNER

212 335 2041

apatel@wmhlaw.com



EDUCATION

Boston University School of Law, J.D. (2010); executive editor of communication, *Review of Banking and Financial Law*

Northwestern University, B.S. (2007); with honors

ADMISSIONS

New York

An experienced litigator and trial lawyer, Avni represents individuals and corporate clients facing complex, sensitive, and high-profile challenges. She focuses on white collar criminal defense, government and internal investigations, regulatory enforcement, and complex litigation at the federal, state, and local levels.

Avni uses her extensive trial and investigation experience at the state and federal levels to approach her white-collar matters with a combination of strategic acumen, thorough preparation, and empathy. Building a strong relationship with her clients is a key element of Avni's ability to build a successful defense, especially when the stakes are high. Avni was part of the WMH trial team that successfully defended a corporate client in a public corruption case in the Southern District of New York, winning the only acquittal in a highly contested and publicized four-defendant trial. She has also represented numerous clients in difficult white-collar sentencings and successfully crafted arguments to minimize exposure in matters involving money laundering, wire fraud, bribery, corruption, and conspiracy. As part of her white-collar practice, Avni has represented dozens of clients in preparation for investigative interviews and proffers with the United States Department of Justice, FINRA, the Manhattan District Attorney's Office, and other federal and state regulatory bodies.

In addition to her white-collar experience, Avni is a highly regarded and meticulous investigator. She has represented clients in a wide breadth of investigations and has been called upon to conduct thorough reviews on behalf of government entities and corporations. In 2019, Avni was appointed as Special Counsel by New Jersey Governor Philip Murphy, pursuant to Executive Order No. 52, to conduct an in-depth examination of the state's corporate tax incentives as well as investigate possible political and special interest corruption in the legislative design and implementation of the \$11 billion tax incentive programs. She also served on the independent monitor team appointed by the Department of Justice to oversee General Motors' compliance with its obligations under the deferred prosecution agreement stemming from its recall of defective ignition switches.



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At the individual level, Avni has represented high-profile and international clients in major investigations around the globe. In 2016, she began representing Russian whistleblower Dr. Grigory Rodchenkov, one of the most significant whistleblowers in sports history. Avni played an integral role in establishing Dr. Rodchenkov's credibility with United States law enforcement and the World Anti-Doping Agency ("WADA"). She has represented Dr. Rodchenkov in cooperating with and providing testimony for WADA, the International Olympic Committee, the Court of Arbitration for Sport, the International Biathlon Union, the International Paralympic Committee, and various law enforcement agencies in Europe.

At the corporate level, Avni is frequently called upon for her recognized ability to efficiently and effectively conduct internal investigations. Among her representative investigations, Avni has conducted internal investigations related to allegations of fraud, negligence, employment discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual assault, and defamation.

Avni also applies her litigation skills to prosecuting and defending civil matters. She places her clients' objectives and constraints at the forefront as she creatively approaches settlement negotiations and litigation strategy. In two recent matters, Avni was part of the WMH teams that successfully convinced the court to dismiss defamation claims against individual and corporate clients based on skillful motion papers alone. She has significant experience in negotiating positive outcomes for individuals in employment cases, including employees targeted by company investigations and clients who experienced discrimination and sexual harassment.

Prior to joining the firm, Avni served as an Assistant District Attorney in the Bronx County District Attorney's Office, where she tried over a dozen felony and misdemeanor cases to verdict—five to jury verdict—on charges ranging from attempted murder to grand larceny. She worked on cases across jurisdictions, in other New York state boroughs and countries, and in the SDNY to reach global dispositions and negotiations. After being appointed the Bias Assistant District Attorney by District Attorney Robert T. Johnson, Avni partnered with detectives in the city's Hate Crime Task Force to prosecute hate crimes in Bronx County.

In addition to her legal work, Avni is a co-founder of the WMH's Women's Initiative, which brings together prominent women from the legal, political, entertainment, and local communities to support gender equality and create a platform for rising women leaders.

Recognitions

Future Star, *Benchmark Litigation* (2023)

Rising Star, *New York Law Journal* (2022)

Sports, Gaming & Entertainment Trailblazer, *The National Law Journal* (2021)

Shortlist, Women in Business Law Americas Rising Star in Litigation, *Euromoney Legal Media Group* (2021, 2022)

Best Lawyers: Ones to Watch, Criminal Defense: White-Collar, *Best Lawyers* (2021, 2022)



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Activities

Professional Affiliations

- WMH Women's Initiative
- South Asian Bar Association
- New York Women's Bar Association
- New York City Bar Association