

Troutman Pepper, DOJ Alum Launches White Collar Boutique

By **Rosie Manins**

Law360 (November 2, 2020, 8:07 PM EST) -- A Georgia white collar attorney opened a national boutique firm on Monday that will represent clients in litigation and government investigations, leaving behind the Troutman Pepper Hamilton Sanders LLP team he joined several years ago.

David M. Chaiken, a former federal prosecutor and a Troutman Pepper partner since late 2016, launched ChaikenLaw Ltd. as an Atlanta-based, national firm that will also operate in Los Angeles and San Francisco.

Chaiken told Law360 he plans to take advantage of an expected increase in white collar cases if President Donald Trump and his administration lose Tuesday's election, given that Democratic administrations tend to be more pro-enforcement in general, and that Trump's government had resulted in an "all-time low in white collar enforcement."



David M. Chaiken

"In terms of timing, depending on what happens in the election tomorrow, a lot of people feel that if there's a change in administration there will be an uptick in white collar work, and I think I'll be well positioned to take advantage of that increased demand with a new administration," Chaiken said Monday.

A former federal prosecutor of nine years, Chaiken said he had been thinking for a while about taking his white collar practice to the next level. He said having his own firm, for which he plans to start recruiting attorneys in the next six months, frees him from any BigLaw case conflicts and provides more flexibility in arranging client fees.

Chaiken said the coronavirus pandemic has actually aided his ability to open in three different cities by making remote or virtual legal proceedings mainstream. He said he has leased coworking spaces in each city and is waiting for his firm to be incorporated in California.

Chaiken's white collar work spans 25 years, starting with a clerk position at San Francisco litigation boutique Keker Van Nest & Peters LLP, which convinced him to pursue a law degree.

He said he likes the high stakes and intensity of helping clients in their "deepest, darkest, most difficult times."

Atlanta has room for a white collar trial and investigations boutique like those that have emerged in other major cities for handling sophisticated cases, Chaiken said in a statement Monday.

"Our goal is to provide the highest quality legal representation to our clients — equal to that of

any top firm in the country — but with some of the efficiencies that can be achieved in a smaller setting," he said.

Chaiken recently negotiated a corporate **nonprosecution agreement** on behalf of a Chinese real estate developer embroiled in a federal investigation into Los Angeles government corruption. And he defended the former Equifax CEO in the securities litigation over the company's 2017 data breach, in which an Atlanta federal judge in February preliminarily approved **settlements worth almost \$200 million**.

Chaiken graduated from Emory University School of Law in 2001 and spent a year clerking for U.S. District Judge William C. O'Kelley in Atlanta, then worked as a litigation associate at King & Spalding LLP for two years and at Heller Ehrman LLP for three years.

In 2007, Chaiken started his almost 10-year stint as an assistant U.S. attorney in the economic crimes section of the U.S. Attorney's Office in Atlanta, which he left in 2016 to join Troutman Sanders LLP — now Troutman Pepper — on its white collar team.

--Editing by Emily Kokoll.