

## Ex-DOJ Prosecutor, FCA Expert Rejoins Crowell & Moring

By Phillip Bantz

*Law360 (January 25, 2023, 12:22 AM EST)* -- A False Claims Act specialist and federal fraud prosecutor has exited the U.S. Department of Justice and returned to Crowell & Moring LLP as a partner in the firm's Washington, D.C., office.

As Jason Crawford rejoins private practice after three years with the government, his finger is on the pulse of developing trends in the FCA realm, including an expected uptick in enforcement actions that hinge on artificial intelligence, cybersecurity and telehealth.

Under the FCA, the government or private whistleblowers, known as relators, can sue companies or individuals accused of defrauding the government.

"Those are all areas that DOJ leadership has identified as priorities, so I would anticipate that the relators' bar will probably be focusing on those and we can anticipate a pipeline of cases focused on those areas," Crawford told Law360.

Crawford is also watching the customs world, where he said rival domestic importers are increasingly accusing competitors of violating the FCA by evading payments of customs duties on imported goods.

"That area [customs] has seen a lot of growth and, interestingly, much of it is fueled not by traditional insider whistleblowers, but rather from companies ... using the False Claims Act as a business litigation tool against competitors," Crawford said.

He launched his legal career in 2012 as an associate at Crowell, but stepped away from the firm a year later for a clerkship in the U.S. Court of Federal Claims. He returned to Crowell in 2014 and co-led the firm's FCA working group before he split again in early 2020 to serve as a trial attorney in the Fraud Section of the Justice Department's Civil Division.

"I had worked with a lot of [federal prosecutors] across the country and it was clear that they all enjoyed the work and found it interesting," Crawford said. "I also felt the call to public service and the chance to serve in the federal government."

As a prosecutor, Crawford focused primarily on alleged violations of government contracting laws and FCA issues. He also prosecuted crimes for the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Columbia, including a case against a defendant accused of threatening to kill a Congress member in the wake of



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the Jan. 6 attack on the U.S. Capitol.

Crawford's second homecoming at Crowell coincides with a "period of heightened enforcement and increased oversight" in government investigations and regulatory actions, according to Daniel Forman, who co-leads the firm's government contracts group.

Crawford said he returned to Crowell, in part, because he sees the firm as a "great platform for [his] practice."

"When I was at the firm previously, I was given a lot of responsibility," he said. "Now, I have the chance to come back and help lead complex cases and investigations, and I was ready to push myself and take that next step."

Crawford isn't the only Crowell lawyer who can't seem to stay away from the firm for very long.

Other recent returns include Agustin Orozco, a former federal prosecutor who rejoined Crowell on Jan. 19 as a partner in the firm's white collar and regulatory enforcement and government contacts groups. Tyler O'Connor, former energy counsel to the U.S. House Committee on Energy and Commerce, also returned to Crowell on Dec. 20 as a partner in the firm's energy and government affairs practices.

--Editing by Marygrace Anderson.