

Secured High-Profile Acquittal at Trial for Matthew Grimes on Charges He Acted as an Unregistered Foreign Agent

NOVEMBER 4, 2022

On November 4, 2022, following a seven-week trial, we secured a full acquittal for **Matthew Grimes**, who had been accused of acting as an unregistered agent of a foreign government in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 951(the Foreign Agent Registration Act (FARA)) and conspiracy to violate the same under 18 U.S.C. § 371. The victory earned our team, and co-defendant's counsel, Am Law's November 11, 2022 "[Litigator of the Week](#)" honor.

Federal prosecutors accused Grimes and his co-defendant, Thomas Barrack, Jr., of acting as unregistered foreign agents running a foreign-influence campaign in the U.S. and serving as a secret back channel for communications from U.A.E. officials. Grimes's lawyers strongly contested the charges, challenging the government's application of the statute, referred to as "espionage lite," to a then-22-year-old, and its interpretation of the evidence, including hundreds of text messages, emails, and business records. While the DOJ has stepped up FARA prosecutions in recent years, the charges against Grimes were novel because the federal government had never before charged someone in his position under FARA. Grimes's co-defendant Barrack, Jr. was also acquitted of all charges, including charges alleging obstruction of justice and six material false statements.

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