

# TRAILBLAZERS

## CRIMINAL LAW

### PAUL SHECHTMAN

BRACEWELL LLP



**PIONEER SPIRIT** Paul Shechtman never intended to be a criminal lawyer. While clerking for a judge in the Eastern District of New York, he watched his first criminal trial and became fascinated with the role of the prosecutor. “The prosecutor seemed to have the job of basically putting on a play, calling witnesses and then persuading the jury that they were credible and accurate. I left wanting to get a job as a prosecutor.”

**TRAILS BLAZED** After serving as prosecutor at the U.S. attorney’s office and also as director of criminal justice in Albany for the state of New York, Shechtman represented a former broker with Bank of America accused of enabling a hedge fund manager to make illegal trades with mutual funds. Representing his client against Eliot Spitzer’s office on 32 counts, Shechtman received an acquittal on 28 and a hung jury on the rest, which were dismissed. “Spitzer was riding high at the time, and this was his first loss. That gave me a reputation as someone who could try a case.” Shechtman also represented financier Andrew Caspersen, who was charged with securities fraud and wire fraud, and successfully persuaded the judge only to give him a shorter sentence of three years. “Knowing the guidelines and writing a good sentencing memorandum are a large part of what white-collar lawyers do these days, and cases like this have helped me develop expertise in this area.”

**FUTURE EXPLORATIONS** Shechtman believes the slowing of some aspects of his practice may be cyclical or due to the Trump administration, but others will emerge. “Usually, there seems to be a ‘crime of the season,’ which the government and the public are concerned about, then it changes.” He also said, “The government has increasing leverage, and it’s getting harder to win. But I’ve won my share, and I hope that continues.”