

May 30, 2022

Davies Summit: International Investigations and White Collar Defence

Experts from around the world, including former U.S. Attorney General Loretta Lynch, gather to discuss trending topics in the space.

Close to 200 attendees from across Canada, the United States and Europe packed the ballroom at Le Windsor in downtown Montréal on May 26 for the second edition of the **Davies Summit: International Investigations and White Collar Defence**, with keynote speaker former U.S. Attorney General Loretta Lynch.



International experts gather for the second edition of the Davies Summit on International Investigations and White Collar Defence.

The opening panel, **High-Stakes Cross-Border Investigations and Prosecutions in the Spotlight**, was moderated by Davies partner Derek Ricci featured three leading lawyers in the field discussing issues such as media leaks, media relations, security, the complexities of international cooperation and regional variations in legal practices and approaches.





From left: Jeannie Rhee, Antonin Lévy, Evan Norris and Derek Ricci discuss high-profile cross-border investigations.

Antonin Lévy, defence counsel for former French prime minister François Fillon, discussed the unique challenges of representing a prominent public figure – especially with regard to on-the-ground security and leak management – and the occasional need to reshape one’s entire case strategy on extremely short notice or being informed of case developments through the media.

Evan Norris, former lead prosecutor in the corruption case against FIFA, talked about the importance of context – for example, leaks were less of a concern in the United States, where soccer is less popular than in France, where the sport is a national obsession. He also discussed the need to create a case narrative that would hold up until the end, while maintaining the flexibility to deal with challenges to that narrative and to reshape strategy on the fly.

Jeannie Rhee, team leader in Robert Mueller’s special counsel investigation into Russian efforts to influence the 2016 U.S. presidential election, and a frequent past collaborator with Loretta Lynch (now her partner at Paul Weiss), spoke from the perspective of a cybersecurity expert in a time of rapidly developing technology, liaising with the FBI and coping with a contemporary landscape in which the dissemination of information is truly global.



From left: David J. Martin, Vincent Larouche, John Athanasiades and Marie-France Dompierre bring their prospective viewpoints to challenging cases.

The second panel, **The Cop, the Defence Counsel and the Investigative Journalist**, was moderated by Davies partner Marie-France Dompierre and illustrated how the requirements of three very different sectors can sometimes dovetail and conflict in a given case, especially with regard to ways of dealing with leakers and informants.

John Athanasiades, former RCMP officer and current leader of the National Bank of Canada’s Financial Crime Management and Corporate Security division, talked about his role in the investigation of the 2012 VIA derailment, as well as some finer points of corporate and financial sector crime, gathering admissible evidence in an international

context and dealing with internal cases.

The journalism profession was represented by Vincent Larouche of Montréal's *La Presse*, who addressed the investigative journalist's role as a neutral party in an adversarial system and the challenge of balancing the needs of the job (i.e., covering a story with all the means at one's disposal) and the ways in which that obligation can sometimes conflict with the perspectives of police and the legal sector.

David J. Martin, defence counsel for Meng Wanzhou of Huawei in the Canada-U.S. extradition case, spoke about the intricacies and challenges of international white collar defence such as extradition between countries with varying legal traditions and philosophies. He also emphasized the lack of security in the modern digital communication arena.

Themes that emerged in both panels included the role of the media in shaping narrative, knowing that the press can help and bearing in mind the essence of a case, particularly who the victims are.



From left: former U.S. Attorney General Loretta Lynch speaks with Davies' Léon Moubayed.

Capping off the event was **A Private Audience with a Former U.S. Attorney General, Loretta Lynch**. She was introduced by Davies partner [Chantelle Cseh](#) and interviewed by Davies partner and Summit lead [Léon Moubayed](#). She began with a personal anecdote about her experience becoming the first African American woman appointed U.S. Attorney General and working in the Obama administration. She spoke, among other things, about the double-edged nature of international sanctions – namely, the balance between their effectiveness and the possibility that they can further empower an autocratic leader. And she pointed out that sanctions against Russia far predate the Ukraine invasion. She also noted the importance of fighting the common misconception that corruption is a victimless crime.

Register for 2023! Add your name to the early bird registration list for next year's summit.