

Haynes and Boone Lawyers Help High-Profile Journalist Win Release from Prison

By Joseph Lawlor | May 26, 2017

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Haynes Boone successfully intervened to secure the release from prison of Barrett Brown, a *D Magazine* columnist who has written for *The Daily Beast*, *Vanity Fair*, *Huffington Post*, *The Guardian*, and *The Intercept*.

Mr. Brown first gained nationwide attention for writing about and supporting the mission of the hacktivist collective *Anonymous*, and for founding Project PM, a crowd-sourced wiki that sought to expose civil rights abuses in the intersection of government and the cyber intelligence industry.

Brown was imprisoned in 2012 in connection with charges related to a hack of Austin-based private intelligence company Stratfor. He was released from prison in 2016 and was later ordered to serve the remainder of his sentence under home confinement. His sentence expired May 25, 2017.

On April 20, however, Brown was detained and sent back to prison because he had agreed to be interviewed by PBS documentary filmmakers. Bureau of Prison officials claimed Brown needed pre-clearance to conduct the interview.

David Siegal, a partner in Haynes Boone's New York office, was able to impress upon prison officials that they did not have the right to revoke Brown's home confinement, and that any requirement of pre-clearance to conduct interviews with the media was a violation of Brown's First Amendment rights. Haynes Boone Associate [Joseph Lawlor](#) assisted on the matter.

Just days after the lawyers got involved, Brown was released from prison.

"The treatment of Barrett Brown by the Bureau of Prisons was unjustified and in violation of his First Amendment free speech rights," Siegal said. "Unfortunately, Barrett was forced to spend four days in a federal penitentiary when he should have been out living his life. We are happy we were able to work with Barrett and his family to achieve his return home."

In a *D Magazine* article in April about his four days in prison, Brown wrote that his detention "only ended after one of the nation's most prestigious law firms" got involved. "Thus it was that on Monday morning, the counselor at Seagoville's J2 jail unit summoned me to his office and told me, 'You won. Get your stuff ready. You're leaving.'"