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FRAUD

A PUBLICATION OF THE ASSOCIATION OF CERTIFIED FRAUD EXAMINERS

MAGAZINE®

VOL. 34 | NO. 3 | MAY/JUNE 2019
Fraud-Magazine.com



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AT ALL COSTS

HONORING A FALLEN WHISTLEBLOWER AND A LIVING TORCHBEARER



“**T**he bravest man I’ve ever known.” This description of Sergei Magnitsky by Bill Browder, a keynote at the 30th Annual ACFE Global Fraud Conference June 23- 28 in Austin, provides a poignant insight into the life of an internationally known whistleblower who dared to take on corruption within the Russian government.

Mandy Moody, CFE, author of this issue’s cover story on Browder, suggested I read his book on this ordeal, “Red Notice: A True Story of High Finance, Murder, and One Man’s Fight for Justice,” and what a great read it was. I was familiar with the Magnitsky Act passed by the U.S. Congress and the general facts behind it, but I didn’t know the full story.

Who’d have thought a multimillion-dollar fraud case would have the intrigue of a Cold War spy novel? And who could’ve predicted the irony of the grandson of the leader of the American Communist Party

becoming a prominent capitalist in post-Soviet Russia? Truth really is stranger than fiction.

However, as a CFE, the most compelling part of this entire story was Magnitsky’s heroic turn as a whistleblower. I’ve heard many whistleblower stories over the years, but Magnitsky’s saga certainly propels the “truth over self” description of a sentinel to a new level.

Magnitsky had the courage and moxie to walk into the Russian Interior Ministry and set forth an allegation of theft, only to be arrested months later by the same agency. It’s one thing to be ostracized for being a sentinel but another to get arrested and die in prison for it.

Browder told us in his interview for the article that “most crimes couldn’t be solved unless there were whistleblowers involved.” Magnitsky didn’t just report on something he saw that didn’t seem right; he led a dogged pursuit of justice to the upper echelons of the Russian government.

Whistleblowers often experience unrelenting turmoil. They endure years of grief and adversity. Often their personal and professional relationships suffer. Magnitsky made the ultimate sacrifice — he gave his life to expose fraud and corruption.

The ACFE Report to the Nations has consistently shown how important whistleblower programs are in detecting and preventing fraud. As CFEs, we do everything we can to promote fraud awareness, provide methods to report fraud and protect those who come forward. We can honor Magnitsky’s life by continuing the fight to recognize whistleblowers like him so truth over self really can prevail. ■ FM

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COVER STORY

Justice at all costs: Bill Browder's anti-corruption campaign continues in shadow of Sergei Magnitsky's death

By Mandy Moody, CFE

Bill Browder assumes the mantle of his fallen friend, Sergei Magnitsky, as he ferrets out fraud and corruption around the world and searches for \$230 million in allegedly stolen laundered Russian funds. Despite the risks, this human-rights activist says he can't look the other way.

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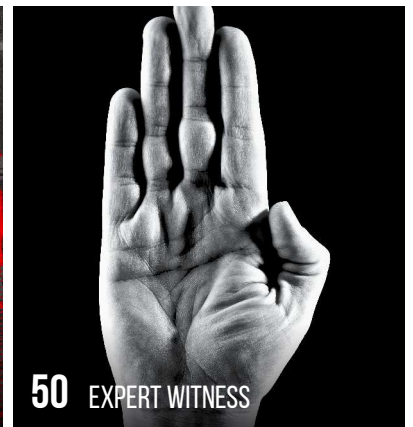
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Fraud Magazine (ISSN 1553-6645) is published bimonthly
 by the Association of Certified Fraud Examiners, 716 West
 Avenue, Austin, TX 78701-2727, USA. Periodical postage
 paid at Austin, TX 78701 and at additional mailing offices.

Postmaster — Please send address changes to:
Fraud Magazine | ACFE Global Headquarters
 716 West Avenue | Austin, TX 78701-2727, USA
 (800) 245-3321 | +1 (512) 478-9000
 Fax: +1 (512) 478-9297

Subscriptions
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 subscription rates are: \$65 in the U.S.; \$77 outside the
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