

Brendan Ballou

Education

Stanford University, Palo Alto, California 2016
J.D.

Honors: Bradley Fellow (award for research in constitutional law), Salzburg-Cutler Fellow (award for research in international law), Gerald Gunther Prize (award for highest grade in exam course).

Columbia University, New York, New York 2009
B.A. Philosophy

Honors: *Magna cum laude*, Dean's List all semesters, Columbia-Oxbridge Scholar (studied at Cambridge University for one year).

Professional Experience

Counsel, Lichten & Liss-Riordan, P.C. (2025)

- I led multiple litigations under California's Unfair Competition Law against "gig" companies who misclassify their employees on behalf of competitors who follow the law.
- I led arbitrations on behalf of workers wrongfully fired by a leading technology company.

Special Counsel, Antitrust Division, Department of Justice (2020 - 2025), Attorney Advisor, National Security Division, Justice Department (2016 - 2017)

- *Criminal experience:*
 - I first- or second-chaired six trials, where I selected juries, led direct and cross-examinations, made opening and closing statements, argued substantive motions, and developed trial strategy. I secured convictions in every case.
 - In addition to trial work, I led many significant criminal investigations, and worked closely with the FBI to issue search warrants and subpoenas, interview witnesses, track fugitives, and present our cases to grand juries. I charged or indicted a dozen cases, and led arraignments, pleas, and sentencings.
- *Civil experience:*
 - I launched the Antitrust Division's program on interlocking directorates, which resulted in 17 publicly-announced investigations into corporate directors serving on the boards of competing companies.
 - I joined the initial trial team in *United States v. Google*, where I deposed key executives, negotiated discovery with multinational companies, and led the Division's work on possible remedies.
- *Administrative experience:*
 - As an attorney hired through the Justice Department's Honors Program, I was tasked with negotiating executive orders and other presidential documents with the White House and other departments.
 - I briefed the Deputy Attorney General, Assistant Attorneys General, and other Department leadership on national security proposals.

Author, *Plunder: Private Equity's Plan to Pillage America* (2023)

- Inspired by my work at the Department of Justice, I wrote the leading book on private equity and why the industry is harming our economy and our democracy.
- The Financial Times and Fortune Magazine called *Plunder* one of the best books of 2023, and the New York Times praised its “crisp prosecutorial delivery.” Kirkus Reviews called it a “powerful, maddening account of some of the chief drivers of inequality and immiseration in the world's richest economy.”
- I did over 60 radio, television, newspaper, and podcast interviews on the book, including with NPR, CBS, and the Wall Street Journal, and spoke at Harvard, Columbia, and at numerous industry conferences.

Associate, Jones Day (2017 - 2020)

- I drafted briefs for courts and administrative agencies at both the trial and appellate level, with a focus primarily on antitrust matters.
- I first-chaired two asylum trials, successfully winning asylum for political dissidents and their relatives from Venezuela, including for two newborn twins.

Policy Advisor, Russ Feingold for Senate (2016)

- I counseled Senator Feingold on legal and economic issues, and prepared him for debates, interviews, and other media appearances.
- I drafted responses to inquiries from media, advocacy groups, and endorsing bodies.

Google Ideas Associate, Google Inc. (2009 - 2013)

- I led the design and launch of *Constitute*, a digital repository of the world's constitutions.
- I led the design and launch of *Reboot Somalia*, the first public opinion survey on that country's new constitution.

Selected Publications

Books

- *When Companies Run The Courts: Forced Arbitration and America's Secret Justice System* (PublicAffairs, Forthcoming 2026)
- *Plunder: Private Equity's Plan to Pillage America* (PublicAffairs 2023).

Popular articles

- *Republicans Might Regret Putting Emil Bove on the Bench*, The Atlantic (Aug. 2, 2025).
- *There's a Darker Purpose Behind Trump's Latest Law Enforcement Against Political Foes*, Slate (June 13, 2025).
- *MAGA Is Aiming to Take Over the D.C. Bar. Be Afraid*, Slate (Apr. 24, 2025).
- *U.S. Attorney Ed Martin May Have Already Messed Up Trump's Retribution Tour*, Slate (Feb. 20, 2025).
- *Notes to the American People — and Government Workers — on How to Stop Trump*, Politico (Feb. 5, 2025).

- *I Prosecuted the Capitol Rioters. They Have Never Been More Dangerous*, New York Times (Jan. 24, 2025).
- *Private Equity Is Gutting America — and Getting Away With It*, New York Times (Apr. 28, 2023).
- *When Private Equity Firms Bankrupt Their Own Companies*, The Atlantic (May 1, 2023).
- *Private Equity Is Killing Your Pets*, The Nation (Apr. 25, 2023).

Academic articles

- *The “No Collusion” Rule*, 32 Stanford Law & Policy Review 213 (2021).