

Al-Qaeda, Cyberattacks, Oil Spills and an Assassination: Wilmer London's Newest Partner Has Seen it All

The former UnitedHealth Group general counsel talks to Law.com about his extensive experience of crises, and why he's switching to private practice.

By Jack Womack

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A quick look at the companies that Rupert Bondy has been a general counsel for—BP, GSK, Reckitt, UnitedHealth Group—makes his assessment of his own career hard to disagree with.

"Ultimately, I'm sector-agnostic and subject matter-agnostic, because in my experience, stuff just happens, and it's really quite unpredictable," he says in an interview with Law.com. "For better or worse, stuff has happened at each of the companies that I've been at for the last more than 20 years."

Stuff has, undeniably, happened. During his time as the top lawyer at UnitedHealth Group—which Bondy departed earlier this month to join Wilmer Cutler Pickering Hale and Dorr—he faced an almost unbelievable set of crises.

In February 2024, an enormous Russian-linked ransomware attack against the company targeted files containing protected health information, with UnitedHealth estimating in January 2025 that the incident resulted in a total annual loss of \$3.09 billion.

For many GCs, this would be by far and away the most significant matter of their careers, but Bondy's has been defined by emergencies of this magnitude.

"I've dealt with industrial accidents like the BP oil spill; I've dealt with huge product liability issues where the pharmaceutical product is believed to have some serious side effect or other problems," he says.

"I've dealt with terrorism at BP; we had an Al-Qaeda group in Algeria that attacked one of our sites, and unfortunately, dozens and dozens of people ended up being killed."

Big Business, Big Problems

Despite the severity and scale of the cyber-attack on UnitedHealth, the company looms large in the public consciousness due to another event.

"In a completely different way, I've spent a lot of time at UnitedHealth Group responding to the



Rupert Bondy, Wilmer.

Courtesy Photo

very tragic murder just over a year ago of my colleague [and CEO] Brian Thompson, and not just his murder, but the reaction to his murder," he says. "His murder was a sort of catalyst for this acceleration of negative sentiment against the healthcare industry."

27-year-old Luigi Mangione is accused of shooting Thompson, with a trial potentially beginning in December 2026 or January of 2027. The shooting attracted intense media interest in the U.S. and around the world.

While many of the events Bondy has had to grapple with as GC seem exceptional, he says that there have been some threads running through the entirety of his career.

"At each company I've been at, there's been this difficult, very negative perception of big business, and there's a common theme of business being seen as part of the problem rather than part of the solution," he says.

"I have spent quite a lot of my career – the last twenty-something years – working in multidisciplinary groups to respond on all levels to defend legal proceedings and investigations, but at each of the companies I've worked for, I have really wanted to be part of the solution, and have tried to get that narrative across, whether it's in a courtroom, whether it's in a congressional hearing, or whether it's talking to regulators."

Why the Switch?

After over 20 years as a GC, Bondy will now co-chair Wimer's crisis management and strategic response group.

Given his experience, it isn't hard to see why Wilmer's clients will be keen to hear his advice.

Why the decision now to move into private practice after such a high-profile career in-house?

"I've been a GC for nearly 25 years, and I thought it was time to do something different. I feel very good about everything in my last job at UnitedHealth Group, starting with successfully delivering an internal successor, which was one of the key objectives when I was hired," Bondy says.

Bondy joins a law firm that is itself no stranger to a corporate crisis of the kind that he has made his name solving.

In 2025, Wilmer was one of several major U.S. firms hit with an executive order signed by President Trump that would restrict the firm's ability to do business. The order cited the firm's ties to former FBI director Robert Mueller.

In May last year, Wilmer secured a summary judgment determining the order was unconstitutional. The Department of Justice appealed this judgment in October.

Bondy says he agrees that law firms and businesses are operating in a highly politicised environment, but questions how different the culture is to what has come before.

"In a way, it's really nothing new," he says. "I'm sure there has been some intensification. There have been other trends, like social media, that have amplified polarisation and politicisation."

"But something about [Wilmer] that I think is quite distinctive, is that at the heart of its practice is this intersection of legal issues, policy issues, regulatory issues, and dealing with the media and public affairs. And I think that's been an area of amazing strength for the firm."