WeirFoulds^{LLP}

Benjamin M. Bathgate

Partner

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Practice Areas

Blockchain and Digital Assets Commercial Litigation Litigation & Dispute Resolution Fraud & Anti-Corruption International/Cross Border

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Benjamin M. Bathgate is the Chair of the Commercial Litigation Practice Group and Co-Chair of the Blockchain and Digital Assets Practice Group at WeirFoulds LLP. His practice focuses on complex, high stakes fraud, digital asset recovery and commercial litigation. Ben is widely recognized in the crypto industry as the go-to digital asset investigations and recovery lawyer in Canada.

Ben has significant expertise in and regularly advises on matters relating to commercial fraud, injunctions, asset tracing and recovery, internal and government investigations (cross-border and national) and transactional disputes. He has been lead counsel in a number of precedent-setting cases, including cross-border digital asset tracing and seizure proceedings. Ben successfully obtained the first reported Anton Piller Order (Civil Search and Seizure) on cryptocurrency in Canada, a case that was the feature story in *Bloomberg Businessweek* (May 19, 2022). He speaks and consults regularly on cryptocurrency frauds and asset tracing as part of his cross-border practice, and has interviewed with leading publications in the field including *CoinDesk*, CoinDesk TV, *Globe and Mail, Canadian Lawyer, Yahoo Finance, Bloomberg Law* and *Bloomberg Business*.

Ben is a leading corporate commercial litigator who has built a far-reaching cross-border practice and network, including foreign lawyer contacts, investigators, local and international law enforcement contacts, forensic experts, custodians/monitors and other specialized service providers. Ben's sophisticated cross-border fraud practice has also helped him develop an expertise in and a network to support investigations of off-shore monetary and digital asset transactions including those implicated in money laundering, sanctions violations and corruption. He prides himself on building cross-disciplinary teams that provide practical, multi-jurisdictional solutions for business challenges facing a diverse global client base. These foreign and domestic companies include: banking and financial services institutions; exchanges; MSBs; investment companies/funds; investment clubs; FinTech companies; consumer products manufacturers and distributors; consulates; embassies; insurance companies; land developers; and telecommunications companies.

Ben has been recognized by *Lexology Index* as a "pre-eminent name of the next generation" and "Future Leader" in Commercial Litigation; by *Legal 500 Canada* as a "Next Generation Partner" in Dispute Resolution; by the *Canadian Legal Lexpert Directory* as a "Leading Lawyer to Watch" in Corporate Commercial Litigation and in White Collar Defence & Investigations; and as a "Future Star" by *Benchmark Litigation*.

Ben has considerable experience representing clients at all levels of court in Canada, including the Court of Appeal for Ontario and the Supreme Court of Canada, and has been lead counsel in a number of precedent-setting cases. He is unique among commercial/civil litigators due to his considerable experience in contempt proceedings and leading private prosecutions (the private laying and prosecution of criminal charges). He appears regularly as counsel in domestic and cross-border disputes, leading teams in complex arbitrations and before various boards and tribunals.

Ben co-authors the Canadian Chapter of Chambers Global's International Fraud and Asset Tracing Guide (Trends: Cybercrime and Cryptocurrency), and its Anti-Corruption Guide. He is faculty for Osgoode Law School's Web3, Blockchain and Metaverse Law certificate course: Global Enforcement Trends in Web3. He is a co-author and co-editor of The Essential Guide to Settlement in Canada, a practice manual designed for in-house counsel, which is cited as an authoritative text by the courts. His writing on what is now Ontario's Apology Act was considered by the Ontario Legislature and in legislative committees.

Called to the Bar

• Ontario (2005)

Education

- Dalhousie University, Juris Doctor, 2004
- Bucerius Law School (Hamburg, Germany),

International and Comparative Business Law Program, 2003

University of Toronto,
 Bachelor of Arts (Honours with
 Distinction), 2001

Affiliations

- Ontario Bar Association, The Franchise Law Section
- Canadian Franchise Association
- International Bar Association
- International Franchise
 Association
- The American Chamber of Commerce in Canada
- The Advocates' Society

Notable Mandates

Crypto Litigation, Fraud and Asset Recovery Experience

- Successfully obtained and executed the first reported Anton Piller Order (Civil Search and Seizure) on cryptocurrency (cold storage, ETH) in Canada, and argued Canada's first case, and one of the world's first cases, considering attacks against smart contracts (on a blockchain) and legal implications arising from user interactions on decentralized finance (DeFi) trading platforms and Decentralized Autonomous Organizations (DAOs);
- Lead Canadian counsel in a cross-border case representing token owners (SOL) in investigating, tracing and prosecuting hundreds of millions (US) in fraud and market manipulation claims;
- Lead Canadian counsel in the cross-border crypto tracing and enforcement investigation arising from the bankruptcy of one of the world's largest crypto platforms, leading to hundreds of

millions (US) in crypto tracing and enforcement work;

- Representing loss holders in the investigation, tracing and recovery from a US \$50 million crossborder, DeFi Ponzi investment scheme that resulted in the collapse of the fund;
- Representing a financial services client in the investigation, tracing and recovery of tens of millions (CDN) in losses arising from a fraudulent DeFi trading platform investment scam and a subsequent 'token recovery' scam;
- Successfully opposed certification of a class action brought by certain DAO token holders (ETH), arising from a smart contract exploitation, on behalf of a token holder;
- Successfully brought a freezing and seizure injunctive claim in a DeFi crypto fraud case involving tens of millions (US) in losses (ETH), on behalf of an anonymous exotic token holder, via a novel wallet assignment argument;
- Prosecuting on behalf of investors more than CDN \$15 million in claims arising from a cryptocurrency mining fraud (BTC), including obtaining urgent Mareva, interim possession and Norwich injunctive relief and investigating allegations of improper monetary and digital asset transactions with off-shore MSBs and crypto exchanges;
- Lead Canadian counsel providing advisory services to a large crypto platform on cybersecurity breaches and hacks that compromised customer data and millions in crypto assets (BTC), and supporting tracing and recovery investigations;
- Representing a group of retail loss holders in investigating, tracing and seeking to recover millions in crypto (ETH) based on a rogue developer's fraudulent DeFi investment platform and a fabricated liquid staking solution;
- Representing a group of retail loss holders in investigating, tracing and seeking to recover millions in crypto (XRP; XLM; THETA; BTC) arising from a social engineering scam;
- Successfully brought Norwich (third party production, KYC) injunctive motions relating to hundreds of millions (US) in transactions against cryptocurrency exchanges, MSBs, wallet service providers, other financial institutions and data custodians in support of asset tracing and recovery proceedings.

Crypto and Digital Asset Advisory, White Collar and Investigations Experience

- Represented several former officers of Sino-Forest Corporation (as second lead partner) before the Ontario Securities Commission in one of Canada's largest ever securities fraud proceedings, spanning 180 hearing days and relating to CDN \$3 billion in Canadian-raised capital;
- Lead counsel providing advisory services arising from the Canadian law enforcement and regulatory investigations into Canada's largest ever cryptocurrency fraud and exchange collapse, QuadrigaCX, with tracing of missing crypto in amounts up to CDN \$250 million;
- Lead Canadian counsel coordinating with Canadian law enforcement, the U.S. Department of Justice, FBI and INTERPOL on international investigations into and NY criminal indictments arising from DeFi trading frauds in excess of US \$55 million (ARB; OP; ETH);
- Lead Canadian counsel advising a client group on a cross-border criminal and regulatory investigation, and class actions claims, arising from an alleged DeFi trading Ponzi fraud, which involved the minting of unique NFT tokens and claims of losses in excess of US \$400 million;
- Lead Canadian counsel providing advisory services relating to a U.S. and Canadian law enforcement and securities investigation (SEC and CFTC) into an investment fund Ponzi scheme in the tens of millions (US);
- Lead counsel providing advisory services on Canadian law enforcement investigations into a

fraudulent DeFi investment platform and a broader investment scam impacting a wide group of Canadian investors, with losses in the tens of millions (CDN);

- Lead counsel investigating and advising on criminal and regulatory implications for a digital asset conversion and exchange businesses as part of an alleged money laundering and sanctions evasion case in the tens of millions (CDN), extending to the Caribbean and Middle East;
- Successfully defended against injunctive relief seeking the custody, valuation and disposition of tens of millions of dollars in cryptocurrency assets (BTC; ETH) on behalf of a high net-worth individual, defeating arguments on the nature of the digital assets and their inherent risk of dissipation.

Commercial Litigation, Fraud and Investigations Experience

- Defending a nuclear power and energy client from more than US \$150 million in breach of contract and shareholder claims arising from a power generation project;
- Litigated claims totaling US \$125 million for breach of contract, breach of privacy/confidentiality and conspiracy, arising from a lease termination in one of the largest cinema projects in the Middle East;
- Defending a seller from US \$60 million in breach of representation and fraud claims arising from a US \$560 million share sale of an aerospace manufacturing company;
- Represented a large merchant bank in prosecuting a CDN \$30 million set of claims for fraud and conspiracy arising from a failed international wood processing joint venture situated in Ukraine;
- Prosecuted and succeeded at trial on a complex 12-year, multi-transfer fraudulent conveyance action seeking repayment on behalf of a European banking client and other creditors on debt totaling CDN \$15 million;
- Represented an international telecommunications company in defending a misleading advertising claim, which involved questions on the sufficiency of disclaimer language used on scrolling Internet pages;
- Represented an international insurer against a CDN \$20 million claim in a failed merger transaction;
- Defending real estate developer from more than CDN \$50 million in shareholder oppression and breach of fiduciary duty claims;
- Defended a land development company and its officers from CDN \$15 million in claims of fraud and oppression;
- Represented a commercial restaurant tenant in obtaining a precedent-setting trial decision enforcing an oral lease and an oral option to purchase land against a landlord;
- Defended an internet advertising company and a large international insurer against oppression remedy and employment law claims brought by former managers and executives.

Reported Cases

- Hao Chen et al v. Masih Moazen-Safaei et al, (2025) ONSC 3098 (CanLII) Successfully obtained and continued Mareva (freezing), digital asset preservation and Norwich (third party data production) orders against a group of defendants alleged to have fraudulently operated a cryptocurrency mining business and illicitly transferred funds away from the plaintiff investors.
- Spasiw et al v. Quality Green Inc. et al, (2023) ONSC 4422 (CanLII) Successfully enforced an

arbitration clause based on arguments that the "pith and substance" of the claims were contractual in nature and governed by the clause, and succeeded in avoiding *Charter* and other arguments seeking to pursue related fraud and oppression claims in the courts.

- Cicada 137 LLC v. Medjedovic, (2022) ONSC 369 (CanLII) Successfully obtained an Anton Piller Order (Civil Search and Seizure) over tens of millions in cryptocurrency assets, arguing issues including: the nature of digital assets for property seizures; how the law should interpret flash loans and smart contracts on a blockchain in decentralized finance (DeFi) trading platforms; and countering the defence of "Code is Law".
- Cicada 137 LLC v. Medjedovic, (2021) ONSC 8473 (CanLII) Successfully obtained a Warrant for Arrest as part of a contempt proceeding against a crypto fraud defendant, arising from the Indexed Finance DeFi fraud case.
- Noranco v MidOcean Partners III, (2019) ONSC 1173 (Ont. S.C.J.) Successfully obtained an indemnification order for the advance payment of a defendant officer's legal expenses, within a broader fraud proceeding.
- Fady Samaha v. Yamashita Rubber Co. et al, 2019 ONSC 3192 and Ewert v Denso Corporation, (2017) BCSC 973 (BCSC) — Defence counsel in settlement approval hearings for a national auto parts class action alleging price fixing.
- Samuels v Attorney General (Canada), 2016 ONSC 7937 Successfully stayed and defended a civil fraud proceeding against a large telecommunications company, pending the outcome of criminal proceedings against the plaintiff, and upheld ruling on appeal.
- Bell Canada v. Cogeco Cable Canada, (2016) ONSC 6044 (Ont. S.C.J.) Defended interlocutory and permanent injunctions on allegedly misleading advertising statements for a telecommunications client, and dealt with questions on the sufficiency of disclaimer language within Internet advertisements.
- Bayerische Landesbank Girozentrale v. Rosen Ridge Farms Ltd., et. al., (2015) ONSC 27 (Ont. S.C.J.) Successfully obtained a trial decision in a complex fraudulent conveyance action, overturning a sham trust agreement and unwinding a series of real property transfers.
- Rehman International Ltd. v. Royal Bank of Canada, (2013) CarswellOnt 9203 (Ont. S.C.J.) Successfully opposed an action seeking to realize upon fraudulent instruments, and succeeded in prosecuting the bank's counterclaim at trial and in piercing the corporate veil.
- Thorne v. AXA Canada Inc. et. al., (2012) ONSC 2409 (Ont. S.C.J.) Successfully opposed a Divisional Court appeal seeking the right to examine the President and CEO of a large defendant insurer.
- Lechuga 1 Ltd. v. Lettuce Eatery Development Inc., (2011) CarswellOnt 8213 (Ont. S.C.J.) Opposed an application brought by three franchisees under the Arthur Wishart Act (Franchise Disclosure) claiming rights of rescission for allegedly deficient disclosure and successfully obtained an order converting the application into an action.
- Sigrist v. McLean, (2011) CarswellOnt 14424 (Ont. S.C.J.) Successfully obtained a trial decision enforcing an oral lease and an oral option to purchase a commercial property, overturning an illegal distress and obtaining an award of damages, including punitive damages.
- Batkov v. Starwood Industries Global Corp., (2010) CarswellOnt 10090 (Ont. S.C.J. Div. Crt.) Successfully opposed a Divisional Court appeal and upheld an order granting an administrative dismissal of a \$15 million action brought against a banking client, upholding a multi-million dollar share purchase transaction.
- Sincies Chiementin S.p.A. (Trustee of) v. King (2010) CarswellOnt 8996 (Ont. S.C.J.) Defended an action and a summary judgment motion seeking to enforce a foreign judgment in Ontario on grounds of jurisdiction, natural justice and public policy.

- R.S.W.H. Vegetable Farmers Inc. and 1427868 Ontario Ltd. v. Bayerische Landesbank Girozentrale and Ontario Peninsula Farms Ltd., 2010 CanLII 69207 (S.C.C.) – Successfully opposed an application for leave to appeal to the Supreme Court of Canada with respect to a proceeding under the Farm Debt Mediation Act, which sought to render null and void the enforcement of a registered bank charge.
- Strassle Informationssysteme Holding GmbH (Trustee of) v. Sieber, (2010) ONCA 604 (CanLII) (Ont. C.A.) – Successfully defended a challenge to an Ontario Judgment enforcing a foreign banking client's award in Europe, and successfully opposed the subsequent appeal in the Court of Appeal for Ontario.
- Bayerische Landesbank Gironzentrale v. Sieber, 2008 CanLII 28753 (ON S.C.) Successfully set aside an earlier dismissal of a complex fraudulent conveyance claim.

Awards

- Repeatedly recognized in Benchmark Litigation: Canada Guide as a Future Star
- Recognized in the 2025 Canadian Legal Lexpert Directory as a Leading Lawyer in Litigation Corporate Commercial; White Collar Defence & Investigations
- Recognized by Who's Who Legal as a Future Leader in Commercial Litigation (2023, 2024)
- Listed in the Legal 500 Canada 2022 as a Next Generation Partner Dispute Resolution
- Listed in the Legal 500 Canada 2021 as a Next Generation Partner Dispute Resolution
- Listed in the Legal 500 Canada 2020 as a "Next Generation Partner" Dispute Resolution
- Recognized in the 2019 Canadian Legal Lexpert Directory as a Leading Lawyer to Watch in the area of Litigation Corporate Commercial

Speaking Engagements

- Speaker, "Digital Asset Trends in the World of Litigation Funding", Deminor Litigation Funding Podcast, June 2025
- Speaker, "Digital Asset Fraud 2025: Peering into the Crystal Ball of Tomorrow's Threats", 2025 London International Disputes Week, London, England, June 4, 2025
- Speaker, "Digital Asset Fraud: Distinguishing Digital Asset Investigations from Those Involving Conventional Assets", G3 Investigations, London, England, June 2, 2025
- Speaker, "Re-thinking Compliance and Litigation Risk Assessments in a World of Digital Transactions: Modern Third-Party Risks Need Modern Risk-Rating Methods", Association of Corporate Counsel, Online, January 21, 2025
- Speaker, "What Is So Special About Digital Asset Fraud?: A Step-by-Step Hypothetical Crypto Fraud Discussion, from Breach ('A') to Recovery ('Z')", C5 Group, Fraud, Asset Tracing & Recovery, Miami, FL, October 24, 2024
- Faculty, the Osgoode Law Certificate in "Web3, Blockchain and Metaverse Law: Global Enforcement Trends in Web3", Osgoode Hall Law School, October 2024
- Speaker, "Troubled Waters Ahead? Key Tips for Employers to Navigate Internal Risk", WeirFoulds LLP, Online, June 4, 2024
- Speaker, "Decentralized Autonomous Organizations (DAOs): Overcoming the Challenges of Managing Clients and Preventing Fraud in a Purely Decentralized 'Entity'", The C5 Group, Annual Crypto and Digital Asset Fraud & Recovery Conference, London, UK, April 25, 2024

- Faculty, the Osgoode Law Certificate in "Web3, Blockchain and Metaverse Law: Global Enforcement Trends in Web3", Osgoode Hall Law School, October 2023
- Speaker, "Crypto and Digital Asset Fraud: New Precedents in Civil Recovery", The C5 Group, Annual Crypto and Digital Asset Fraud & Recovery Conference, London, UK, June 2023
- Speaker, "White Collar Crime for Litigators Program: Digital Fraud and Asset Tracing in the Crypto Era", Law Society of Ontario, May 9, 2023
- Panelist, "Trends and Developments in Cryptocurrency: What the Experts are Seeing in the Tracing, Seizing and Safeguarding of Digital Assets, and Why So Much Value is Being Lost", McMillan LLP, April 25, 2023
- Speaker, "Blockchain Recent Wave of Bankruptcies and Impact of Centralised versus Decentralised Model", Chambers Global Practice Guides Tech Summit 2023, March 8, 2023
- Speaker, "New Developments on Crypto Freezing, Tracing, Search and Seizures and the Code is Law Debate", Association of Corporate Counsel, September 28, 2022
- Speaker, "Cryptocurrency, Digital Asset Tracing and Global Enforcement Trends and Is Regulation of the Market on the Horizon and ESG Disputes and Crystal Ball Gazing", TerraLex IDR and RIWCCC Joint Meeting – Roundtable Discussion, June 7-13, 2022
- Speaker, "CFAAR (Crypto Fraud and Asset Recovery Group) and New Precedents on Crypto Search and Seizures and the Code is Law Debate", Webcast, May 17, 2022
- Speaker, "Persuasive Advocacy in a Virtual Hearing", TerraLex Virtual Hearings Webinar Series, September 2020
- Speaker, "Litigation Funding Overview", TerraLex Virtual Global Meeting, Webinar, October 2018
- Speaker, "Unique Perspectives and Opportunities for 'Big Data", TerraLex Webinar, April 4, 2018
- Speaker, "Effective Crisis Response: A multi-disciplinary perspective", Association of Corporate Counsel, October 5, 2017
- Speaker, "Fraudulent Preferences and Conveyances: From Detection to Judicial Remedies", ACFI Annual Fraud Conference, Toronto, May 2, 2017
- Speaker, "Should it Stay or Should it Go Part II: Litigation Hold", McMillan Corporate Counsel Webcast, October 2016
- Speaker, "Litigation Holds and Document Preservation", McMillan Corporate Counsel Presentation, May 2016
- Speaker, "Best Practices in Document Management: Part I", McMillan Corporate Counsel Webcast, April 2016
- Speaker, "Commercial Lease Remedies 101", McMillan Corporate Counsel Presentation, September 2015
- Speaker, "Associate Career Development Planning", McMillan in-house presentation, May 2014
- Speaker, "An Overview of Franchise Law in Ontario: A Litigator Perspective", Ontario/New York Legal Summit, Ontario Bar Association, March 2014
- Speaker, "Making Settlements Stick: A Guide to Settlement", McMillan Corporate Counsel CPD Series, Fall 2013
- Speaker, "Recent Developments in Franchising and Distribution Law", McMillan in-house presentation, January 2013
- Speaker, "Recent Developments in Franchising and Distribution Law", McMillan Corporate Counsel CPD Series, Fall 2012

Additional Publications:

- "Is The Sun Setting On Perceived DAO "Immunity?," Law360 Canada (July 12, 2023)
- "DeFi Platform Mango Loses \$117 Million in Smart Contract Exploit: Avraham Eisenberg Arrested and Sued", McMillan LLP (February 2023)
- "Franchising in Canada: 2022 Year in Review", (January 2023)
- "Anti-Corruption 2023 Guide (Canada Chapter)", Chambers and Partners (January 2023)
- "DeFi Platform Mango Loses \$117 Million in Smart Contract Exploit: Is Mango's Settlement with the Exploiter Enforceable and What Does it Mean for DAOs?", McMillan LLP (November 2022)
- "DeFi Platform Mango Loses \$117 Million in Smart Contract Exploit: Are DAOs Responsible for Bad Smart Contracts?", McMillan LLP (October 2022)
- "International Fraud & Asset Tracing 2022 (Canada Chapter)," Chambers and Partners (June 2022)
- "Anti-Corruption 2022 Guide (Canada Chapter)", Chambers and Partners (January 2022)
- "International Fraud & Asset Tracing 2021 (Canada Chapter)", Chambers and Partners (April 2021)
- "Anti-Corruption 2021 (Canada Chapter)", Chambers and Partners (January 2021)
- "<u>Anti-Corruption 2019 Second Edition (Canada Chapter</u>)", Chambers and Partners (December 2019)
- "Anti-Corruption 2019 Guide", Chambers and Partners (December 2018)
- "Guide to Tracing Assets Around the World 2018", TerraLex (May 2018)
- "The Essential Guide to Settlement in Canada", Published by LexisNexis, Canada (Winter 2013)

Media Mentions:

- "<u>How a Canadian math prodigy allegedly stole millions in crypto</u>", *The Current with Matthew Galloway*, CBC Listen (April 15, 2025)
- "Running the numbers", The Globe and Mail (April 12, 2025)
- "Mango Market Exploiter's Arrest Is 'Chilling Effect' on DAOs: Lawyer," CoinDesk TV (February 3, 2023)
- "Mango Markets Exploiter Thought a DAO Protected Him. Then US Courts Showed Up," by Danny Nelson, CoinDesk (January 31, 2023)
- "Ethan Lou: A Hamilton teen genius 'hacked' millions in crypto but he may not be in the wrong," by Ethan Lou, Financial Post (June 15, 2022)
- "<u>The Math Prodigy Whose Hack Upended DeFi Won't Give Back His Millions</u>," by Christopher Beam, Bloomberg Businessweek (May 19, 2022)
- "<u>Code is law' defence to be tested in case of allegedly stolen crypto</u>," by Aidan Macnab, Canadian Lawyer Magazine (March 17, 2022)
- "<u>OSC wants a more transparent fixed-income market</u>" by Allan Tony, Advisor's Edge (June 26, 2015)
- "Don't be tempted to tip," Canadian Lawyer (June 17, 2015)

Publications

• Mango Markets Guilty Conviction Overturned on Appeal – Take-aways for DeFi Users

Everywhere, May 30, 2025

- Commercial Litigation Insights: Maybe Now the SEC Will Let Crypto Be: Will the SEC's Crypto Task Force and the Crypto Czar's Working Group Find Harmony?, April 16, 2025
- Canadian Medjedovic Indicted for DeFi Fraud in the Eastern District of New York: Rule of Law '2', Code is Law '0'?, February 04, 2025
- Rule of Law '1', Code is Law '0': Eisenberg Convicted in Mango Markets Criminal Trial after He Shies Away from Testifying, April 19, 2024
- Commercial Litigation Insights: Securities Enforcement? But They're Crypto Tokens, Not Shares..., February 07, 2024
- Cryptocurrency 'Regulation by Enforcement' as Hot as Ever: What's to come from Securities Regulators in 2024?, February 05, 2024
- Postponement of Long-Awaited Mango Markets Criminal Trial on the Heels of SBF Guilty Verdict: What's to Come?, November 27, 2023