

Alumni Spotlight



For years, a corporate stalker terrorized MicroPatent, an online patent and trademark information site. In e-mails to the company's president, the stalker claimed to have plundered thousands of proprietary documents and confidential customer data from MicroPatent's online files. If it didn't pay him \$17 million, he threatened to distribute the information across the globe.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation hunted the stalker for a year and a half, but to no avail. Finally, MicroPatent hired Stroz Friedberg, a consulting and technical services firm co-headed by **Eric Friedberg** (NY/Lit./'82) that offers services in computer and mobile phone forensics, electronic discovery, data breach, cybercrime response and investigations.

"He was a very wily and powerful adversary," Eric says of the stalker. After two months of investigation and surveillance, Stroz Friedberg cracked the case, and authorities arrested Myron Tereshchuk, a 43-year-old Maryland entrepreneur.

The firm's investigation included the help of a clinical psychologist at Stroz Friedberg who had once profiled terrorists and international leaders for the Central Intelligence Agency. His examination of the stalker's e-mails revealed that the perpetrator was over 30, technologically sophisticated, obsessive-compulsive and possibly a weapons owner. Sure enough, when authorities raided his home, they found makeshift hand grenades and ingredients for the deadly biological toxin ricin.

Eric was serving as the lead computer crimes prosecutor at the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of New York when he joined forces in 2001 with Edward Stroz to found Stroz Friedberg. Edward is a former FBI special agent responsible for the formation of the agency's Computer Crime Squad in New York. The company has gone from humble beginnings in downtown Manhattan to a team of 175 people scattered throughout nine cities and two data centers in the U.S. and the U.K.

"A rising demand," for the firm's cybersleuthing skills happened shortly after its founding, Eric says, as regulators began paying increasing amounts of attention to cyberspace, and the world of crime began to migrate to computers.

Half a decade after its founding, Stroz Friedberg was joined by another Skadden alum, **John Curran** (NY/Lit./'87). The former assistant U.S. attorney and deputy general counsel for national security affairs at the FBI now leads Stroz Friedberg's New York office and its digital forensics practice and electronic discovery group.

While fighting the bad guys is all part of a day's work for Eric, he traces much of his approach to his early career in private practice.

Before joining the U.S. attorney's office, Eric spent six years as an associate at Skadden. He got his feet wet in restructuring, real estate and mass torts before going to work for New York intellectual property and technology partner **Ken Plevan**, who taught Eric the fundamentals of trying cases and would become a mentor, Eric says.

"Ken was unbelievable," Eric says, recounting the way in which Ken would sit his team around a table to collaborate on matters. Learning from him was a "rush," Eric adds.

Although more than 20 years have passed since he worked at the firm, Eric can relate those experiences directly to his role as an entrepreneur today.

"We've built a successful company based in no small part on the work ethic and rigor that we learned at Skadden," Eric says. He emphasizes the importance of a "no-holds-barred approach" to responding to clients' needs immediately and in full force. "If we didn't have that ethic of responsiveness, we wouldn't exist, and we basically learned it there."