

Death penalty, substance abuse and billion dollar claims. The only two Dutch trial lawyers in “the Big Apple” are actively litigating cases.

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Jeroen van Kwawegen is a lawyer in New York who is frequently involved in multi-billion dollar cases. The 36 year old Dutchman is a plaintiffs' lawyer at Bernstein Litowitz Berger & Grossmann LLP. He and his colleagues work in small teams to fight injustice, including bringing claims against banks that advised their clients to invest in the Madoff Ponzi scheme. At the other side of the courtroom they face their opponents, frequently dozens of parties each with large teams of lawyers- an impressive defense. "It's a challenge to be the underdog" Van Kwawegen says. "In some way it's like David and Goliath. Together, three good lawyers can outsmart and win against numerous opponents."

There are other Dutch lawyers besides Van Kwawegen in the United States. "However, Olav Haazen and I are different because, as far as I know, we are the only trial lawyers. Moreover, I am the only trial lawyer who has tried and argued cases in open court. Just like in the movies or in *Law & Order*. It's an amazing experience."

Van Kwawegen left the Netherlands and went to New York ten years ago, hoping he would one day be an American trial lawyer. He now feels that he is indeed a true trial lawyer who is determined to win his cases. "As they say here, if you have bad facts, argue the law; if you have bad law, argue the facts." Van Kwawegen will not rest and is not satisfied until he obtains the best possible results for his clients, regardless of the odds or the challenges. One of his prior clients is someone on death row in Louisiana. Van Kwawegen represented him for a number of years until he changed jobs and started at BLB&G. "This is an extreme example of someone who finds himself in a very difficult situation and whom I was trying to help to the best of my professional abilities. In this case, there is also a very real possibility that my client is actually innocent and there is no doubt whatsoever that he did not get a fair trial. My former colleagues are still pressing those claims, regardless of the time and effort that this case may still require in the future."

Van Kwawegen enjoys working on any case, regardless of whether it makes headlines. For example, when he started as a lawyer in the Netherlands, he assisted an Ethiopian farmer who was accused by a Dutch company of delivering bad sesame seed. "I am simply determined to assist my clients regardless of the circumstances" he said. In the long term, Van Kwawegen considers doing more non-profit work once his family is financially secure. "I love serving the public interest, but I love my children more."