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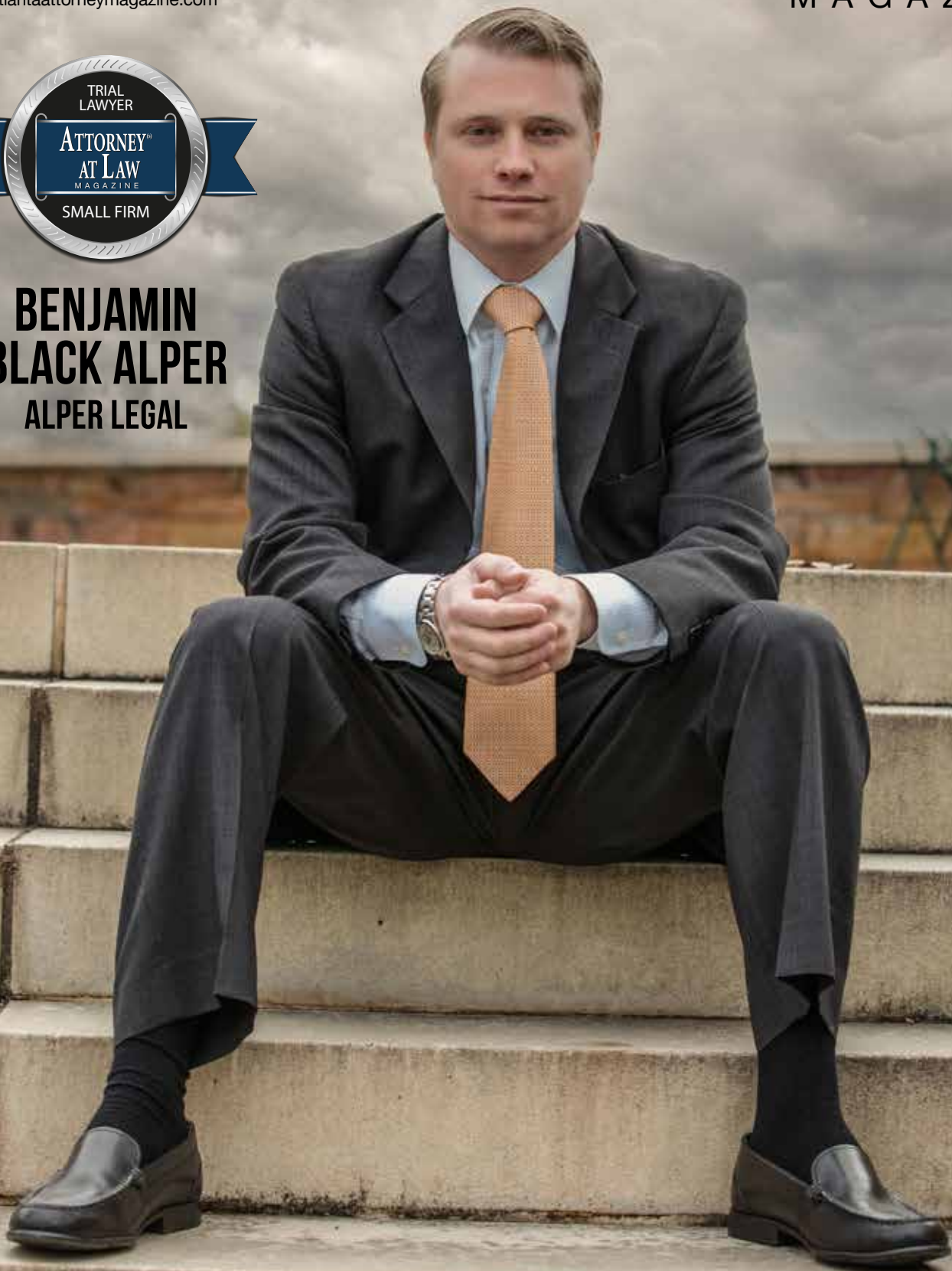
# ATTORNEY<sup>(S)</sup> AT LAW

MAGAZINE

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**BENJAMIN  
BLACK ALPER**  
ALPER LEGAL





# BEN ALPER SEEKS TO SEE THE PEOPLE BEHIND THE CHARGES

By Jan Jaben-Eilon, Photography Jeremy Adamo

**A** client once compared Attorney Ben Alper's performance in the courtroom to that of a conductor of an orchestra.

"I never really thought about it like that, but he was right. As a trial attorney you need to be constantly thinking about the presentation you are making to the Jury, to the Judge, and to your client. It is stressful, but I love it. That's why I became a lawyer."

Growing up with parents who were attorneys, Alper insisted that he would never become a lawyer. But that changed when he was an undergraduate, first at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, and then later at Washington University in St. Louis, where he graduated. "I guess slowly a passion for this work was instilled in me during all those conversations with my parents at the dinner table." Following his graduation from undergrad, Alper went straight to Emory University School of Law, where he graduated in 2009.

Once at Emory, Alper knew that he was going to become a criminal defense attorney and he focused his law school experience around that, working at the Northern Virginia Capitol Defender's Office, the Georgia Attorney General's Office, and the United States Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Georgia, all while also clerking for his criminal law professor.

"To me, it was always the most interesting area of law, and it is really the only thing I ever wanted to do. The stakes are so high when you are fighting for a person's freedom, it is stressful, but it can also be incredibly rewarding."

As a criminal defense attorney, Alper said he must be an expert in criminal law, but he says you also need an extraordinary amount of empathy, compassion, and patience. "I recognize that I am dealing with individuals who are likely going through one of the most stressful events of their lives. They are looking at losing their freedoms, their employment, their

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family. The criminal justice system is extremely scary to those who are unfamiliar with it. You have to take the time to work with your clients to make sure they fully understand what is going on.” Although not a licensed counselor, Alper acknowledges that much of his time is spent assisting his clients and their family members through these stressful situations.

He is critical of attorneys whose clients can't reach them on the phone. “Not communicating with them in a timely manner is unacceptable. There is nothing more stressful than being in a situation where your freedom is on the line, and you cannot get a hold of your lawyer.” Mr. Alper says he's most proud of the accolades he receives directly from clients and their family members.

And they seem to appreciate his accessibility. One client said of Alper that he's a “very knowledgeable and thorough attorney. He spent a lot of time going over my options and possible outcomes and explaining everything along the way. You can tell he cares about the person and their case.”

Another client said he “found Ben Alper to be very intelligent, knowledgeable, approachable, compassionate and determined. He is truly a caring person who will put your fears to rest. He would work hard to get the best possible outcome for your case.”

Still another client described Alper as “very personable and cares about his clients. [He has] excellent communication skills, verbally and written, prompt responses and proactive. [He is] trustworthy, very diligent [and] well prepared which leads to providing focused, effective strategy.”

He has certainly handled some fascinating cases. Alper has represented individuals involved in the January 6, 2021, violence at the U.S. Capitol, where Alper toured the Capitol crime scene as part of his defense preparation, along with an employee charged with sextortion while working at the U.S. Embassy in London, England.

Alper is also proud of the work he did when he represented University of Alabama fans who attended the first college football game played at the Mercedes-Benz Stadium in Atlanta between Alabama and Florida State. “Google ‘Alabama Florida State fight’ and you'll see my clients right there. There was a brawl between competing fans. We got involved from the beginning and were able to get surveillance films from the stadium that the media never saw showing that it was self-defense from the beginning.” The case was dismissed, he said, underlining the importance of getting involved from the earliest possible stage to gather as much evidence as possible. “It also illustrates how something can look really bad at first, but when you start to investigate further, a different story emerges. I think some lawyers can fall into the trap of pre-judging their clients when they first meet with them. You cannot let happen.”

In fact, his advice to budding attorneys is to be prepared. “So many times, the other side is not as prepared. You need to look at every single piece of evidence. You only get one shot in the courtroom.” He also suggests that attorneys shouldn't be afraid to take risks. “Be confident in what you believe the law is and what you think is right, even if opposing counsel or a Judge are saying you

are wrong. But also, don't be afraid to admit when you don't know the answer to something. In law school, you are led to believe that you must always know the right answer right away, but it's okay to admit that you don't know something, and you'll find out.”

One of the aspects of his practice that he loves is being able to deal with people from all walks of life. “You cannot effectively represent a client until you know where they come from and what's important to them. People do things for all sorts of different reasons and being able to tell a Judge or a jury why someone did something can be as important as what they may have done. People are more than the crimes they may have committed, and it is my job to make sure Judges and juries see that.”

Alper apparently strives to sharpen his strategy skills while playing chess nightly with his eight-year-old son. He also has a six-year-old daughter who is also learning the game. “My wife and children are so supportive, and that's necessary in this line of work. They keep me grounded and keep me focused on what the real priorities in life are, and that translates into how I treat my clients.”

Alper, once a summer associate at a big law firm, decided early on that his work-life balance was more important than any big firm job. “A lot of people are leaving law firms,” he stated. “Lawyers must ask themselves what lifestyle they want. In law school, we are trained to be at the top of our class and go into a firm. But you need to know what's important to you, what will make you happy and content.”

Along with his parents, Alper lists his former partner, Howard Weintraub, as one of his important mentors. “We have worked together for over ten years. And while we have very different personalities, we work well together and I'm incredibly proud of the results we have consistently delivered for our clients.”

Spending time with his family is obviously important to Alper, but prior to the pandemic, he also had an unusual hobby. For several years Alper wrote theater reviews of local Shakespeare performances. Alper encourages other lawyers to read Shakespeare. “From the effective use of language, to the incredible story-telling, to the recognition of the depth of motivations for a character, Shakespeare provides an endless supply of tools that a lawyer needs.” Given the stress and intensity of his job, Alper was asked whether there was any chance he might slow down. “Not at all, this work is too important, this is a show that must go on.”

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