

UNRIVALED HONOREE



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You were lead trial counsel of a team representing Sudanese genocide survivors in bellwether case *Kashef, et al. v. BNP Paribas SA, et al.* in the US District Court for the Southern District of New York. The \$20.75 million jury verdict in October 2025 marked the first time a US jury held a global bank civilly liable for funding genocide, according to reports. Tell us about your trial strategy.

The trial strategy that we used is the same we always use: We focus on the truth of what actually happened. I believe it is our responsibility to get out of the way of the facts of every case that we present, and the presentation of those facts must respect and highlight the inherent value of the people we represent. We focus on the blood and bone of the case, not what we think “jurors will like.” This case was presented with one idea in mind: It was not about clever ideas or rhetoric—it was about the survivors of a genocide.

Tell us about some of the challenges you faced in *Kashef, et al. v. BNP Paribas SA, et al.* and how you overcame them.

While sitting in the courtroom with over a dozen defense lawyers from two of the nation’s largest litigation firms, we realized our presentation needed to be not just accurate but compelling. Our team worked around the clock to respond to the wave of objections and documents that tried to derail our case. The stakes were enormous. Thousands of refugees were counting on us to send a message to one of the world’s most powerful banks: Your money should never have funded a genocide. The judge reminded us that he was eager to get the case completed and impatient with anything that did not meet his exacting standards of trial presentation. We lived on caffeine, and we survived by embracing a detailed record of depositions and documents, which takes us to the biggest challenge: presenting 10 years of litigation in a matter of days.

Take us back. When did you first know you wanted to be a trial lawyer?

The seed was planted when I was 12 years old, sitting in the car with my father—an accomplished trial lawyer himself—as he played a cassette tape on his car stereo. It wasn’t music I heard—it was the voice of legendary lawyer Gerry Spence, lecturing on trial skills and telling stories about the cases he had handled. Somehow, I knew I had found the place where I was meant to go.

What are the major keys to winning over a jury or a judge?

There is only one: Always remember that the best trial lawyer knows that it’s not about them. The goal is not to make a beautiful presentation. The goal is to vanish and let the facts of your case do the work.

What’s the best advice a mentor gave you about trial prep?

The best advice I ever got about trial prep came from Gerry Spence. He told me, “You have to believe in yourself in order for the client to believe in you.”