

Tomislav Z. Kuzmanovic

Milwaukee, WI

He/Him

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About Tom

With more than three decades of US and international trial and dispute resolution experience, Tom provides litigation services, including trial, for clients involved in business disputes and serious injury litigation in multiple jurisdictions. He has represented insurers, transportation companies, small and large businesses, including financial entities, property management and construction entities, and product manufacturers. Tom also handles international arbitrations and argues appellate matters in a variety of forums.

Tom handles complex business litigation, transportation, toxic torts, construction, hospitality, security, product and premises liability, international and human rights law, as well as foreign and domestic investigations.

Tom's Affiliations

- American Bar Association, Fellow
- Association of Defense Trial Attorneys
- Wisconsin Defense Counsel
- Conference of Freight Counsel
- Transportation Lawyers Association
- Association of Croatian American Professionals
- Defense Research Institute (DRI)
- International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ADC-ICC), Association of Defence Counsel, Executive Board, Vice President, 2009 – 2010; Disciplinary Board, 2014 – 2015
- Litigation Counsel of America, Fellow
- Milwaukee Bar Association, Bench/Bar Civil Committee, 2005 – 2015

- State Bar of Wisconsin, International Practice Section, Board of Directors

Areas of Focus

Industries: Transportation & Mobility

Services: Appellate; Complex Tort & General Casualty; Consumer & Class Action Defense; Litigation & Trial; White Collar Defense, Investigations & Enforcement

Experience

- Secured a motion to dismiss for a freight broker client in a consolidated personal injury case with claimed damages of over \$7 million. The judge granted the motion to dismiss all claims based on federal preemption and insufficient pleading.
- Defended General Mladen Markač before the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) in The Hague, Netherlands. General Markač, who served as the assistant minister of interior and commander of special police (equivalent to special forces) in Croatia in 1995, had been sentenced to 18 years of imprisonment by the ICTY's Trial Chamber for allegedly committing crimes against humanity and violations of the laws or customs of war from August to September 1995. Tom began representing General Markač in 2007, with the trial commencing in March 2008 and concluding in August 2010. General Markač was acquitted on all charges when the appeals court verdict was rendered in November 2012.
- Successfully attained dismissal in its entirety representing the Order of Friars Minor (OFM), the worldwide order of Catholic Franciscan Priests based in Rome, in defense of a class action lawsuit. The case alleged that the OFM was involved in the transport and misappropriation of gold bars allegedly stolen from the Croatian State Bank at the end of WWII. After six years of litigation, beginning in federal district courts in Los Angeles (where it was dismissed) and San Francisco, and progressing through US Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit and the US Supreme Court, the Ninth Circuit ultimately dismissed the case.
- Successfully represented the Republic of Croatia in both federal litigation and international arbitration. In *Kahvedzic v. Croatia*, Hinshaw obtained a dismissal of claims made by a plaintiff who alleged that the Croatian government misappropriated and converted assets from a Bosnian business owner during Croatia's war for independence. The federal district court in Tampa dismissed the case and the US Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit affirmed the dismissal. The US Supreme Court denied the plaintiff's petition for a writ of certiorari. In *Lalich v. Croatia*, the US District Court for the Northern District of Illinois dismissed the plaintiffs' \$3.5 billion claim for reparations for property allegedly stolen from them by Croatia during the Second World War.
- Successfully defended Croatia in international arbitration against claims brought by the military contractor L3 Communications. After an arbitration hearing in London, the three-person arbitration panel dismissed all claims related to Croatia's war for independence in the 1990s.
- *Harvey v. Western Diversified*, Milwaukee County, Judge Michael Skwierawski. Insurance bad faith and toxic tort.

- *Pettit v. Vassos*, Kenosha County, Judge Michael Fisher. Professional liability/architect.
- *Pilkington-Theesfeld v. Bornstein*, Walworth County, Judge John Race. Premises liability/equine.
- *Prosecutor v. Delalic*, International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY). Command responsibility.
- *Weimer v. Dynaweld*, Jefferson County, Judge William Hue. Product liability/trailer.
- *Zahran v. Cleary*, Federal District Court, Eastern District of Wisconsin, Judge Robert Warren, Judge Charles Clevert. Breach of contract and fraud case.
- *H. K. Mallak, Inc. v. Fairfield FMC Corp.*, Federal District Court, Eastern District of Wisconsin, Judge Lynn Adelman. Premises liability/security.
- *Heritage v. Intermatic, Inc.*, Federal District Court, Eastern District of Wisconsin, Judge William Griesbach. Product liability/timer.
- *Schulz v. Grunau Project Development, Inc.*, Milwaukee County, Judge Daniel Noonan. Construction defect.

Tom's appellate experience includes:

- *Briggs v. Farmers Ins. Exchange*, 2000 WI, 234 Wis. 2d 178.
- *H. K. Mallak, Inc. v. Fairfield FMC Corp.*, 209 F.3d 960 (7th Cir. 2000).
- *Malinowski v. DeLuca*, 177 F.3d 623 (7th Cir. 1999).
- *Carney v. White*, 843 F. Supp. 462 (E.D. Wis. 1994), aff'd 60 F.3d 1273 (7th Cir. 1995).

Recognition

- *The Best Lawyers in America*®, Personal Injury Litigation – Defendants, 2022 – 2026; Transportation Law, 2023 – 2026
- Association of Croatian American Professionals (ACAP), Professional Excellence Award in Law, Governance, and Public Policy, 2024
- *Wisconsin Super Lawyers*, Business Litigation, 2005 – 2012, 2014 – 2024
- Croatian American Bar Association (CABA), 2012 Vinodol Code Award, 2013
- *Super Lawyers*, “A Small Part to Play,” litigation practice profile and human rights work in independent Croatia, 2006
- Croatian President Franjo Tudjman, Order of the Croatian “Pleter” Award, 1996
- Croatian City of Slavonski Brod, City Council, recognized for contributions to the city's defense, 1992
- Milwaukee Young Lawyers Association, Service Award, Outstanding Contributions to the Community, 1991
- Martindale-Hubbell, AV® Peer Review Rating
- University of Wisconsin Law School, *Wisconsin International Law Journal*, Senior Managing Editor

Credentials

Education

University of Wisconsin Law School, JD, 1988

University of Wisconsin – Madison, BA, 1985

Bar Admissions

Wisconsin

Court Admissions

US Supreme Court

US Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit

US Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit

US Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit

US District Court for the Northern District of Illinois

US District Court for the Eastern District of Wisconsin

US District Court for the Western District of Wisconsin

Languages

Croatian

Interests

Did you know...

Tom wrote the forward to a book, in Croatian, about the Foreign Press Bureau and its establishment during Croatia's war for independence in the 1990s. In another life, he may have pursued being a foreign correspondent. Tom also is an avid fitness enthusiast, former Division I collegiate tennis player, and vinyl music and music memorabilia collector.

Community/Civic Activities

- The Federation of Croatian Societies, Inc., Milwaukee, President
- Greendale Police and Fire Commission
- Croatian American Association, Board Member and Vice President, 1994 – 2002
- University of Wisconsin at Madison, National W Club

Thought Leadership

Presentations

Tom frequently appears on the “Political Power Hour” with Steve Scaffidi on 620 WTMJ, 620 AM in Milwaukee, discussing current national legal issues and international law topics. He is also a regular guest on “International Focus,” a weekly television broadcast sponsored by the Institute of World Affairs at the University of Wisconsin—Milwaukee. Additionally, he is an active speaker at professional and community events across the country.

His presentations include:

- “Contractual Indemnity Agreements: Drafter Beware,” 37th Annual Product Liability Conference, University of Wisconsin-Madison Interdisciplinary Professional Program, Madison, Wisconsin, October 8, 2025
- “The Decisive Battle of the Croatian War of Independence: A Primer on the ICTY Appeals Judgment That Proved Operation Storm was a Lawful Military Operation,” Crodiaspora Webinar, August 4, 2020
- “War Stories from a War Crimes Trial,” Society of Trial Lawyers, Chicago, Illinois, September 2014
- Presenter and Co-Panelist, “Foreign Corrupt Practices Act—What You Need to Know,” Wisconsin Real Estate and Business Law Institute, Madison, Wisconsin, June 2013
- Panelist, “The Role of International Criminal Courts and Tribunals; How Do We Measure Success?” Section of International Law, American Bar Association, Paris, France, November 2010
- “Present and Future Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina,” 39th National American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies (AAASS) Convention, New Orleans, Louisiana, November 2007
- “National Leadership Conference of Bosnian and Croatian Americans,” moderator, Chicago, Illinois, March 2006
- “Contract Law for Contractors,” Project Manager / Project Executive Peer Group Meeting, Gilbane Inc., Milwaukee, Wisconsin, December 2005

Events

- Tomislav Kuzmanovic Presents on the Importance of Indemnity Agreement Clauses at the 37th Annual Product Liability Conference, Oct 8, 2025
- Tomislav Kuzmanovic to Speak at the Transportation Lawyers Association Annual Conference & CTLA Midyear Meeting, Apr 29, 2016
- Hinshaw Partner Tom Kuzmanovic to Serve as Guest Speaker at ABA International Courts Committee Meeting, Nov 11, 2015
- Tomislav Kuzmanovic to Present at the ABA’s Pathways to Employment in International Law Program, Nov 13, 2013

Hinshaw Alert

- Discovery Rule Permits Accrual of Survival and Wrongful Death Claims After Decedent’s Death, Jul 1, 2015

In The News

- On the Political Power Hour Show: Tom Kuzmanovic Discusses International Legal Implications in Gaza and Ukraine and Developments in Trump Classified Documents Case, Mar 26, 2024
- Tom Kuzmanovic Discusses Croatia’s Operation Storm and Subsequent ICTY Trials, Aug 26, 2020

Press Releases

- 102 Hinshaw Lawyers Recognized in 2026 Editions of *The Best Lawyers in America*® and *Ones to Watch*™, Aug 21, 2025
- Hinshaw Milwaukee Office Moves to the BMO Tower, Jan 31, 2025
- Tomislav Kuzmanovic Honored by the Association of Croatian American Professionals with 2024 Professional Excellence Award, Oct 9, 2024
- 105 Hinshaw Lawyers Recognized in 2025 Editions of Best Lawyers in America and Ones to Watch, Aug 15, 2024
- Tomislav Kuzmanovic Appointed Partner-in-Charge of Hinshaw's Milwaukee Office, Oct 16, 2023

Webinar

- A Group of Hinshaw Attorneys Will Review COVID-19 Considerations for Business Owners and Lenders, Apr 24, 2020

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