

SEAN MUELLER

FOUNDER, PROACTIVE ETHICS | KEYNOTE SPEAKER ON ETHICAL LEADERSHIP & ACCOUNTABILITY

From a \$100M hedge fund to a state prison cell to a summa cum laude diploma — Sean Mueller's story is the case study.

Sean Mueller built a \$100 million hedge fund, lost it to fraud, served 14 years in state prison, and rebuilt his life from nothing through education, service, and radical honesty. He now helps founders, executives, and students recognize the small compromises that lead to ethical collapse — before the stakes get high.

WHY BOOK PROACTIVE ETHICS

- Earned credibility, not borrowed theory — 17 years in finance, a \$100M hedge fund, and 14 years in state prison for securities fraud. Sean understands ethical drift because he lived it — and rebuilt his life from the ground up.
- The core message: drift, not decisions — nobody wakes up and chooses fraud. They rationalize once, get away with it, and the line quietly moves. That's the pattern Sean helps audiences learn to catch early.
- Built for high performers — his story is about someone trusted, praised, and successful, which lands harder with ambitious leaders than a generic case study or compliance lecture.
- A practical framework, not just a cautionary tale — audiences leave with concrete tools to spot blind spots in themselves and their teams before they become crises.
- Documented transformation — associate's degree completed while incarcerated; summa cum laude graduate, University of Colorado Denver, 2025; advisory board member, CU Denver Prison Education Program; currently pursuing a Master's in Entrepreneurship.
- New book — [*After the Walls: Living Without Shortcuts*](#) gives audiences and organizers something tangible to extend the conversation beyond the room.

[Watch 3 minutes of the Sean's ACFE keynote interview](#)

SIGNATURE TALK

“The Line That Moves: Recognizing Ethical Drift Before It's Too Late”

A candid, first-person account of how a respected hedge fund manager justified one small lie, then another, until the cover-up cost him his freedom — and the practical mindset shifts that prevent the same drift in any high-pressure career.

AUDIENCES LEAVE KNOWING HOW TO

- Recognize the first rationalization — before it becomes a pattern.
- Build psychological safety so people surface problems early, not after they've escalated.
- Tell the difference between protecting an image and protecting an organization.
- Lead with humility and consistency rather than title or performance.

FORMAT & LOGISTICS

- Keynote, workshop, or panel — adaptable from 20-minute keynote to half-day interactive session.
 - Past audiences include financial firms, conferences, business schools and compliance professionals.
 - Tailored content available for finance, corporate ethics/compliance, higher education, and entrepreneurship audiences.
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