



LIBERTAS
CHAMBERS

Leonard Smith QC

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clerks@libertaschambers.com

Year of Call: 1986

QC: 2007



A renowned criminal defence advocate with particular expertise in all areas of serious and complex crime.

Extensive experience in several jurisdictions, defending in all forms of complex and grave cases. Advising and appearing for CEOs and professionals in all type of large scale financial, sexual and other crime.

Equally at home in the largest and most complicated of SFO frauds or in heavyweight Old Bailey murders, or in large scale cases of forfeiture and civil and asset recovery. He is a member of the Criminal Bar Association.

Ranked as a leading silk in the 2019 edition of Chambers & Partners Guide.

TESTIMONIALS

"He will work around the clock to make sure he has read every piece of evidence, even if it's already been considered by the junior, in order to make sure he has considered every angle of the case." (Chambers and Partners 2022)

"He prepares very well and is a ruthless cross-examiner." (Chambers and Partners 2022)

"Totally committed to the client's cause... He has a remarkable skill of digesting voluminous material and working out the real issues in the case. Added to this he is a reassuring presence for the client."

"A criminal defence silk who commands respect for the pains he takes with this preparation, and for the persuasive advocacy he delivers in court. He regularly handles cases involving allegations of mortgage fraud, breach of sanctions and overseas corruption... Regularly instructed by both corporations and individuals, and has a strong record of acting in cases



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with a global reach.” (Chambers & Partners 2018)

“Very industrious and someone with superb technical knowledge. He is prepared for most eventualities and is definitely a great courtroom advocate.” (Chambers & Partners 2017)

“A great tactician who is very hard-working and passionate about achieving the right result for the client.” (Chambers & Partners 2016)

“He is in some of the best cases in the country, his strategy is second to none, he knows the law inside out and he works extremely hard.” (Chambers & Partners 2015)

Ranked in Chambers & Partners 2013 as leading practitioner in Criminal Fraud. The same publication describes him as “hard-working, meticulous and extremely bright”, “good with clients”, and valued for his “hands-on approach from beginning to end.”

RECENT CASES INCLUDE

2020:

The Canning Town Freezer Murder –

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2020/jul/29/man-murdered-two-women-and-kept-bodies-in-freezer-court-told>

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-8004797/Murder-suspect-kept-bodies-two-female-victims-freezer-home-three-years.html>

2019:

Operation Isidor - Manchester Crown Court – appeared for main defendant –a chartered accountant in long running prosecution for serious fraud offences.

<https://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/greater-manchester-news/david-pape-billy-black-court-16914121>

R v Baxter and others – Swansea Crown Court - high profile murder trial involving murder in caravan park. BBC News.

<https://www.hulldailymail.co.uk/news/hull-east-yorkshire-news/solicitor-katie-baxter-cleared-charges-1504776>

R v EM - Newcastle Crown Court - savage murder of elderly shopkeeper..

<https://uk.news.yahoo.com/ethan-mountain-trial-teenager-stabbed-174911621.html>



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R v Kate Baxter and others. Hull Crown Court. Acted for solicitor in seven handed mortgage fraud prosecution. Only defendant to be cleared by jury after long trial. The Hull Daily Mail.

GENERAL CRIME

Has appeared in over 60 murder trials and also in appellate jurisdictions including the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council (3 Appeals) and in the House of Lords (**R v H and C**), and the High Court of Australia.

Advised in the News of the World phone hacking case and is also currently instructed in cricket spot fixing case.

SEXUAL OFFENCES

Has a long history of defending contested sexual cases including alleged historical sexual abuse cases, cases involving multiple complainants of all ages and recently, in sexual grooming cases in complex investigations attracting wide publicity.

In **R v Ahmed and others** (Snaresbrook Crown Court) defended alleged ring leader of sexual grooming gang in eight week trial. Advised in Operation Central, the investigation into alleged widespread organised sexual abuse in Rotherham.

OTHER CASES OF INTEREST

R v Giovanni Di Stefano -- Southwark Crown Court. The trial of the famous international "lawyer" and businessman charged with 22 counts of fraud between 2004 and 2012. The Recorder of Westminster described the case in which evidence was given for the prosecution by Judges and QCs, as "...extremely complex and unique in its scope".

These are just a few of the articles from around the world concerning this extraordinary case - The Washington Post, The Daily Mail, The Independent, The Daily Record, Sky News, The Telegraph, LCCSA, The Express, Fox News, Australia News, CPS Blog, BBC News.

R v Fraser and Brook -- The Imperial Consolidated case- Blackfriars Crown Court. Achieved the acquittal, after a 160 day trial, of his CEO client in The Imperial Consolidated Group case, one of the largest alleged investment fraud trials yet prosecuted by the SFO. The successful



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defence in one of the largest and most complex international investment frauds ever prosecuted by the SFO.

Led for the Chief Executive Officer of an international group of 108 companies across 5 continents and 34 countries - and who was acquitted after 27 interlocutory applications and then a trial lasting 160 days. CAT 1- 500,000 pages. This was an alleged PONZI fraud of enormous dimensions - £250 million was allegedly defrauded from US celebrity investors, wealthy investors throughout the world and also famous large scale financial institutions throughout the world's major tax havens.

More than 25 expert witnesses gave evidence during the trial in areas as diverse as Securities exchanges, Mining valuations, Administrators and Receivers obligations and alleged negligence, Customs Bond houses, US and Caribbean Regulatory Requirements, US Constitutional law, FBI and CIA investigations, Osama Bin Laden, Japanese banking industry policies and procedures, Insurance and banking bond regulations. During the trial, evidence was also heard from more than a dozen of the world's leading chartered accountants.

Truly, this case stretched established LSC boundaries of what is a "complex category - one super fraud" and it is difficult to imagine one being tried again of this size, length and complexity.

See-among numerous other worldwide media reports- The Guardian, Federal Criminal Defense Blog, The Telegraph, This is London, The New Statesman, IFA Online, TalkTalk, SFO, This is Lincolnshire.

R v David Purdie (and eight others) for the main defendant in the North East Property Mortgage Fraud- an enormous and politically sensitive prosecution affecting the homes of hundreds of people in the North East. More than 1000 mortgages were obtained by companies said to be controlled by client in what is alleged to be one of the UK's largest ever mortgage cases. Loan Talk, Chronicle Live, The Mirror, The Evening Standard, BBC News, This is Money, The Times.