



LIBERTAS  
CHAMBERS

Matt Lawson

[mlawson@libertaschambers.com](mailto:mlawson@libertaschambers.com)

[clerks@libertaschambers.com](mailto:clerks@libertaschambers.com)

**Year of Call: 1995**

Recognised as a Leading Junior by the Legal 500:

*“Matt is a true jury advocate - he is extremely engaging with a jury and inevitably gets them on side. He is an excellent barrister with exceptional client care and clients love to have him on their side. He is a real fighter and leaves no stone unturned.”*

*“Matt is extremely approachable, responsive and clients love to have him on their side. His client care skills are exceptional and he is very persuasive in court.”*

**Experienced as both a Junior and Leader in his three principle practice areas:**

- **Fraud and Financial Crime**
- **Regulatory and Professional Discipline;**
- **Confiscation, Civil recovery and Asset Forfeiture; and,**
- **Organised Crime.**

Matt specializes as a Leading Junior in complex fraud, including corporate funding frauds, Off-shore Placement Schemes, Mutual Funds, Ponzi Investment Vehicles and MTIC “Carousel” frauds. He is particularly knowledgeable about such matters because, before coming to the Bar, he worked in Investment Banking for Kleinwort Benson.

He is currently involved defending in numerous indictments prosecuted by the full breadth of financial investigating authorities: the SFO, FCA, HMRC, SOCPA, City Police and National Fraud Squad.

In recent years instructions have been received to defend in respect of a number of high-profile cases prosecuted by the NTS e-Commerce Team concerning internet-based sales vehicles for the provision of Government-related services (e.g. Self-Assessment Tax, DVLA and National Insurance) and Secondary Ticket sales for entertainment events (e.g. Viagogo, Stubhub, Getmein etc.).

**TESTIMONIALS**

*Matt is a true jury advocate - he is extremely engaging with a jury and inevitably gets them on side. He is an excellent barrister with exceptional client care and clients love to have him on their side. He is a real fighter and leaves no stone unturned.’ – Legal 500, 2023*

*Matt is extremely approachable, responsive and clients love to have him on their side. His client care skills are exceptional – Legal 500, 2023*



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*An outstanding Counsel in every sense of the word. One of the very few barristers who have the ability to pick up the most serious of cases with voluminous volumes of evidence at the last minute, and be up to speed with it and ready for trial. His work ethic is rivalled by very few – **Richard Derby, Potter Derby Solicitors.***

*Matthew Lawson is one of the most sought after and highly regarded barristers around. I have instructed him on numerous occasions over the last decade and have always found him to be an enthusiastic, capable and effective advocate. He has many years' experience of successfully defending complex and serious cases with particular expertise in defending financial crime cases. I am consistently impressed with his meticulous preparation, and his tactical awareness is second to none. He is a pleasure to work with, extremely responsive, and pro-active in his representation. An excellent, jury friendly barrister that I have no hesitation in recommending – **Craig Liversidge, Partner in the Specialist Crime Division, Forbes Solicitors.***

*I was fortunate enough to have Matt at my side for nearly 3 years during a complex and demanding Fraud trial. Matt stood head and shoulders above all others in the case in respect of his attention to detail, work ethic and availability. Huge amounts of data were served, often at the 11th hour and on more than one occasion it was evident that Matt had been burning the candle to be on top of everything and ahead of his peers. He has a very keen eye to detail and is a shrewd operator. I cannot praise him highly enough, but if you need a barrister you will struggle to find a better one. I would be happy to provide further details to anyone considering Matt and would suggest that if you are reading this the you are about to make a very good decision. **Acquitted client.***

*I instructed Matthew Lawson and worked with him for the two years on a very large and complex case. Matt particularly excelled in statistical and financial data analysis and I was particularly impressed by his ability to not only comfortably analyse large swathes of data, but also his ability to interpret and present this data and his analysis to provide compelling support for the arguments he was advancing on my behalf. I was particularly reassured by his friendly nature and pragmatic approach. Throughout the entire time, he demonstrated ongoing care and diligence in all of his dealings with me and I would have no hesitation whatsoever in recommending him as a trusted, professional barrister to anyone who may require his services. **Acquitted client.***

#### **MEMBERSHIPS:**

Member of:

- Criminal Bar Association;
- the Fraud Lawyers Association; and



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- the Proceeds of Crime Lawyers Association.
- Criminal Bar Association;
- the Fraud Lawyers Association; and
- the Proceeds of Crime Lawyers Association.

### **PRACTICE AREAS:**

#### **FRAUD AND FINANCIAL CRIME**

*Matt is extremely approachable, responsive and clients love to have him on their side. His client care skills are exceptional and he is very persuasive in court - **Legal 500 (2023)**.*

Matt is much sought-after in all areas of the country due to the specialist nature of his practice. He is currently involved defending in numerous indictments prosecuted by the full breadth of financial investigating authorities: the SFO, FCA, HMRC, SOCPA, City Police and National Fraud Squad.

#### **Notable Cases**

**R v Dewhirst & Others, Southwark CC (Pre-trial):** Leading Counsel for one of five Defendants accused of Bribery in respect of the award of contracts within the construction industry worth tens of millions of pounds. The Crown (the Serious Fraud Office) and all other Defendants are being represented by Silk.

**R v Rush & Others, Southwark CC (Operation Barbados)(Pre-trial):** Leading Counsel for one of the main Defendants accused of a multi-layer VAT fraud in the metals and VOIP industries worth hundreds of millions of pounds. The Crown (HMCE) are represented by two Silks and all of the other main Defendants are represented by Silk.

**R v Solaja & Others, Southwark CC (Pre-trial):** Counsel for the main Defendant in a multi-million "Binary Options" investment fraud prosecuted by the Financial Conduct Authority.

**R v Anderson & Others, Birmingham CC (Pre-trial):** Junior Counsel for the main Defendant accused of a multi-million pound investment fraud.

**R v Sahtip-Zadeh & Others, Leeds CC (Pre-Trial):** Counsel for the main Defendant accused of running a fraudulent website business in which members of the public were invited to pay for government service which could be obtained for free if a direct approach was made to the relevant Department.

**R v Hunter, Leeds CC:** Leading Defence Counsel in the first prosecution of its kind to establish whether the Secondary Ticketing market in the UK was unlawful in respect of the sale of tickets for live sporting and entertainment events. The case involved the evidence of Ed Sheeran's manager and promoter. The case involved criminal and civil arguments based



on Regulators' Code (Adaway consumer abuse), the law concerning tickets and contractual webs involved in the ticketing industry and unfairness to consumers in business-to-consumer contracts forming part of contractual webs.

[The Guardian Press Report](#)

[The Daily Telegraph Press Report](#)

[Sky News Report](#)

[Daily Mail Press Report](#)

[The Metro Press Report](#)

[Complete Music Update Press Report](#)

**R v Shah, Southwark CC:** Counsel for the “Ringleader” individuals of an MTIC organization utilizing over thirty companies said to be involved in trading in alcohol. The gang stole £34 million in VAT and laundered £87 million through more than 50 bank accounts after in Britain, Cyprus, Hong Kong, Dubai and other foreign countries. Shah’s subordinates created paperwork for him detailing fictitious transactions, which were used as a cover for the sale of smuggled alcohol.

[The Drinks Business Press Report](#)

[Brighton & Hove Independent Press Report Churchill Tax Advisors Bulletin Report](#)

[Churchill Tax Advisors Bulletin Report](#)

[BBC News Report](#)

**R v Crane, Hull CC:** Leading Counsel for one of the main two Defendants in a multi-handed mortgage fraud in which multiple properties were bought then re-mortgaged in unlawful “back to back” sales.

[The Hull Daily Mail Press Report \(1\)](#)

[The Hull Daily Mail Press Report \(2\)](#)

**R v Brooks, Central Criminal Court:** Leading Counsel for the First Defendant in a multi-handed investment fraud concerning the sale of Carbon Credits and Rare Earth Metals to members of the public, with losers parting with upwards of £6m. A jury failed to agree on a verdict following a three-month trial at the Old Bailey. At the scheduled re-trial the Crown offered pleas to the minor offence of engaging in a misleading commercial practice and the case was settled without the need for another trial.

[Financial Times Bulletin](#)

[Metro Press Report](#)

[City of London Police Press Release](#)

**R v H, Teeside CC:** Counsel for one of the three main Defendants in a government “copy-cat” website case whereby the Defendants are said to have misled individuals who intended



to use Government services or submit their tax returns into the payment of service fees to their company. Over £19 million was received in fee income.

**-R v Hall, Teeside CC:** Acquitted in an enormous and politically sensitive prosecution affecting the homes of hundreds of people in the North East. More than 1,000 mortgages were obtained by companies said to be controlled by the defendants in what is alleged to be one of the UK's largest ever mortgage cases.

[The Evening Standard Press Report](#)

[BBC News Report \(1\)](#)

[BBC News Report \(2\)](#)

[This is Money Press Report](#)

**R v Disley, Preston CC:** Leading Counsel for the principal defendant (who acquired the epithet of "The King of Marbella") in an eight-handed cut-throat fraud trial.

[BBC News Report](#)

[The Olive Press News Report](#)

**R v Altinbas, CCC:** Leading Counsel instructed by a solicitor defendant in respect of a multi-million pound immigration fraud in which the firm itself provided "brides for hire".

[The Daily Mail Press Report](#)

[The Daily Telegraph Press Report](#)

[BBC News Report](#)

**R v Vidgeon, Ipswich CC:** Leading Counsel for the principal defendant in a six-handed Boiler Room fraud in a joint SFO/FSA investigation. In a twist to the "usual" operation of such a fraud, on this occasion the organization corrupted the executive management of the traded companies and secured their complicity to the perpetration of the fraud. The offending is alleged to be some of the most prolific, complex and significant of its kind, with over £7m being lost.

**R v Fraser, Blackfriars CC:** First Junior for one of the two defendants in the SFO prosecution emanating from the collapse of the Imperial Consolidated Group, one of the largest and most complex international investment frauds ever prosecuted by the SFO. The allegation was that the group of multi-national plc. companies were being run as a veil for a Ponzi fraud based upon Caribbean Private Placement and Mutual investment funds. Over 3,000 individuals invested over £253m. The first 6 month trial resulted in a hung jury and second trial led to complete acquittals after a trial lasting 160 days.

[The Financial Times](#)

[The Times](#)

[The Guardian](#)





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[The Telegraph](#)  
[Financier World](#)  
[Lexology](#)

### **ORGANISED CRIME**

*Matt is extremely approachable, responsive and clients love to have him on their side. His client care skills are exceptional and he is very persuasive in court - **Legal 500 (2023)**.*

Matt has been instructed in the whole gamut of Organized Crime offences up and down the country and has particular expertise in respect of RIPA and the use of covert monitoring devices and “undercover assets” - he was instructed in the first such cases where “probe evidence” was relied upon and has built upon that experience ever since.

*Matt is extremely approachable, responsive and clients love to have him on their side. His client care skills are exceptional and he is very persuasive in court - **Legal 500 (2023)**.*

### **Notable Cases**

**R v A, Cardiff CC (Pre-Trial):** Operations Soros & Vanetic. Instructed as Leading Counsel for a main defendant in an alleged large Cardiff Class A drug dealing operation, with the key evidence stemming from the “hacking” of the Enchrochat communications network.

[BBC](#)  
[The Times](#)  
[Computer Weekly](#)  
[National Crime Agency](#)

**R v Sharpe & Others, Leicester CC:** Operation Clubman. Instructed as sole Counsel for a defendant charged with running a Class A distribution network spanning the East Midlands and beyond.

[Leicester Mercury](#)  
[Nottingham Post](#)  
[Press Reader](#)

**R v Balasaityte, Leicester CC:** Operation Buster. Instructed as sole Counsel for a defendant charged with money laundering in respect of a huge Class A importation and distribution network, the ring-leaders of which received sentences of 29 years’ imprisonment.

[Leicester Mercury](#)  
[Nottingham Post](#)  
[Derbyshire Police](#)



**R v Gordon, Bristol CC:** Instructed as sole Counsel for the “London End” of a County Lines operation in which large amounts of Class A drugs were supplied from the Capital to the West Country.

[The Sun](#)

[The Guardian](#)

[Wiltshire Police Federation](#)

[Swindon Advertiser](#)

**R v Cullen, Liverpool CC:** Instructed as sole Counsel for the Ringleader of an Organised Crime Group which distributed Class A and Class B drugs throughout the North West and North Wales, as well as maintaining and Armory of weapons which were either used by themselves or hired out for profit to others.

[The Liverpool Echo Press Report \(1\)](#)

[The Liverpool Echo Press Report \(2\)](#)

[Gang sentenced to 185 years in jail](#)

**R v Voos, Liverpool CC:** Conspiracy to supply Class A and Class B drugs in the North West.

[Warrington Worldwide Press Report](#)

[CPS Press Release](#)

[Manchester Evening News Press Report](#)

**R v Sharp, Kingston CC:** Instructed as sole Counsel for a “key player” in a conspiracy to supply Class A drugs, which led to multiple seizures, one alone of which was 80 kilos of cocaine at 96% purity. The Defendant was acquitted.

**R v Allen, Basildon CC:** Conspiracy to commit Violent Disorder and Pervert the Course of Justice. Counsel for the first of 13 Defendants concerning a large public disturbance after a football match as a result of which a man was left in a Persistent Vegetative State.

[BBC News Report](#)

**R v Isoufarj, CCC:** Counsel for the first Defendant in a multi-handed conspiracy to import in excess of 50 kilos of Class A drugs.

**R v C, Stafford CC:** Murder - the drugs-related killing of rival dealer.

[BBC News Report](#)

[ITV News Report](#)

**R v Rashid, Sheffield CC:** Conspiring to supply Class A drugs and Perverting the Course of Justice (by the planting of a firearm and drugs at the home of a rival dealer in order to



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reduce the Drugs sentence that was pending), while on remand for a earlier Conspiracy to Supply Class A drugs.

[ITV News Report](#)

**R v Patel, Preston CC:** Violent Disorder stemming from a feud between two rival drugs gangs in Preston and Blackburn.

[The Lancashire Telegraph Press report](#)

[Lancashire Evening Post Press Report](#)