



LIBERTAS
CHAMBERS

Michael Halepas

mhalepas@libertaschambers.com

clerks@libertaschambers.com

Year of Call: 2007

Michael is a passionate and dedicated criminal law practitioner with extensive experience in Criminal Justice. He has defended and prosecuted cases at every stage, from the police station to the Court of Appeal. His interests lie particularly in financial crime, AML, and digital assets. Michael serves as an independent consultant to both the Government of the British Virgin Islands and the Council of Europe's Economic Crime and Cooperation Division.

Michael specialises in:

- Fraud and Financial Crime
- General Crime
- Digital Assets
- Anti-Money Laundering (AML)

Michael has Crown Court trial advocacy experience across a variety of cases and has represented a diverse clientele-base, ranging from career criminals to vulnerable individuals, including those with learning disabilities, mental health issues, and youths.

Appointments & Memberships:

He is a committee member of the Criminal Bar Association.

FRAUD AND FINANCIAL CRIME

Previously, as a Legal Adviser to the Economic Crime and Confiscation Unit, Law Officers' Department of Jersey, Michael was responsible for the conduct of complex cases of financial crime and money laundering, including Jersey's first "irresistible inference" money laundering prosecution and convictions. Michael's cases often concerned the investigation and prosecution of multi-jurisdictional financial crimes. His responsibilities also included providing legal support to Jersey's Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU); reviewing SAR submissions, consent requests, and intelligence packages.

During his tenure as a Senior Crown Prosecutor attached to the CPS Specialist Fraud Division (SFD), Michael prosecuted a range of fraud cases; including, Ponzi schemes, Boiler Room frauds, Investment frauds, counterfeit goods, and VAT frauds. Michael advised the National Crime Agency (NCA) on the planning and implementation of a Data Protection Policy, and he was instructed as the Data Protection Lawyer in a NCA case against [a former government minister of a foreign country](#). Michael was also entrusted as an assessor in the [CPS Advocate Panel Scheme](#).



LIBERTAS
CHAMBERS

Michael Halepas

mhalepas@libertaschambers.com

clerks@libertaschambers.com

In the role of Disclosure Counsel at the Serious Fraud Office (SFO), Michael was part of a multidisciplinary team that investigated and prosecuted LIBOR and EURIBOR manipulation.

R v Muhuddin Umurzkov & Ors – Prosecution of three defendants for money laundering activities linked to an unknown source of funds and associated predicate offenses. The defendants targeted banks, the post office, and high-value dealers in Jersey to launder criminal proceeds. The Crown built its case primarily on circumstantial evidence, leading to guilty pleas from the defendants for money laundering offences. The investigation revealed connections to an international organised crime group. One of the defendants appealed his sentence; however, the Crown successfully argued against the appeal, resulting in the Royal Court of Jersey dismissing it.

[Three people sentenced for attempted money laundering in Jersey](#) – ITV News

[Trio jailed for trying to launder crime-gang cash](#) - Jersey Evening Post

[Money launderer's appeal against his sentence fails](#) - Jersey Evening Post

[Money launderer claimed 'threats to sister' were reason for crimes](#) | Bailiwick Express Jersey

R v Diezani Alison-Madueke - Served as the Data Protection Lawyer in a high-profile case against Diezani Alison-Madueke, a former government minister of Nigeria. Advised the National Crime Agency (NCA) on the planning and implementation of a comprehensive Data Protection Policy. Provided legal guidance on compliance with data protection regulations and ensured practices aligned with legal standards.

[Former Nigerian Oil Minister Diezani Alison-Madueke, Appears Before UK Court](#) – News Central TV (via youtube.com)

[UK Lays Bribery Charges On Ex-Nigerian Oil Minister Diezani Alison-Madueke](#) - OCCRP

[Justice Department Recovers Over \\$53M in Profits Obtained from Corruption in the Nigerian Oil Industry](#) - United States Department of Justice

[Nigeria Diezani oil corruption in Chude Jideonwo documentary](#) – Semafor

LIBOR and EURIBOR Prosecutions

Served as Disclosure Counsel in high-profile LIBOR and EURIBOR manipulation cases involving multiple defendants. These cases resulted in several convictions and garnered international media attention, significantly impacting banking institutions in the UK and abroad. Responsible for applying the Disclosure Test on extensive materials related to the prosecution of fraudulent conduct by bank traders, submitters, and middle



LIBERTAS
CHAMBERS

Michael Halepas

mhalepas@libertaschambers.com

clerks@libertaschambers.com

management. Contributed to the successful prosecution of individuals involved in manipulating benchmark interest rates, reinforcing the integrity of financial markets.

[LIBOR](#) - Serious Fraud Office

[Two former senior bankers convicted of fraud in SFO's EURIBOR manipulation case](#) - Serious Fraud Office

[Former Barclays traders jailed over Euribor rate-rigging](#) – BBC News

GENERAL CRIME

Whilst he was a Senior Crown Prosecutor attached to the CPS London-South Crown Court Unit, Michael handled serious and complicated criminal cases, including matters that attracted media attention. Michael managed cases involving serious violence and attempted murder, large-scale commercial burglaries, drug importation and distribution, fraud and money laundering, domestic violence, and public disorder. Michael represented the CPS in a television news interview concerning a case of national media interest. In the same case, Michael made a successful case referral to [the Attorney-General](#) ([2019] 1 WLUK 323).

Over several years working as an Accredited Police Station Representative, Michael gained considerable police station experience, advising detainees across London and the South East.

Michael served as an in-house Crown Court defence barrister, representing defendants in a range of cases and providing advice on the general conduct of defence cases both orally and in writing. He has experience representing youths charged with sexual offences as a trial advocate in 'Certificate for Counsel' cases. Additionally, Michael delivered professional development seminars on 'Magistrates' Court Trials' and 'Youth Court Sentencing'.

R v Joshua Gardner - Prosecuted a case involving a "zombie" knife attacker who assaulted a car and its occupant with a large "zombie" knife in broad daylight on a busy London street. Gardner managed to smash the passenger window and attempted to stab the victim through the hole, but the victim escaped uninjured. The attack was captured on dashcam footage, which went viral online. Despite the victim's unwillingness to cooperate and bystander witnesses declining to participate in the trial, the Crown proceeded with the prosecution. Gardner was convicted and sentenced, and the case was referred to the Court of Appeal under the Unduly Lenient Sentence Scheme. Following judicial review, the Court of Appeal increased the sentence length, establishing a precedent that such behaviour must result in substantial and effective custodial sentences.

[Teenager who tried to attack driver with zombie knife avoids jail](#) - ITV News (via youtube.com)



LIBERTAS
CHAMBERS

Michael Halepas

mhalepas@libertaschambers.com

clerks@libertaschambers.com

[Joshua Gardner sentenced to three and a half years by Court of Appeal](#) – Daily Mail (via youtube.com)

[Zombie knife attack sentence - Joseph Kotrie-Monson discusses the judge's decision on LBC](#) – via youtube.com

[Joshua Gardner latest: Sentence of Croydon 'zombie knife' attacker referred to Attorney General](#) - Evening Standard

[Joshua Gardner: Croydon teen in 'zombie' knife attack spared jail](#) - Your Local Guardian

[Joshua Gardner: Croydon 'zombie knife' attacker jailed after sentence ruled unduly lenient](#) – The Independent

R v Jyrelle O'Connor - Prosecuted a firearms case involving Brixton drill rapper "Loski." This case stemmed from a three-year investigation led by the Specialist Firearms Command. O'Connor was charged with possessing a loaded revolver while travelling in an Uber cab. During the trial, he gave oral evidence and claimed duress as a defence, alleging that a drug dealer had made threats against his life and that of his mother.

[Brixton drill rapper 'Loski' guilty of possessing loaded revolver](#) - Evening Standard

[Harlem Spartans drill artist Loski found guilty of possessing loaded revolver](#) – Mixmag

R v Harry Rawlings and Jay Reilly - Successfully prosecuted two teenagers who chased down and attacked a 15-year-old boy with a "Rambo" knife, inflicting multiple stab wounds. This violent incident was part of a postcode turf war, with the assailants specifically targeting a perceived rival from another area. The case highlighted critical issues of youth violence and gang-related activities within suburban communities.

[Teens jailed following 'ferocious' Chessington attack that left boy, 15, fighting for his life](#) - Surrey Live

[Schoolboy attacked with 'Rambo' knife by two teens on moped 'too scared to go out'](#) - Evening Standard

DIGITAL ASSETS

Through the Council of Europe's Economic Crime and Cooperation Division (ECCD), Michael advises international competent authorities on the crime risks associated with digital assets, and on strengthening risk-based AML/CFT supervision and strategic analysis.



LIBERTAS
CHAMBERS

Michael Halepas

mhalepas@libertaschambers.com

clerks@libertaschambers.com

Michael is the founder of [BlockAML](#), a project specialising in consulting, training, advocacy, and keynote speaking at the intersection of digital assets, financial crime, and anti-money laundering. Michael regularly delivers keynote speeches at international crypto conferences, notably [NFT.London 2022](#), [NFT.NYC 2023](#), [ETH Belgrade 2024](#), [ChainCon](#) and the [4th Annual Economic Crime and Compliance Symposium](#).

Michael was formerly the Lead Digital Assets Lawyer in the Law Officers' Department of Jersey; tasked with filling gaps in the Island's crypto capabilities. Michael spearheaded educational initiatives on crypto, provided legal guidance concerning digital assets, and advised on the jurisdiction's crypto law enforcement approach. Michael drafted the "Digital Assets" section of the Law Officers' prosecution manual, and the Parallel Virtual Asset Investigations strategy.

Michael advised the States of Jersey Police on all cases involving suspected illicit use of digital assets and supported their public outreach efforts to educate islanders about the risks associated with crypto scams. In preparation for Jersey's Moneyval assessment, Michael proactively engaged with local policymakers, regulators, and government agencies on the subject of digital assets.

Michael served as the Law Officers' representative in Jersey's [VA and VASP National Risk Assessment working group](#), and advised the Government of Jersey in crypto-compliant legislative amendments to proceeds of crime law and civil forfeiture law. Michael regularly shared his knowledge and insights on virtual assets with other on-Island agencies, including the Jersey Financial Services Commission (JFSC).

Michael provided counsel during the crafting of crypto custody and handling policies for the Viscount's Department. He also devised, updated, and delivered "Blockchain & Digital Assets" training to several of Jersey's and Guernsey's respective competent authorities; he delivered 32 crypto training presentations in total.