



LIBERTAS
CHAMBERS

Simon Csoka KC

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clerks@libertaschambers.com

Year of Call: 1991

Year took silk: 2011

Recognised in Chambers & Partners Guide to the Bar as *"at the top of his game and a silk that no other barrister wants to face in court."*

Simon specialises in:

- **Fraud and Financial Crime**
- **Homicide**
- **Health and Safety and Regulatory**
- **Terrorism**
- **Organised Crime**

Simon specialises in all aspects of criminal law, in particular homicide, serious fraud and organised crime. He has defended many high-profile cases such as Dale Cregan, Arran Coghlan, and Operation Elveden (the News International cases.) He is widely praised for his devastating cross-examinations.

He exclusively defends in serious and complex crime and fraud, together with related hearings in other tribunals. His practice encompasses murder, gross negligence manslaughter, evasion of duty, MTIC and serious fraud, terrorism, complex multi-handed drugs cases and corruption.

He has appeared in many high-profile cases. He defended John Hardy, a former sergeant major, in Operation Elveden who was accused of selling stories about Prince William and Prince Harry to The Sun. He was the only source to be acquitted by a jury in those News International trials. As well as his skills as a jury advocate, he is well known for his ability to develop complex legal arguments. He is known for his mastery of detail even in cases with voluminous quantities of evidence. He has an advanced knowledge of computing which can assist with the management of large amounts of evidence.

He led for the defence in the first case in which an application for independent special counsel for disclosure was granted [R v Greaves]. Since then he has made several successful applications for special counsel which led to the cases collapsing.

He has defended a number of solicitors and professionals in recent years who have found themselves charged with criminal offences.

He has advised CEOs, such as Julian Wheatland, former Chief Executive of Cambridge Analytica.

He will provide an extremely comprehensive and involved service together with a robust



defence to those charged with more minor offences who wish to pay privately.

He also appears in Sport Regulatory work and has appeared before the FA Appeal Committee and the Court of Arbitration for Sport in Lausanne. In 2012 he succeeded in restoring Bradford City FC to the FA cup after they were disqualified.

Testimonials (most recent first):

“Simon is at the top of his game – a silk that everybody wants to instruct. He is incredibly bright and extremely persuasive. A phenomenal advocate that commands the respect of the courtroom. He is highly respected by the judiciary and his peers and is a joy to watch. One of the best around.” - Legal 500, 2024

“He has a phenomenal capacity for memory and is so great on the detail. He is a polished performer and a great advocate.” - Chambers and Partners, Financial Crime, 2024

“He is a bright and able advocate.” - Chambers and Partners, Financial Crime, 2024

“His memory and grasp of a case is absolutely phenomenal.” - Chambers and Partners, Financial Crime, 2024

“He is dynamite: fierce in his arguments, with a very big intellect.” Chambers and Partners, Financial Crime, 2024

“His knowledge and willingness to fight for a client are of the highest level” - Chambers and Partners, Crime, 2024

“He is just phenomenal. You sit back and watch him at work and you just see a true expert.” - Chambers and Partners, Crime, 2024

“He’s a go-to for encroachment cases because of his intellect. The arguments he deploys are exceptional.” - Chambers and Partners, Crime, 2024

“Simon is at the top of his game – a silk that everybody wants to instruct. He is incredibly bright and extremely persuasive. A phenomenal advocate that commands the respect of the courtroom. He is highly respected by the judiciary and his peers and is a joy to watch. One of the best around.” – Legal 500, 2023

“Simon is a truly exceptional advocate. Probably the finest exponent of the art of cross examination on any circuit in England and Wales. Frighteningly bright, masters complex briefs very easily and has a chair side manner that never fails to impress both professional and lay clients. Easily one of the finest criminal and regulatory silks in the country.” – Legal 500, 2023



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"Simon is excellent. He is really clever and thinks outside the box." – Chambers and Partners, Financial Crime, 2023

"His written work is fantastic." - Chambers and Partners, Financial Crime, 2023

"Simon is a go-to silk. He has a brain like a computer and it is a joy to work with him." - Chambers and Partners, Financial Crime, 2023

"He is great with difficult clients as he has a very calming influence on them and can deal with people from all strata of society." - Chambers and Partners, Financial Crime, 2023

"A man with a brain the size of a planet, he is fearless and will stand up to judges when no one else will." - Chambers and Partners, Financial Crime, 2023

"He is academically on a different planet and so good when it comes to understanding a case." - Chambers and Partners, Crime, 2022

"A truly fantastic silk and someone you want on your side." - Chambers and Partners, Financial Crime, 2022

"He is incredibly bright and my number one silk for serious and complex crime. He is at the top of his game and a silk that no other barrister wants to face in court." "He is an exceptional jury advocate and has a great client manner." – Chambers and Partners, Crime, 2019

"He is exceptionally bright and a quality advocate." "He has a remarkable intellect and is one of the best criminal silks in the UK." - Chambers and Partners, Financial Crime, 2019

"A silk who oozes class." – Legal 500, 2018

"A highly respected figure in the Criminal Defence Bar, who handles a range of complex and high-value fraud cases. Areas of strength include cases involving allegations of missing trader intra-community (MTIC) fraud...Very good on issues such as disclosure and dismissal. He is very active pre-trial, looking for anything which can bring an end to the case before it gets anywhere near a jury...Great, extremely intelligent. A very good approach to matters....Recent work: Acted in R v Anthony O'Neill, regarding long-running allegations of missing trader fraud and income tax fraud in relation to the construction industry." – Chambers & Partners, 2017

"A leader in his field with a national reputation; he is a formidable opponent." – Legal 500, 2016

"He looks into the detail thoroughly and he's an extremely good cross-examiner." – Chambers and Partners, 2016

"He is an incredibly good advocate." – Chambers and Partners, 2015

"Devastating in cross-examination." Legal 500, 2015



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"An exceptional advocate in the most complex of cases." – Legal 500, 2016

Appointments & Memberships:

He is a committee member of the Criminal Bar Association.

FRAUD AND FINANCIAL CRIME

He exclusively defends in serious and complex fraud, together with related hearings in other tribunals. His practice encompasses evasion of duty, MTIC and serious fraud, corruption, and Health and Safety cases. Simon is ranked in Band 1 as a leading individual in Chambers and Partners Guide to the Bar 2019 for Financial Crime:

"A highly respected figure at the Criminal Defence Bar, who handles a range of complex and high-value fraud cases. Areas of strength include cases involving allegations of MTIC fraud, as well as mortgage fraud. He is also adept at handling cases involving organised crime."

R v Ludovic Black – He acted for the lead defendant and alleged architect of a financial repayment scheme for solar panels. The case was prosecuted by the SFO.

R v John Hardy – John Hardy, a former sergeant major, in Operation Elveden who was accused of selling stories about Prince William and Prince Harry to The Sun. He is the only source to be acquitted by a jury in those trials.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/crime/11461461/Sun-payments-trial-Four-journalists-cleared-of-paying-public-officials.html>

R v Mark Quayle (Operation Aquamarine) – Successful defence of Barclays manager in a multinational fraud involving off-shore special purpose tax companies in the Isle of Man and BVI to avoid tax. This was a six-year investigation which resulted in a three-month trial at Southwark Crown Court. Mark Quayle was acquitted following a comprehensive critique of Barclays offshore companies.

R v Richard Dixon – Successful defence of national car hire director upon charges of fraudulent trading.

R v Grace Purdie (Operation Bamburgh) – Successful defence of a director of two financial institutions in the UK's biggest ever mortgage fraud prosecution. Over half a million pages of evidence was served.

R v Tony Khaliq - Defence of a company director in the UK's biggest ever unified local authority trading standards prosecution involving regulatory offences in multiple council



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areas.

R v Mussarat Ali – Successful defence of company director in UK Border Agency prosecution.

R v Anthony O’Neill – Defence of businessman in a national CIS tax fraud.

R v Umair Nazir - Operation Inertia MTIC tax fraud. Largest ever MTIC VAT prosecution successfully compromised.

R v Godley - allegation of abuse of process by SFO in respect of breach of promise.

R v Davies – MTIC fraud involving copper cathode and scrap.

R v Chohan – Hundi/Hawala banking: international money laundering and fraud.

R v Young – Multimillion VAT fraud on imported luxury cars.

R v K and K – Leading for the respondent in a Prosecution appeal against a terminating ruling. This followed the successful defence of an accountant for international money laundering. The Court of Appeal certified a point of law for the House of Lords but leave was refused.

HEALTH AND SAFETY, GROSS NEGLIGENCE MANSLAUGHTER AND REGULATORY

Simon regularly appears in gross negligence manslaughter cases. According to Chambers and Partners Guide to the Bar 2019, in this sector he is *“at the top of his game and a silk that no other barrister wants to face in court.”*

R v Joseph Travers – Successful defence of custodial manager at HMP Woodhill charged with gross negligence manslaughter as a result of his management of a suicidal inmate. The case exposed serious failing in Healthcare at the prison as opposed to custodial care.
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-beds-bucks-herts-42878661>

R v James Abbott – Successful defence of a senior prison officer charged with gross negligence manslaughter for failing to take steps to prevent a female inmate from hanging herself.
<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/crime/jail-guards-knew-suicidal-inmate-had-a-noose-in-cell-a4187551.html>

HOMICIDE



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Simon has led for the defence in many of the most notorious murder cases in the last decade. He also regularly appears in corporate manslaughter cases. According to Chambers and Partners Guide to the Bar 2019, in this sector he is *"at the top of his game and a silk that no other barrister wants to face in court."*

R v Carne Thomasson – The Salford gang war tit for tat shooting which led to a seven-year-old boy and his mother being shot on their door step. Thomasson was alleged to be the gangster who confronted them at the door but was acquitted of conspiracy to murder: <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2019/mar/21/gang-trio-guilty-botched-hit-left-mother-and-son-shot-salford>

R v Hedley Plummer – Successful defence of a man alleged to have kicked to death the Manchester rapper, Whites. His defence that he acted in self-defence was accepted by the jury despite the assertion from the prosecution pathologist that he had only seen similar injuries when a person had been hit by a train. <https://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/greater-manchester-news/hedley-plummer-noel-white-court-15568797>

R v Alfred Kurti - Successful defence of a defendant in a cold case murder prosecution. The supergrass's identity was exposed as fraudulent despite being taken on trust by the police. <https://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/greater-manchester-news/kalvinder-bob-singh-murder-trial-10617570>

R v Dale Cregan – Defended Dale Cregan in perhaps the most notorious murder trial in recent times. Despite his admission to murdering two women police officers, he secured his acquittal upon a further hand grenade and sub-machine gun attack upon a defenceless woman. https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/2013/06/13/dale-cregan-trial-jury_n_3434163.html

R v Rabeel Malik – Successful defence of a mother over the violent death of her baby.

R v Bartlomej Bilas – Successful defence of alleged principal in multi-handed murder. One of the first cases in which the post Jogee law was applied

R v Adrian Rhodes – Acquittal of client for murder in a South London gang shooting.

R v Shahid Nowaz – Defence of man accused of murder in Hackney. A notorious case because the victim was mistaken for a gang member. Abandoned by the prosecution and remains unsolved.

R v Rebecca Leighton – the Stepping Hill Hospital (Stockport) nurse arrested for the insulin deaths. <http://tinyurl.com/8574vyc>



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R v Ishaq Hussain - the Pakistani gang grooming murder in which his client, the alleged orchestrator, was acquitted. This was the subject of a Panorama documentary which led to uncovering the Rotherham grooming scandal.

<http://tinyurl.com/7qtgrvw>

R v Kieron Stapleton - the defendant was accused of the murder in Salford of the Indian student, Anuj Bidve, who was shot in the head on Boxing Day.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-manchester-16437658>

R v Zaahid Patel – 13 week murder trial in Preston involving 5 separate cut-throat defences

TERRORISM

R v SF – Defence of man accused of a plot to kill hundreds in Whitehaven during the annual festival.

R v GL – Defence of a Muslim man paradoxically accused of far right white supremacist terror offences.

R v MC – Defence of man accused of plotting Islamist terror attacks in London. Long undercover MI5 operation.

ORGANISED CRIME

This was his speciality as junior counsel but he has continued to be in demand for the gravest and most complex cases when a certificate for a KC is granted or when instructed on a private fee basis. According to Chambers and Partners Guide to the Bar 2019: *“He is incredibly bright and my number one silk for serious and complex crime.”*

R v Luke Dann – This was a 10 year investigation which led to a mammoth prosecution of four defendants whom the prosecution alleged were the “bosses of the bosses” in a previous series of national and international drug conspiracies. Luke Dann was the lead defendant. There were nearly two years of disclosure applications and arguments which led to the appointment of special counsel by the Attorney-General. The prosecution offered no evidence on all counts in 2019.

R v Arran Coghlan – A substantial drugs prosecution by KC and two juniors, together with two KC special counsel, of the businessman labelled the “Teflon Don” by the media. The case collapsed during a disclosure application.

<http://tinyurl.com/6pihwej>



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R v Longden – the UK's biggest ever drugs supply case at the time involving over £200 million worth of Class A drugs.

R v Greaves – the first ever successful application for special counsel to review PII material to enable English law to comply with Article 6. Appeal allowed in Court of Appeal owing to allegations of corruption against police officers in Lancashire Constabulary.

Operation Safe – called to the bar in the Isle of Man to defend in an undercover drugs supply case.

R v Singh – kidnapping for a substantial ransom of a “businessman” This became the leading case upon implied assertions following the introduction of the CJA 2003, R. v. Sukadeve Singh [2006] 2 Cr.App.R. 12

R v Taberer – blackmail of international money launderer who was being pursued by the Serbian and Russian mafia.

R v Pearson – a substantial police corruption case involving the sale of sensitive material to active criminals.

R v Miah – A substantial drugs prosecution which collapsed at the retrial following my successful application to exclude all the telephone evidence in the case. The submission concerned the influencing of experts with sensitive material and the manner in which the prosecution liaised with the Attorney-General's office over special counsel.