



Colin Aylott QC

Year of Call: 1989

QC: 2017



Appointed to Queen's Counsel in 2017. Listed in the 2018 New Silks lists in both Chambers and Partners and the Legal 500 for fraud and crime.

“Completely dedicated to the client’s position with a very keen eye for the even the smallest detail” and “sharp witted and fully conversant with the law, he works tirelessly to ensure the job is done.”
Chambers & Partners 2018

“Popular with instructing solicitors for defending complicated fraud cases...Straightforward in his approach and not a man to panic.” Chambers & Partners 2017

“Has a very measured and calm approach. He’s no-nonsense.” (Chambers and Partners 2016)

“He has a really nice style in court and is really switched on.” (Chambers and Partners 2015)

“He has a track record of high-stakes cases involving drugs, guns and violence.” (Legal 500 2017)

“His practice covers the gamut of serious crime” (Legal 500 2016)

“An excellent leading junior counsel.” (Legal 500 2015)

Colin is widely recognised as an expert in murder, serious crime and fraud. He has appeared for the defence in many of the most recent high profile criminal trials in the country including the News International “*Operation Elveden*” prosecutions and the SFO LIBOR manipulation case. His practice embraces serious fraud, corruption murder, terrorism, historic sexual abuse, and multi-jurisdictional drug supply conspiracies.

His homicide practice spans more than 15 years. He has defended in numerous murder cases including gang related murders and contract killings. Since taking Silk he has been instructed in a number of high-profile murder cases. A list of his recent instructions in murder cases can be found in the expertise section.

Other work in Silk has included defending in and securing the only acquittal in the first prosecution under the Terrorism Act of alleged members of National Action. The case received significant coverage in the national media.

His expertise in complex fraud and financial crime as leading counsel includes defending allegations of MTIC fraud, fraudulent trading, diversion fraud, boiler room fraud, international money laundering and revenue offences. He is well known for his ability to marshal large amounts of complex evidence and to identify a clear strategic approach. Recent instructions in Silk include advising an oil industry executive pre-charge in relation to an SFO investigation into allegations of bribery and corruption.

His financial and business crime practice encompasses High Court civil restraint proceedings, confiscation and cash seizure proceedings. He defends in prosecutions brought under various regulatory regimes and appears before a range of tribunals and Professional Disciplinary bodies.

In addition he advises companies in relation to money laundering procedures, regulatory compliance and internal corporate investigations.

Colin is equally experienced in all other areas of serious crime. In recent years he has been regularly instructed as leading counsel in major drug trafficking, allegations of commercial armed robbery, kidnapping, terrorism and serious sexual offences.

He appears regularly before the Court of Appeal and has represented the Government of Mauritius before the Privy Council.

He frequently advises television companies including Channel 4, ITV and Company Pictures on documentary and drama productions.

Called to the bar in the Turks and Caicos Islands.

Memberships: South Eastern Circuit, Criminal Bar Association.

Fraud and Financial Crime

SFO Unaoil Investigation – Instructed pre-charge to act for an oil industry executive in relation to an ongoing SFO investigation into the activities of Petrofac PLC and Unaoil. The SFO investigation is focusing on allegedly corrupt payments made to secure the award of multi-million dollar government oil industry contracts in Iraq. The case involves special Treasury funding indicating that it is in the top tier SFO investigations.

R v Copp - Instructed as Queen's Counsel. Four handed conspiracy to cheat the public revenue of VAT of £45 million. The defendants were alleged to have used a series of umbrella companies through which a complex payroll fraud was operated. Press links:

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-4589048/Family-stole-45m-VAT-scam-jailed-27-years.html> and
<https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/3735226/copp-family-stole-millions-vat-scam-luxury-cars/> and
<http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/grinning-fraudster-poses-front-fleet-10594308>

R v Gilmour - Acted as junior counsel for a yen cash broker in the SFO LIBOR manipulation prosecution. This was the SFOs largest ever investigation and the case has attracted global media coverage. The Crown alleges that the manipulation provided a UBS and Citibank trader with an advantage in multi-billion yen derivatives trades. Client acquitted. Press links: <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2016-01-14/libor-brokers-are-players-in-show-trial-defense-lawyer-says> and <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/f5689ae2-c509-11e5-808f-8231cd71622e.html#axzz40EbHyr1X> and http://www.nytimes.com/2016/01/29/business/dealbook/sixth-ex-broker-cleared-in-london-libor-trial.html?_r=0

R v Spence - Secured the acquittal in July 2017 of one of the directors of the London Fields Brewery. The company was one of the first and most successful of the craft microbreweries that have been established in recent years. The defendant was charged with a range of offences relating to tax avoidance by the company. The case has attracted significant media attention. Press links <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/business/2017/07/03/london-microbrewery-sold-giant-rival-carlsberg-ahead-founders/> and <http://www.standard.co.uk/news/crime/london-fields-brewery-boss-and-wife-cheated-on-730000-tax-bill-a3437781.html> and <http://www.standard.co.uk/news/crime/brewery-boss-in-tax-trial-had-3m-drug-bust-debt-wiped-out-a3438766.html>

R v C - Instructed as leading counsel on behalf of a partner level accountant charged together with three others with VAT fraud. The case concerns the alleged use of two large engineering and telecommunications companies that had been contracted to install broadband for BT Carillion Telent to defraud HMRC. The contracts were worth in-excess of £15m. The Crown's case is that the conspirators set-up a series of bogus companies that were then sub-contracted to provide labour to the two main contractors. The bogus companies were utilised to avoid evade the payment of more than £1 million. Trial at Southwark Crown Court 2018

R v G - Instructed to act for a chartered surveyor alleged to be party to a high value mortgage fraud. Allegations related to £40 million mortgage advances loaned against high value properties in prestigious Central London locations purchased using companies incorporated in the British Virgin Islands. In total fifteen defendants charged and client said to be one of the prime-movers. Client acquitted.

R v Basra ("Operation Carp" & "Operation Tulipbox") - Secured acquittals in two separate trials for a carbon credits trader following the "Operation Tulipbox" and "Operation Carp" investigations. The cases concerned an international carbon credits trading fraud and the defendant's trades with Deutsche Bank, Gazprom, RBS, Morgan Stanley and other "Blue Chip" companies. The money laundering element of the case was highly complex and included the use of British Virgin Islands based trusts and banking platforms based in Hong Kong, Dubai and New Zealand. The combined alleged losses to the Revenue ran to in-excess of £50 million. <http://carbon-pulse.com/3325/> and <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2465365/Sandeep-Singh-Dosanjh-Leader-gang-stole-39million-taxpayer-told-pay-13m.html>

Operation Chainmail & Crystallite - Advised and acted for an Investment Banker charged with conspiracy to cheat. The allegations concerned a film investment scheme that was used by "high net-worth" individuals to offset personal tax liabilities. The scheme utilised Limited Liability Partnerships (LLPs) as investment vehicles that were allegedly created with the sole purpose of tax avoidance and used by the LLP partners to then fraudulently claim sideways tax relief against their personal tax liabilities arising out their employment.

R v R ("Operation Hayrack") – Instructed to represent a defendant charged with laundering the proceeds of corruption linked to the awarding of contracts by the Royal Household. The contracts were for the management of mechanical and engineering work undertaken at the Royal Palaces between 2006-2011.

Re CE Limited v The Serious Fraud Office - Instructed by the board and current directors of CE Limited to intervene in judicial review proceedings arising out of an SFO investigation. Former directors of the company were potential defendants in criminal proceedings giving rise to various issues relating to professional legal privilege and the R (Kent Pharmaceuticals) v SFO procedures. This was a complex multi-party judicial review with the underlying allegations relating to the use of fraudulent international holding companies to transfer ownership of various freeholds and thus circumvent UK primary legislation prohibiting the same.

R v Misick – Turks and Caicos Islands Supreme Court – Acted on behalf of a Turks & Caicos attorney, the brother of the former Chief Minister of the Turks and Caicos Islands ("TCI") in relation to allegations of money laundering the proceeds of corruption and bribery. Allegation centred on the sale of land to global hoteliers and casino companies together with favourable planning authority. This case has attracted worldwide media interest and has been the subject of investigations by the BBC Panorama strand and the Sunday Times.

R v Harris - Southwark Crown Court - Acted as leading junior defending in a prosecution conducted by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills. Multi-handed [12 defendants] long firm fraud perpetrated by inducing trade suppliers to grant various building companies credit facilities and then folding the

companies and creating a new corporate entity. The fraudsters employed corrupt accountants to carry out the numerous liquidations, receiverships and administrations of the “failed companies”. The losses to the various trade creditors ran into the millions.

R v Khan (“Operation Spallation”) – Acted for a Customs Officer in a series of trials at the Old Bailey in 2014/15. The Crown alleged high level corruption. The defendant was alleged to be the insider providing “tip-offs” and intelligence to individuals involved in multi-million pound diversion frauds. Crown also alleged the defendant facilitated the grant of licences to the alleged fraudsters to transport and store bonded goods.

S, M & A v G – Instructed to advise and appeared on behalf of a defendant in a Chancery Division fraud claim. The complex litigation concerns allegations relating to an international “boiler room fraud” with multi-jurisdictional evidential issues and worldwide freezing orders. The defendant represented was one of nine defendants to the action with money traced to various banks around the world. Advised in relation to the concurrent civil and criminal proceedings and appeared in interlocutory proceedings before Mr. Justice Smith sitting in the Chancery Division.

R v W - Allegation of conspiracy to defraud relating to a sophisticated property fraud. The conspirators using insiders at the Land Registry, Banks and solicitors hijacked the ownership of a number of high value London properties and sold them. The fraud generated millions of pounds that was then laundered or used to finance multi-kilo cocaine deals.. The defendant after a trial at Southwark CC was acquitted.

Confiscation, Civil Recovery and Asset Forfeiture

Includes civil proceedings in the High Court under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002, and Cash Forfeiture in the Magistrates’ Court. Appeared regularly in the High Court dealing with cases brought under the restraint regimes of the Criminal Justice Act 1988, Drug Trafficking Act 1994, and Proceeds of Crime Act 2002.

Terrorism

R v B – (2018) Instructed as Leading Counsel in the first prosecution under the Terrorism Act of alleged members of National Action a proscribed terrorist organisation. The case received significant coverage in the national media. Press interest includes: <https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/british-soldier-accused-being-national-12175704>, <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2018/mar/12/british-soldier-kept-terrorism-manual-by-anders-breivik-court-told>, and <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-43380915>

Instructed as Leading Junior at trial and in the Court of Appeal in **R v Rahman** [2008] 4 All ER 661; [2009] 1 Cr.App.R. (S) 70 (<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/7107872.stm>)

Homicide and Corporate Manslaughter

Since taking Silk Colin has been instructed in a series of high profile murder cases. Instructions as Queen’s Counsel include:

R v Das - Central Criminal Court. Murder & attempted murder. Trial October 2017. For media interest, click here: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-39335499> and <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/3129884/bidhya-sagar-das-finsbury-park-toddlers-wilberforce-road-maria/> and <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/03/19/boy-one-dies-girl-critically-incident-london-flat/>

R v J - Luton Crown Court - Two handed murder. For media interest, click here: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-beds-bucks-herts-37922744>

R v D - Lewes Crown Court - Murder & Conspiracy to pervert the course of justice. Trial September 2017. For media interest, click here: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-sussex-39520479> and http://www.theargus.co.uk/news/15210055.Murder_case_four_appear_in_court_over_death_of_21_year_old_man/

R v M – St Albans Crown Court - Conspiracy to murder. Trial September 2017.

R v H (April 2018) - Lewes Crown Court - Represented a 16 year old young man charged with murder. Case had gang related background.

R v R (May 2018) - Inner London Crown Court - Allegation of manslaughter arising from the alleged commercial sale of “DNP”.

Organised Crime

Colin is regularly instructed as leading counsel in significant high profile cases including allegations of kidnapping, drug trafficking and the commercial supply of firearms. Recent instructions include:

R v Quinn - Instructed as leading counsel to represent one of the alleged ringleaders of a large-scale drug trafficking operation. Described by the Hampshire Police as their largest ever investigation into a drug trafficking gang. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-hampshire-37249917>

R v J - Harrow Crown Court. Conspiracy to supply firearms described as an “assassins kit”.

R v Hyland & Others (Largest ever commercial supply of steroids).

Operation Karnak (£62 million “Flower Gang” conspiracy to supply cannabis).

Operation Leonin (Supply to undercover officers of 300 kilogrammes cocaine).

Commercial armed robbery **Operation Mashad** & **Operation Angeln** (both at the Central Criminal Court).

Operation Twin Lakes 2 - “London Fields gang” prosecution linked to the Hoxton drive-by murder trial.

Sexual Offences

An expert in defending all allegations of sexual offences. Colin is frequently instructed privately and is renowned for his skilful and effective cross-examination. He frequently defends in cases of historic allegations of sexual abuse. Recent instructions have included the “Operation Bullfinch” grooming trials and acting for a HNWI from the Middle East.

Regulatory and Disciplinary Proceedings

He defends in enforcement proceedings of regulatory regimes and appears before various tribunals including the VAT Tribunal and various Professional Disciplinary bodies.