

Jonathan Kinnear KC

"Jon is a star of the Bar. Brilliant on his feet, engaging with clients, navigates difficult legal and practical issues with ease and very accessible. Solicitors are grateful for the superb all round service he delivers."

Legal 500 UK 2023



Year of Call: 1994 (Northern Ireland 1996) KC: 2012

020 7353 5324

Jonathan Kinnear KC specialises in advising corporate clients, Government Departments and individuals in the most complex and challenging cases, particularly matters of real financial complexity often in the margins where the criminal and civil law meet. He has a multi-jurisdictional practise, regularly appearing in both the Criminal and Civil Divisions of the Court of Appeal, the Crown Court, the High Court and a range of Tribunal jurisdictions, in particular in respect of tax matters.

He has been instructed in a number of the most serious and complex fraud cases over the last 20 years and is regularly instructed to provide strategic advice in advance of charge or prosecution. In addition he has significant expertise in the area of proceeds of crime, including confiscation, restraint and Account Freezing Orders.

He is a leading practitioner in the field of malicious prosecution, dealing with the most serious and high value cases.

He is regularly instructed in large-scale review and investigation work, leading large teams of investigators, solicitors and counsel.

Jonathan is an accomplished public speaker and is often engaged to deliver keynote addresses at corporate and quasi-governmental conferences both in the United Kingdom and abroad.

He also acts as a special advocate dealing with cases relating to national security and has particular expertise in relation to disclosure issues.

He was shortlisted as Corporate Crime Silk of the Year in the Legal 500 UK Bar Awards.

Jonathan accepts [Direct Access](#) instructions.

Current and Recent instructions include:

- Leading the national strategy in Operation Venetic, the largest law enforcement operation in UK history, relating to the use of data from the EncroChat secure communications system, involving the prosecution of

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over 3000 individuals.

- Representing and advising former partners of a ‘big four’ accounting firm in an HMRC criminal investigation and linked judicial review proceedings.
- Advising the Secretary of State for Transport in respect of the removal of Southeastern Trains rail franchise and the imposition of a £23.5 million penalty on The Go-Ahead Group.
- Advising Post Office in respect of the malicious prosecution claims brought following the overturning of convictions following the Horizon scandal.
- Advising a major corporate client in respect of due diligence, contract structure and formation of new business, with particular regard to it’s VAT obligations and contact with HMRC.
- Advising a Lloyds of London insurance broker in a bribery and corruption investigation by the SFO.
- Advising a multi-national oil and gas distribution company in respect of an investigation by HMRC.
- Representing the SFO in the multi-jurisdiction investigation and prosecution of Petrofac Limited, which led to financial penalties totaling £77 million.
- Representing the CPS in the civil claims brought following the Rochdale child sex abuse scandal.
- Advising the Northern Ireland DPP in respect of alleged fraud relating to the National Asset Management Agency sale of £1.3 billion of property in Northern Ireland.
- Representing the CPS in the multi-million pound malicious prosecution claims brought following the failed prosecution of a number of HNWI for Cheating the Revenue in a £100 million pound film and games tax avoidance scheme.
- Overseeing a LPP review in respect of the freezing of the assets of a Russian billionaire oligarch.
- Representing numerous corporate clients in high value tax investigations by HMRC and the subsequent Tribunal and Judicial Review proceedings – includes contested hearings and reaching settlements in numerous difficult and high value cases.
- Representing a Hong Kong based HNWI in a dispute with World Sailing.
- Representing the SFO in the confiscation proceedings in respect of Glencore Limited.
- Leading the review in respect of the safety of the conviction of James Ibori, formerly Governor of the Delta State, Nigeria and the subsequent multi-jurisdictional, £100 million plus confiscation proceedings.
- Providing the FCA with high level and detailed legal and policy advice in respect of several of its statutory evidential gathering powers.
- Representing HMRC in the litigation with Citibank.
- Advising an Isle of Man based HNWI in respect of various regulatory investigations and the drafting of due diligence protocols.
- Advising a NYSE listed international heating solutions firm in respect of a large scale HMRC investigation.
- Advising the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland in respect of the historic legacy cases, as part of an advisory panel.
- Representing the CPS and settling high value malicious prosecution claims following the quashing of several murder convictions.
- Advising a partner at a “big four” accountancy firm in respect of the SFO investigation in respect of G4S.

What others say:

He is cited in both Directories the Legal 500 and Chambers UK Bar which have described him as:

“Jonathan is a brilliant and extremely bright barrister.” “He has bags of energy and lots of attention to detail.” and “Jonathan is a delight to work with. He is hard-working but also very personable.” – Chambers UK 2024

“Jonathan is approachable and responsive. He manages to cut through the evidence to the key issues and gives clear and practical advice in complex cases.” and “Jonathan is brilliant and

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authoritative. He is a great strategist.”- Chambers UK 2023

“Extremely bright and conscientious; off-the-chart client-care skills exuding the right mix of confidence, reassurance and top-rate advice.” – Legal 500 UK 2022

“Very impressive, knowledgeable and quick to master his brief. He’s always willing to help and works in a collaborative way.” and “He is extremely knowledgeable and his manner provides a lot of reassurance for clients. He is hard-working and makes himself available at short notice.” – Chambers UK 2022

“Hard as nails yet fair-minded. Extremely knowledgeable and responsive to the nuances in a case.” – Legal 500 UK 2021

“He can cut through complex cases with ease.” – Chambers UK 2021

“Highly experience in handling large-scale bribery and corruption cases.” – Legal 500 2020

“Firm in his approach but fair.” and “He is excellent and has proper expertise in VAT fraud and confiscation matters.” Chambers UK 2020

Business Crime & Financial Services

Jonathan’s criminal practice focuses on the prosecution and defence of serious fraud, the related money laundering and subsequent confiscation proceedings. In recent years he has appeared in many of the most serious and complex cases both at first instance and in the Court of Appeal.

He has particular expertise in the area of international bribery and corruption, defending and prosecuting Government Ministers, high-ranking officials and multi-national companies. He is currently instructed in a number of cases prosecuted by the SFO (acting both for the SFO and corporate clients) relating to international corruption.

Jonathan has a proven track record of taking the most complex of cases, uncovering the true issues and presenting them in a way in which a jury or other tribunal can easily understand.

For many years he has been a leading practitioner in MTIC carousel VAT fraud having been instructed in some of the largest and most serious cases brought by the RCPO and latterly the CPS.

Jonathan has extensive expertise in dealing with cases relating to direct taxation, including income tax, capital gains tax, NIC and PAYE, in particular, in relation to accountants, labour providers and “gangmasters”. He has an in-depth knowledge of accountancy procedure and the use of forensic accountants.

Jonathan has also been widely instructed to defend in SFO prosecutions involving the defrauding and theft of pension funds and Customs prosecutions relating to VAT offences, diversion fraud and the evasion of duty.

Asset Recovery, Restraint and Confiscation

Jonathan also has extensive experience in the restraint and recovery of the proceeds of crime under both the CJA 1988 and POCA 2002 regimes. He appeared in the leading case in relation to the determination of realisable and hidden assets and in several leading cases in relation to the calculation of benefit.

He is currently instructed in several confiscation cases which involve benefit figures and realisable assets running

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into tens of millions of pounds and in matters relating to restraint and enforcement in the High Court and Court of Appeal.

He is often instructed to advise high net worth individuals in respect of restraint and enforcement issues.

Notable Cases:

Petrofac Limited

Jonathan was instructed by the SFO to lead the counsel team in the in the multi-jurisdiction investigation and prosecution of Petrofac Limited, which led to financial penalties totaling £77 million. The case involved corruption in Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Iraq in respect of the award of contracts valued at over \$5 billion.

The NAMA Northern Loan Book

Advising the Northern Ireland DPP in respect of alleged fraud in respect of the National Asset Management Agency sale of £1.3 billion of property in Northern Ireland.

Glencore Limited

Representing the SFO in the confiscation proceedings in respect of Glencore Limited.

Advice and investigation work

Advising a partner of a big four accountancy firm in respect of a criminal investigation by the SFO.

Advising a Lloyds of London insurance broker in a bribery and corruption investigation by the SFO.

Advising a partner at a big four accountancy firm in respect of the SFO investigation in respect of G4S.

X and others v HMRC

Representing and advising former partners of a 'big four' accounting firm in an HMRC criminal investigation and linked judicial review proceedings.

Advising Secretary of State for Transport

Advising the Secretary of State for Transport in respect of the removal of Southeastern Trains rail franchise and the imposition of a £23.5 million penalty on The Go-Ahead Group. Over the course of 6 months Jonathan provided the strategic advice in respect of the investigation into financial misreporting within Southeastern Trains and on the resulting consideration as to whether to remove the franchise and the subsequent imposition of a financial penalty.

LPP Review

Overseeing a LPP in respect of the freezing of the assets of a Russian billionaire oligarch.

R v James Ibori

[2018] 1 W.L.R. 3697

[2018] 10 WLUK 742

Acted for the Crown in a series of appeals by James Ibori, the former Governor of the Delta State, Nigeria, his

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former solicitor Bhadrash Gohil following allegations of corruption against the MPS and allegations of misconduct against the original prosecuting team. I was responsible for leading a team which conducted a complete review of the safety of the convictions, which had been obtained over the course of 6 years and then defending those convictions in protracted proceedings in the Court of Appeal. All the convictions were upheld.

R v Bertling & Others

Acted for the SFO in the successful prosecution of Bertling and 6 Directors and employees in respect bribes paid to a high ranking official of Sonangol, the Angolan national oil company, in order to secure lucrative freight forwarding contracts.

SFO v Z [2016] Lloyd's Rep. F.C. 157

Acted for the SFO in the investigation and restraint proceedings against the former Ukrainian Minister for natural Resources.

Operation Fastback – R v C & Others

Widely reported as the largest VAT fraud ever prosecuted, with an estimated loss to the Revenue of £365 million. Jonathan led two juniors on behalf of the Crown. An enormous case with 50,000 pages of statements and exhibits and millions of pages of unused material. The defendants eventually pleaded guilty 2 weeks into the listed trial.

The case received substantial publicity in the national TV and print news.

R v Marsden and McIntosh – [2011] EWCA Crim 1501; [2011] 4 All E.R. 917; [2011] S.T.C. 2349; [2012] 1 Cr. App. R. (S.) 60; [2011] Lloyd's Rep. F.C. 577; [2011] Crim. L.R. 814; [2011] S.T.I. 1940;

The leading case in relation to the calculation of realisable and hidden assets. Jonathan was leading counsel for the Crown in an appeal to the Court of Appeal in relation to 2 confiscation orders of £3.6 million each. The case involved a reconsideration of a number of the leading authorities in respect of realisable and hidden assets, in particular RCPO v Telli. The court clarified the test in relation to the calculation of hidden assets and the case is now the leading case on the topic. The orders were upheld.

R v Sander – [2009] EWCA Crim 2377; [2010] 1 Cr. App. R. 20 (p.285), [2011] 1 Cr. App. R. 6.

Jonathan led for the Crown in the prosecution of Mr Sander in relation to the laundering of £7 million that was the proceeds of MTIC fraud. At the initial trial the jury were tampered with and the Judge ruled that he would complete the trial without a jury. This was the first time that such an order had been made under the new law.

There followed 2 interlocutory appeals, both heard by the Lord Chief Justice. The case was eventually heard by the Recorder of Birmingham with a protected jury. The defendant was convicted on all counts.

R v Ahmed and Ahmad – [2012] EWCA Crim 391; [2012] S.T.I. 546.

A confiscation case that resulted in orders of £184 million being made, the largest ever in the UK and which eventually made it to the Supreme Court. In proceedings that have lasted over 10 years Jonathan acted for the Crown and in 2017 obtained enforcement orders in the High Court in respect of millions of pounds worth of property.

Operation Decade, R v Warman and others

Jonathan led two juniors in the successful prosecution of an accountant and two property developers charged with evading over £1 million in income tax, through the double manipulation of their accounts and tax returns. The

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case involved the management of over one million pages of unused material and extensive evidence from forensic accountants. Jonathan conducted the confiscation proceedings at first instance and in the Court of Appeal, leading to an order of over £1 million.

Operation Inertia – R v Ravjani

This was a very substantial MTIC fraud prosecution. The loss to the Revenue was in excess of £175 million. There have been 4 trials, leading to the conviction of 15 defendants. Jonathan acted as the lead disclosure counsel, in a team of 5 counsel, and was responsible for all disclosure policy and issues at substantive hearings. The first defendant received a sentence of 17 years, believed to be the longest sentence ever imposed for fraud. Jonathan conducted the very substantial confiscation proceedings, which led to substantial orders and default sentences.

Criminal Defence

Jonathan has a very significant indirect tax practice, specialising in VAT, excise and other customs duties and has appeared in many of the most complex cases across the full range of jurisdictions, the Tax Tribunals, the Administrative Court and the Civil Division of the Court of Appeal. In 2016 and 2017 he appeared in the two leading Court of Appeal decisions in respect of the application of the *Kittel* principle and the jurisdiction of the UT on appeal.

Notable Cases:

Advising a partner of a big four accountancy firm in respect of a criminal investigation by the SFO.

Advising a Lloyds of London insurance broker in a bribery and corruption investigation by the SFO.

Advising a partner at a big four accountancy firm in respect of the SFO investigation in respect of G4S.

SFO v P

Acting for a company director in a prosecution brought by the SFO in respect of the theft of a pension fund.

R v M

Represented a company director charged with supplying large quantities of cocaine and using his business to assist in the laundering of the proceeds.

R v B

Acting for a company director in respect of charges relating to the indecent images of children.

R v X

Represented a 16 year old charged with murdering another young girl with a comb.

Criminal Defence

Jonathan has acted for the Financial Reporting Council (FRC) in respect of a number of its most serious cases in respect of accountancy regulation.

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Notable Cases:

- Acted for the FRC in the investigation and proceedings under its Scheme for the accountancy profession into the conduct of a Member of the ICAEW and of HWCA Limited, the former auditors of Worthington Nicholls Group Plc until 4 December 2007.
- Acted for FRC in proceedings against EY in respect of their audit of the accounts of Farepak the failed Christmas savings club. EY were fined £750,000 and ordered to pay costs of £425,000. The former audit partner AF was reprimanded and fined £50,000.
- Acting for the FRC into the investigation into the conduct of KPMG Audit plc as auditors to BAE Systems plc.
- Advising a partner of a big four accountancy firm in respect of investigations by the SFO and the FRC.

Public Prosecution

Jonathan is a leading prosecutor in the area of fraud and financial crime and is instructed in the largest cases brought by the SFO and the specialist groups of the CPS.

Notable Cases:

Operation Venetic

In July 2020 Jonathan was instructed to by the CPS to lead the national strategy in respect of Operation Venetic, the largest law enforcement operation in UK history. The provision of data to the NCA by the French authorities led to the arrest and prosecution of over 1200 individuals for the most serious criminal offences. For over two years Jonathan has set the strategy and overall approach to the prosecutions, has dealt with the preparatory hearings in respect of the admissibility of the evidence and has represented the Crown in all the hearings in the Court of Appeal, Divisional Court and the Investigatory Powers Tribunal. In addition he has coordinated and provided advice to counsel in the hundreds of prosecutions in the Crown Court.

Advice work

Instructed by the DPP's Strategic Policy Advisor to provide advice on the prosecution of individuals using video conferencing facilities to view and distribute indecent images of children.

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Operation Decade, R v Warman & Others

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R v B [2017] EWCA Crim 534; [2017] 1 W.L.R. 4071; [2017] 2 Cr. App. R. 25; [2017] Lloyd's Rep. F.C. 297; [2017] L.L.R. 607;

Instructed by the DPP to intervene in proceedings in the Court of Appeal in respect of a private prosecution brought by a local authority.

Malicious Prosecution

Over the last eight years Jonathan has represented the Crown Prosecution Service, instructed by the Government Legal Department, in all its high-profile malicious prosecution cases, This includes cases that have gone to trial, those that have settled and others in which, although the CPS were not parties, they were third parties and were

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heavily involved in the litigation either because employees or former employees were witnesses and/or there were significant disclosure issues. Many of the cases have also involved claims for misfeasance in a public office, conspiracy to injure by unlawful means and breaches of Article 6.

Over the course of three years Jonathan has advised Post Office in respect of the malicious prosecution claims brought following the quashing of convictions following the Horizon scandal and the half a billion that has been provisioned to settle the claims. As well as completing a significant review and providing detailed advice on both the facts and quantum, Jonathan acted in the complex Early Neutral Evaluation proceedings in front of Lord Dyson.

Notable Cases:

Rudall v CPS [2018] 11 WLUK 553

Acted for the CPS in a multi-million pound claim brought by a former solicitor who had been unsuccessfully prosecuted twice by the CPS for serious fraud offences over a period of over 10 years. The claims were dismissed following a 2-week trial in front of Lambert J. This is the leading case in respect of malicious prosecution claims brought against prosecuting authorities. Dealt with significant strike-out and summary judgment applications and a huge disclosure exercise.

Dunn and Higgins v CPS

Conrad Jones v CPS

Acted for the CPS in claims brought by two individuals whose convictions for murder were quashed on appeal, having served 11 years in custody. Settled the case on a confidential basis following protracted negotiations with the Claimants counsel.

In a satellite case Mr Jones had been convicted of perverting the course of justice and had served several years in prison, prior to his conviction being quashed. Negotiated a settlement.

Coghlan v CPS – [2018] EWHC 1784 (QB)

Acted for the CPS in high value claims brought by Claimant following his acquittal for murder. Claims were struck out by Yip J.

Mouncher and others v South Wales Police – The Lynette White Case

Although the CPS were not a party to the proceedings they were heavily involved as a third party. Jonathan was responsible for drafting witness statements, advising witnesses, devising strategies and completing a disclosure exercise for the civil trial. Thereafter he was also responsible for advising on the CPS approach and response to the independent review conducted by Richard Horwell KC.

Khan, Khan and Khan v CPS

Acted for the CPS in claims brought by three defendants who had been acquitted of conspiracy to murder. The case was prepared over the course of three years, including numerous interim applications and a vast disclosure exercise. Having pushed the strength of the CPS position the Claimants dropped their claims shortly before trial.

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Tax

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Jonathan is Head of the 2 Hare Court tax team.

Having originally gained years of experience in the criminal prosecution of the most serious and complex tax cases he has brought and applied his advocacy, trial acumen and incisive cross-examination to the Tax Tribunals and civil courts.

He has conducted scores of cases in the FTT and UT over the last 10 years with a total value of several hundred million.

Notable Cases:

Recent taxpayer work

Advising a multi-national oil and gas distribution company in respect of an investigation by HMRC.

Advising a NYSE listed international heating solutions firm in respect of a large scale HMRC investigation.

Advising an Isle of Man based HNWI in respect of various regulatory investigations and the drafting of due diligence protocols.

Representing numerous corporate clients in high value investigations by HMRC and the subsequent Tribunal and Judicial Review proceedings.

R. (S&S Consulting Services (UK) Ltd) v Revenue and Customs Commissioners [2021] EWHC 3174 (Admin)

Successfully acted for HMRC in Judicial Review proceedings relating to a decision to deregister a trader for VAT on the *Ablessio Principle*.

HMRC v Citibank & Ebuyer – [2017] EWCA Civ 1416; [2017] B.V.C. 47

Successfully acted for HMRC in the Court of Appeal Civil Division, which overturned the decision of the UT, concluding that HMRC did not have to plead dishonesty on the taxpayer's part in missing-trader fraud cases, because dishonesty was not part of the knowledge element of the *Kittel* test.

HMRC v Davis & Dann – [2016] EWCA Civ 142; [2016] S.T.C. 1236; [2016] B.V.C. 11; [2016] S.T.I. 1157;

Successfully acted for HMRC in the Court of Appeal Civil Division – The Upper Tribunal had erred in overturning a determination by the First-tier Tribunal that a trader seeking a VAT repayment of over £8 million in connection with its large-scale purchase of razor blades ought to have known that the only reasonable explanation for its transactions was that they were connected with VAT fraud. The Upper Tribunal had not looked at the totality of the evidence, and its conclusion that the transactions could be seen as ordinary market transactions was not supported by the evidence.

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HMRC v Safe Cellars [2017] EWHC 1957 (QB);

In 2016 and 2017 Jonathan acted for HMRC in all of the multi-jurisdictional cases in respect of Safe Cellars, which involved the revocation of its WOWGR and other authorisations. This included substantive appeal proceedings in the FTT, injunctive actions in the Admin Court and claims for damages in the High Court.

HMRC v Carbodesk

Successfully acted for HMRC in respect of a £98 million carbon credits fraud. This was the first case of its type to come before the FTT. Carbodesk dropped its appeal after it was unsuccessful in efforts to argue that the time limits for the issuing of the assessments had expired.

HMRC v Megantic Services Limited

Longest ever First-tier Tribunal case lasting for 61 days relating to the denial of over £28 million of input tax. The case involved over 2000 deal chains involving complex contra-trading transactions. The papers ran to in excess of 200,000 pages.

Accreditations



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Appointments & Memberships

- Recorder of the Crown Court (authorised to try serious sex cases) 2009
- QC List for SFO Prosecution Panel & Proceeds of Crime Panel (2013 – present)
- Special Advocate appointed by the Attorney General to deal with terrorism (Special Immigration Appeals Commission) cases and complex public interest immunity (PII) issues – 2007
- Criminal Bar Association
- Revenue Bar Association

Education & Qualifications

- Methodist College, Belfast
- Newcastle University LLB (Hons)
- Inns of Court School of Law

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