

Christopher Coltart KC

“Christopher is able to digest the most complex of cases and present them with effortless grace.”

Chambers UK 2024 (Band 1, Financial Crime)



Year of Call: 1998 KC: 2014

020 7353 5324

Christopher's background was originally in commercial property litigation. During that time, he had an extensive portfolio of cases, representing banks, pension funds and other financial institutions in a variety of high value claims. For the last 25 years, he has specialised in business crime, professional disciplinary cases and sports law. He is recommended by the legal directories in relation to all of these practice areas. He is also Head of 2 Hare Court's Business Crime & Financial Services Group and is a Sports Arbitrator with Sport Resolutions Limited.

Recent cases include representing:

- The UK subsidiary of an overseas listed company in relation to potential breaches of its Anti Money Laundering obligations
- The owner and FD of a high profile UK business in relation to allegations of fraud, tax evasion and money laundering
- An interested party in relation to the Axiom Ince scandal currently under investigation by the SRA
- The former FD of Redcentric plc in relation to charges of false accounting, misleading the company's auditors and making misleading statements to the market
- Clients before the Financial Reporting Council in cases involving Tesco, Sports Direct, Serco and Carillion
- The former Chief Executive of Sports Direct in relation to criminal charges arising under s.194 of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992
- A UK company in the on-going worldwide investigation into Cum Ex trading
- Cambridge Analytica, the firm at the centre of the Facebook data sharing row
- Individuals in the SFO investigations into Barclays Bank and Rolls Royce
- A major airline in relation to compliance with Covid travel regulations
- A high net worth individual in relation to an FCA insider dealing investigation
- The Football Association in proceedings brought against Joey Barton and Daniel Sturridge
- The MCC in relation to events at Lords during the Ashes Test Match in 2023
- The directors of various high profile companies for failing to file accounts on time, contrary to ss.441 and 451 of the Companies Act 2006

As a junior, Christopher also had a significant prosecution practice and was on the 'A' Panel of selected

Location

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advocates for the Serious Fraud Office. He now undertakes private prosecution work and is a member of the 2 Hare Court dedicated private prosecution team. Recently, he has prosecuted a significant fraud on behalf of a UK based hedge fund, and separately advised a major airline in relation to a possible private prosecution. He is presently defending in a private prosecution arising out of a contested will. He is one of only a handful of silks recommended for this area of work in Chambers UK.

In addition, Christopher has significant experience of major inquest work. His instructions in this regard include representing clients in the 7/7 London bombing inquest, and also the inquest into the Hillsborough tragedy.

Christopher accepts **Direct Access** instructions.

Other recent instructions – Business and White Collar Crime

- Advising a law firm in the Turks & Caicos Islands in relation to its AML obligations
- Representing a company director accused of fraudulently evading VAT
- Advising a set of tax chambers in relation to their anti-money laundering policies and procedures.
- Representing a company director in an SFO investigation into allegations of bribery, corruption and money laundering in overseas mining contracts.
- Advising a claimant in defamation proceedings about the money laundering aspects of his case.
- Advising a UK bank on the conduct of an internal investigation into possible criminal offending.
- Advising an AIM listed company on the settlement of a dispute concerning the misappropriation of £4m from the company.
- Advising a partner from one of the 'Big 4' accountancy firms on allegations of corruption and bribery.
- Advising a firm of solicitors in relation to a possible money laundering investigation.
- Advising a firm of US lawyers on an application for Mutual Legal Assistance arising out of the LIBOR litigation.
- Advising a firm of forensic accountants in relation to an order compelling them to produce client documentation.
- Representing a Police & Crime Commissioner in relation to an allegation of electoral fraud.
- Representing a firm of loss adjusters on charges brought under s.55 Data Protection Act – 1998.
- Advising on the legality of search warrants in a major criminal investigation.
- Acting for a company director accused of failing to file accounts, contrary to ss.441 and 451 of the Companies Act 2006.
- A company director in contempt of court proceedings in the High Court.
- D&O insurers in relation to claims triggered by SFO investigations.
- The directors of an international business, accused of failing to file its UK accounts on time.

Other recent instructions – Regulatory cases

- Advising a major UK plc on a current investigation by the FRC
- Representing the former Financial Director of a listed company in proceedings brought against him by the FRC
- Representing the FRC in proceedings brought against the former CEO and FD of a listed company
- Representing a company director in disciplinary proceedings before the Takeover Panel
- Advising the FA on an investigation into issues at a Premier League club
- Representing a solicitor in proceedings brought against him at the Solicitors Disciplinary Tribunal
- Representing the FA in proceedings against Leeds United Football Club and its chairman, Massimo Cellino

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Recent instructions – Inquests and Health & Safety

- Advising one of the witnesses in the inquest into the Hillsborough tragedy
- Representing the same individual in the subsequent criminal investigation
- Representing a construction company in an inquest into a fatal accident at work
- Representing one of the interested parties in the inquest into the death of Zane Gbangbola

What others say:

“He knows everything about everything and is a brilliant prosecutor.” and “He is fabulously persuasive: he has a calmness and reasonableness that gives his advocacy persuasive force.”
Chambers UK 2024 (Financial Crime)

“A very persuasive advocate who has the measure of the courtroom. He is incredibly thorough in terms of his preparation and detailed in his written submissions, which have been material in changing the course of the case.” and “Extremely knowledgeable, approachable, and incredibly down to earth. He runs a case effectively and ensures everyone on the case really grasps it, and he gets into the nitty-gritty. He gets to the heart of the issues and his manner with the client is second to none. Robust and extremely humane.” and “Single-handedly wins my cases. Thorough and always available, Christopher is a real go-to.” – Chambers UK 2024 (Professional Discipline)

“A silk with great tactical acumen.” – Legal 500 UK 2024 (Professional Discipline)

“Christopher is a go-to barrister for complex factual cases or anything with a technological dimension. He is extremely quick to master matters of the utmost complexity.” – Chambers UK 2023

“Chris is one of the few lawyers at the Bar able to straddle the corporate, regulatory, civil and criminal aspects of a case. He is extremely bright, pragmatic, commercial, technical and thorough. He is a delight to work with.” – Legal 500 UK 2024 (Financial Crime)

“He is technically brilliant, works extremely well in a team, has a great manner with clients and is excellent on his feet.” and “He is unbelievably good.” – Chambers UK 2022

“Chris is extremely easy to work with. He works hand in glove with his solicitors, is very approachable and a joy to work with. His attention to detail is unrivalled and his preparation for trial is exemplary. He cuts through the complexity of cases and can identify potentially winning points in even the most difficult cases.” – Legal 500 UK 2022

“Dogged, determined, on top of detail, committed and hard working.” – Legal 500 UK 2022

“An exceptional regulatory defence lawyer who is commercial and proactive; outstanding case preparation.” – Legal 500 UK 2022

“A phenomenal advocate who can get to grips with the technical facts quickly and with great ease.” – Chambers UK 2021

“He is really good – methodical, calm and fantastic in court.” – Chambers UK 2021

“An engaging advocate with a devastating eye for detail. His approach to cases is to leave no stone unturned and he carries the confidence of clients from the very first meeting. A man you would

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definitely want in your corner.” – Legal 500 UK 2021

“A formidable barrister at ease in the commercial world and great with clients.” and “Strong in disciplinary matters.” – Legal 500 UK 2021

“A superb intellect who gets results.” – Chambers UK 2019

“A high-quality silk who has great client handling skills.” – Legal 500 2020

“A very good lawyer and highly regarded. He is very popular among City executive clients.” – Chambers UK 2020

“A criminal silk of the highest order who is meticulous in preparation.” – Chambers UK 2019

“Fiendishly bright with a calm and considered manner. He is able to absorb substantial information and give clear, concise advice.” – Chambers UK 2018

“One of the best silks out there for financial crime. He has a City background and is a very calm advocate. Judges think he is fantastic, and his written work is excellent” – Chambers UK 2018

“He is terrific, because he’s very calm and, having worked in the City, he has a good grasp of the system. He’s very responsive, extremely clever and easy to work with.” – Chambers UK 2017

“His forensic approach to defence preparation puts him ahead of his peers.” – Legal 500 2017

“A masterful drafter who is very approachable.” – Chambers UK 2016

“He is incredibly organised and accessible. He is very engaged throughout the process, good with clients and trusted by everyone.” – Chambers UK 2015

“A cerebral and talented advocate.” – Legal 500 2015

“His advocacy and drafting are fantastic and he instils complete confidence in any client.” – Chambers UK 2014

“He has an impressive track record of handling white-collar and fraud defence work. Solicitors admire his flawless preparation and ability to handle sensitive cases.” – Chambers UK 2014

“One of the ablest barristers in practice.” – Legal 500 2013

“Very thorough and approachable...excellent in terms of his ability.” – Chambers UK 2012

“Highly intelligent, clear, calm and able.” – Legal 500 2011

“One of the brightest barristers at the criminal Bar.” – Legal 500 2010

Business Crime & Financial Services

Christopher is considered to be one of the leaders at the Bar in this field and is routinely instructed by the premier firms of solicitors.

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The cases in which he is involved are invariably complex and cover a wide range of offences, including the following: bank fraud, financial instrument fraud, accountancy fraud, offences under the Companies Act, VAT fraud, mortgage fraud, corruption, bribery, money laundering, data protection, telecommunications fraud, intellectual property offences and advance fee frauds / Ponzi schemes. Many of these cases have an overseas element to them and he often advises on issues of jurisdiction and international co-operation.

Recent cases

FCA v Croft & Others

Representing the former FD of an AIM listed company, accused with others of orchestrating a major audit fraud. Listed for 3 month trial in October 2021.

Folgender SA v Letraz International Ltd

Representing a company director facing contempt of court proceedings in the High Court. The case related to a £10m investment by a Russian individual into a commercial property dispute in London. The allegation was that the director had failed to account properly for the £10m and breached previous court orders requiring him to do so.

X v Y

X was the claimant in defamation proceedings brought against Y. Advising X on the money laundering aspects of his claim.

ICO v Cambridge Analytica

Representing Cambridge Analytica, the firm at the centre of the data harvesting row.

SFO v X

Advising (X), a former employee of Rolls Royce, in relation to allegations of bribery and corruption brought by the SFO.

SFO v Y

Advising (Y), a director of a UK company, alleged by the SFO to have been involved in bribery and corruption in relation to overseas mining contracts.

Re Z

Advising a US law firm in relation to requests for Mutual Legal Assistance re the trial of Z in New York on Libor rate rigging charges.

Re X

Advising a partner from one of the 'Big 4' accountancy firms on allegations of corruption and bribery

Takeover Panel v [X]

Representing company director in relation to allegations that he misled the Takeover Panel re his share dealings in a listed company.

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Information Commissioner's Office v [Y] Ltd

Defending allegations brought by the ICO that this well known firm of loss adjusters was involved in breaches of the Data Protection Act 1998.

Re [X] Bank Plc

Advising a UK Bank on the conduct of an internal investigation into potential criminal wrongdoing.

SFO v Barclays Bank

Advising the former General Counsel of Barclays Capital in relation to the SFO investigation into the Qatari rights issue during the banking crisis.

R v David Forsey

Representing the former CEO of Sports Direct in relation to an alleged offence under s.194 of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.

Re Berkeley Mineral Resources Ltd

Advising on the settlement of a dispute concerning the alleged misappropriation of £4 million from the company.

R v Jumani & Others

Representing one of several defendants at Southwark Crown Court charged with a massive counterfeit DVD operation, in which registered trademarks were also infringed. The prosecution case at trial lasted for 2 months. Christopher's client was acquitted at that juncture following a submission of no case to answer.

R v Ahmad & Others

Prosecuted this case on behalf of the Medicines & Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency. The defendants were accused of the large scale importation of unlicensed and counterfeit medicinal products. This gave rise to charges under both the Medicines Act 1968 and the Trademarks Act 1994. The defendants pleaded guilty in the Crown Court.

R v Guestyn

Prosecuted this case. The defendant was accused of seeking to defraud several banks through the use of counterfeit currency. The total value of the attempted fraud was in excess of \$70 million. The counterfeit nature of the currency was established and the defendant pleaded guilty in the Crown Court.

Inquests & Public Inquiries

Christopher has significant inquest experience, notably representing a number of the bereaved families in the Coroner's Inquest into 7/7 and also the interests of a witness in the Hillsborough Inquest.

Recent cases

Re Paul Tilcock (2017)

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Inquest concerning the death of Mr Tilcock, who was overcome with adhesive fumes whilst fitting a bathroom. Representing the company which employed him, which also engaged in civil proceedings and a possible prosecution by the HSE.

Re Zane Gbangbola (2015)

Inquest concerning death of a young boy from alleged carbon monoxide poisoning. Representing the company which supplied the pump in question. Case heard over 6 weeks in June and July 2016. Verdict of accidental death returned by the Coroner. Case received extensive coverage in the national press.

Hillsborough Inquest (2014)

Advising a significant witness in relation to his proposed appearance at the inquest.

7/7 Inquest (2011)

Represented a number of the bereaved families in this 6 month long inquest. Case involved making submissions about the performance of MI5, and undertaking extensive cross examination of the emergency services re the adequacy of their response to the bombings.

Private Prosecution

Christopher has a wealth of prosecution experience. Prior to taking silk in 2014, he frequently undertook prosecution work on behalf of the Crown Prosecution Service, appearing in a wide range of cases from murders to drugs importations to high value, complex frauds. He was a Grade 4 prosecutor for the CPS (i.e. the top level) and also on the SFO's 'A' Panel for Fraud and Confiscation. He is therefore extremely well placed to undertake private prosecutions and is at the forefront of this growth area. He is a member of the Private Prosecutors' Association.

Recent notable cases:

Re X plc

Advising a major international airline (X plc) on the merits of a possible private prosecution. Due to client confidentiality it is not possible to give further details of the issues under consideration, save to say that they were technical and legally complex.

[Y] Ltd v SA

Acting for the private prosecutor in this case, which was a UK based hedge fund (Y Ltd).. SA had been the Office Manager at Y Ltd for some 30 years. Over the course of a nine year period, she had stolen nearly £3m from the business, primarily by ordering foreign currency and then manipulating electronic records of in order to cover it up. Y Ltd brought a private prosecution. Christopher advised on that prosecution from its inception and represented the company through both the Magistrates' Court and the Crown Court proceedings. Mrs Anderson pleaded guilty and was sentenced to 4.5 years' imprisonment.

Wollenberg v Global Gaming Ventures plc & Others

Anthony Wollenberg was the owner of a casino in Leeds which had failed to keep up with repayments on a loan from a US based hedge fund. The fund had therefore appointed receivers and eventually the casino was sold by

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the receivers back to the fund for £1. Mr Wollenberg began a private prosecution of both the fund and the receivers, claiming that they had engaged in a conspiracy to steal the casino from him. Christopher acted for the company which employed the receivers (Z Ltd), which was served with a witness summons by Mr Wollenberg for the disclosure of significant volumes of confidential documentation. The full extent of that summons was contested and the case gave rise also to complex issues of legal professional privilege.

X v Y

Advising X (a Russian oligarch) who is engaged in civil litigation in this country with Y (another Russian oligarch) over a commercial dispute. X wanted advice on the merits of a private prosecution arising out of an aspect of the civil proceedings.

Philcox v A & B

Acting for the respondents, who were directors of a company providing bailiff services to the court system. The claimant was pursuing a vendetta against them after his daughter had been dismissed from the company for gross misconduct. The claimant had started two private prosecutions against A & B already (one for misconduct in public office and the other for offences under s.167 Companies Act 2006) and was threatening further criminal proceedings. The respondents wanted to prevent him from going ahead with these further cases, and also to halt civil proceedings which he had brought against them. In the end, an Extended Civil Restraint Order was obtained against the claimant in the High Court. The private prosecutions were discontinued.

Professional Discipline

Christopher undertakes professional disciplinary work, and as a junior frequently appeared before the tribunals of the General Medical Council. He has also been involved in significant cases brought by the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency, the Solicitors Regulation Authority, the Security Industry Authority, the Takeover Panel and the Financial Reporting Council.

Recent cases

FRC v X

Representing X, a former employee of Tesco, in relation to the FRC investigation into the accounting scandal at the company.

FRC v Y

Representing Y, a former in house accountant at Sports Direct, who is under investigation in relation to the compilation of the company's annual accounts.

The Takeover Panel v [Z]

Representing a company director in relation to allegations that he misled the Takeover Panel re his share dealings in a listed company.

FRC v Hill

Representing the former CFO of this listed company, who is alleged to have manipulated the year end accounts in order to give a false impression of profitability.

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FRC v Whiston & Whelan

Representing the Financial Reporting Council in proceedings brought against the former CEO and CFO of iSoft plc, who are alleged to have engaged in premature revenue recognition re a contract worth £20 million.

SRA v Denis McKay

Representing this solicitor accused of having committed a multi-million pound fraud on the Legal Services Commission.

Sports Law

Christopher took silk in 2014 and is considered to be one of the leaders at the Bar in his areas of expertise. He is consistently recommended by the leading industry directories Chambers & Partners UK and The Legal 500 and is routinely first choice counsel for many major law firms.

In sports law, Christopher is instructed by The Football Association in some of its biggest cases, and is appointed to the Arbitrators' Panel of Sport Resolutions Limited.

Notable cases:

FA v Daniel Sturridge

Represented the FA in this case. Daniel Sturridge, formerly of Liverpool FC, was accused by the FA of passing on inside information to his family. The case was initially heard over a 5 day hearing in April 2019 before a Regulatory Commission, following which some of the allegations were proved. The FA appealed against the charges which had been dismissed and also against the leniency of the ban imposed by the Commission. That appeal was concluded in February 2020, following which a number of the other charges were upheld and the ban was increased from 2 weeks to 4 months.

FA v Joey Barton

Represented the FA in proceedings brought against Joey Barton, who was charged with illicit gambling offences over a 10 year period, which included betting against his own team. Mr Barton was banned from football for 18 months, reduced to 13 months on appeal.

FA v Leeds United FC and Massimo Cellino

Represented the FA in proceedings brought against Leeds United and its former Chairman, Massimo Cellino. The Club and Cellino were charged with creating sham paperwork to hide the involvement of an unauthorised agent in transfer dealings undertaken by the club. They were found guilty at first instance, on appeal and again in arbitration proceedings brought by Mr Cellino. He was eventually banned from football for a year and fined £100,000.

Re [X] F.C

Instructed to advise the FA in relation to historical allegations at a Premier League football club. The advice given dealt with a number of technical issues under the FA's regulations. For reasons of client confidentiality and legal professional privilege, it is not possible to give any more information about the case.

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Accreditations



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Appointments & Memberships

- Fraud Lawyers Association
- ARDL
- Criminal Bar Association
- Sport Resolutions' Panel of Arbitrators and Mediators

Education & Qualifications

- 1993: Law Society Finals
- 1992: Common Professional Examination
- 1990: MA, Philosophy, Politics & Economics (St Edmund Hall, Oxford)

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