

Martin Heslop KC

"An exceptional advocate, highly persuasive and brilliantly incisive."



Year of Call: 1972 KC: 1995

020 7353 5324

Martin is widely recognised as one of the Leading Silks at the Criminal Bar with extensive experience of criminal trials including corporate and financial crime. He also specialises in Gaming and Licensing, Health & Safety and associated areas of practice.

For 9 years as Treasury Counsel he prosecuted the most serious and complex cases. However, at the same time, unusually, he maintained a significant defence practice, being in demand to defend in major trials because of his advocacy and insight into the prosecution process.

On taking Silk, he has continued with a high profile criminal defence practice and is highly regarded for his excellent tactical skills and presentation in complex cases both in the UK and abroad.

He is generally regarded as one of the finest jury advocates today and his cross-examination skills are of the highest calibre.

In addition, he brings these skills to the fields of Gaming and Licensing, and Health & Safety representing leading operators throughout the world.

He is held in the highest regard by his peers and his successful cases are well known and documented.

Martin accepts [Direct Access](#) instructions.

What others say:

He is cited in the Legal 500, Chambers UK and the Legal Experts Guide which have described him as:

"A fine advocate with an enormous memory for the facts of any case."

"Has an amazing knowledge of case law and completely grasps all the relevant points."

Location

2 Hare Court
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“My go-to counsel of choice to defend in murder cases.”

“A highly rated advocate.”

“A truly brilliant advocate.”

“In the super league.”

“A colourful and likeable advocate who is terrier like in Court.”

“Dedicated, highly intelligent and quick witted with oodles of charm.”

“A fine silk, whose standing as an excellent criminal lawyer is seen further to compliment his gaming practice.”

Criminal Defence

Martin Heslop KC is probably one of the most experienced practitioners at the Bar in Crime. He has defended at the highest levels; including nine years as Treasury Counsel whilst, most unusually, he maintained a very substantial defence practice which has continued in Silk.

He enjoys a high profile and diverse practice both in the UK and abroad in the Crown and Superior Courts. He is rightly regarded as one of the top Queen’s Counsel for his advocacy skills.

The vast number of his successful cases as Leading Counsel is well known and well documented.

Cases

Preston Crown Court

Of the 13 defendants tried for the gangland murder of 18 year old rival Abdulwahab Hafidah in Moss Side Manchester, Martin secured the only acquittal after trial in the case. The remainder were convicted of murder or manslaughter in the two trials.

The Old Bailey

He successfully secured an acquittal for his 20 year old client in a murder allegation following a gang related South London stabbing. His submission of no case against his client in a six handed gangland stabbing case was accepted by the Judge and was based upon the effect of his cross examination of the prosecution witnesses which very substantially destroyed the prosecution case.

Bristol Crown Court

He successfully secured acquittals of all allegations of historic rape and sexual violence against his client. After a two and a half week trial the jury returned unanimous verdicts of not guilty in respect of multiple allegations of rape and sexual violent assaults against his ex- wife and two young step children dating back to 2000 to 2001.

Maidstone Crown Court

In a multi million pound drugs importation case involving a 2 year undercover police operation , he secured the

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acquittals of all defendants by his cross examination of the key prosecution witness raising major issues of disclosure, resulting in the prosecution abandoning their case.

Licensing

Martin Heslop KC enjoys a reputation as a leading Silk in the field of casino, gaming and other forms of licensing, bringing to this work his recognised advocacy skills from his substantial and extensive criminal trial practice, including his appointment as Treasury Counsel for nine years.

He advises on all major issues in this area of law, and represents the key principal companies and numerous independent operators. He is regularly asked to advise on the interpretation of new legislation, accompanying regulations and proposed gaming schemes.

In addition, he represents numerous major operators in the entertainment industry dealing with their general licensing matters and specifically appearing for them in licensing hearings.

Cases

Re Crockfords & London Clubs International

He was exclusively retained by Crockfords and thereafter LCI. As part of his work for these companies he was the lead objector in the Ritz Casino application and appeal, and has been involved in almost all contested casino cases heard in London and elsewhere in the UK over the last 10 years.

Paddington Hilton

He obtained, against objection, the first new casino licence granted in London in a five-year period, and the first in North Westminster since 1988.

Empire, Leicester Square

He successfully won the gaming licence for London Clubs International at the 47,000 sq ft Empire Building in Leicester Square – the 2nd largest casino in London, and a leading entertainment venue. This was a multi-million pound project objected to by all the existing casino and entertainment operators.

Aspinals, Stratford

He successfully obtained the Stage 1 Licence and in doing so made the very first application under the new gaming legislation for casinos, which has formed the template of all other applications.

Criminal Regulatory

Martin Heslop KC has, throughout his career, advised and represented national and global companies, both listed and private, in all aspects of Health & Safety generally, on procedures and enforcement, related inquests, and policy.

Solicitors regularly comment that they appreciate his approach which provides timely and effective advice, minimising any adverse impact on clients' commercial operations and reputation.

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He seeks to ensure the best result for his clients, accompanied by the least publicity. A key skill he offers is an ability to negotiate with the HSE to try and avoid the issue of proceedings or to reduce the basis of a case to an agreed acceptable level. His case history demonstrates this. However, where cases progress to trial, his extensive experience as an advocate in the criminal courts, including almost a decade as Treasury Counsel, means he is extremely well placed to advise and represent effectively his clients' interests in contested matters.

Cases

T & G – International Oil Companies

He successfully represented both oil companies following a major explosion, which occurred at their joint refinery, causing over £150m worth of damage. The prosecution asserted this was one of the UK's worst disasters and alleged that so called system failures were the direct result of the pursuit of profit. Most specifically, that in the pursuit of profit, the oil companies had allowed the refinery to operate in an upset condition without taking appropriate measures to shut it down.

This allegation was vehemently disputed and he successfully negotiated an appropriate basis of plea without conceding any of the original points sought to be made by the HSE and secured the imposition of a limited fine in a judgment, which painted the companies in a favourable light.

He managed all corporate communication issues resulting in favourable press coverage, which ensured no impact on global share price of either company.

Z – A Leading Bed Manufacturer

He advised and represented one of the best-known bed manufacturers in the UK, which offered as a sales promotion, free children's pyjamas and nighties with the sale of beds. The nightclothes were manufactured in China. They were declared to be fire retardant. This declaration proved to be wrong when a young girl was badly burned whilst wearing the nightclothes.

He was instructed almost immediately after the incident, advised a total product recall and drafted all appropriate notices and press releases. He led negotiations with HSE on the basis that the company was entitled to rely on the expertise and declarations of the Chinese manufacturer. No proceedings were issued, and the company suffered minimal publicity.

B – A National Supplier Of Industrial Gases

He represented the company at the coroner's inquest and at the Crown Court following the death of an employee in a serious explosion at one of its plants.

The prosecution alleged the company had failed properly to identify the inherent dangers in their processes and inadequately labelled the machines being used by the operative so that his safety was not properly protected.

He immediately advised on and redrafted the company's health and safety procedures and systems.

Thereafter he was able to negotiate a basis of plea agreeable to all parties, which avoided acceptance of the most serious allegations.

In the light of his reorganisation of the company's health and safety procedures and systems, the Court accepted the company had done everything possible to correct the initial position and imposed a significantly reduced financial penalty.

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Accreditations



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Appointments & Memberships

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- 1993-present: Recorder
- 1993-1995: Senior Treasury Counsel
- 1987-1993: Junior Treasury Counsel

- Criminal Bar Association
- South Eastern Circuit

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