

Martin Hicks KC

"A vastly experienced barrister." "He is a standout defence advocate."
and "Unbelievably shrewd and very hard-working."
Chambers UK 2022



Year of Call: 1977 KC: 2003

020 7353 5324

Martin Hicks KC is a leading silk who specialises in the defence of crime, fraud, both domestic and international, and business regulation.

He was involved in the 21/7 London bombing cases and represented the Jamaat al Muslimeen leader, Abu Bakr, accused of terrorism and sedition with Al Qaeda links to the JFK Pipeline Bomb Plot. Other high-profile cases include the Victoria Beckham Kidnap Plot, the trial of Hendy-Freegard (the "bogus MI5 agent kidnapper" and subject of a Channel 4 documentary), Byron Coles (the south London PCC gang as featured in the BBC series "Murder Blue") and Operation Elveden where he represented senior editorial journalists of the Sun and Daily Mirror acquitted of making payments to public officials for news stories.

Recent instructions include securing an acquittal in a well publicised "Exorcism" killing trial, a suspended sentence for a seafood trader who smuggled £53 million of endangered (CITES) eels to the far east, appearing in the privately prosecuted Allseas multi million investment fraud and acting for a former Quindell director during a 6 year investigation by the SFO and which concluded with no criminal charges.

Martin came to prominence as junior defence counsel in R v Pryce (a 17-year old musician accused of hacking into high security computer systems belonging to the Pentagon and NASA). Through his appearances in cases brought against a range of high-profile individuals, as well as cases arising from a series of "fake sheik" stings by the News of the World, and other matters such as the series of celebrity Rolex robberies and a major mobile phone heist at Heathrow airport, he gained experience of prosecuting as well as defending.

Martin is consistently recommended by the leading industry directories Chambers UK and The Legal 500, he is routinely first choice counsel for many of the major defence firms, and he appears in courts across the UK, as well as overseas. He advises and appears for individual defendants, corporate clients, their directors and officers and national governments and agencies. He also acts on behalf of professionals such as accountants, solicitors and others who face proceedings arising out of their work.

Location

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What others say:

While in silk, Martin has been described in the legal directories as:

“A really good, bright advocate who is experienced and likeable.” and “In court he’s a smiling assassin.” – Chambers UK 2023 (Crime)

“Martin is very experienced in financial crime, he is a bright practitioner.” – Chambers UK 2023 (Financial Crime)

“Martin is a class act. His attributes include excellent ability as an advocate, great tactical and strategic skill and a deep commitment to every case he appears in.” and “With a gentle touch, gains the confidence of the client and the court.” – Legal 500 UK 2023

“Martin is a great QC who does the work and is tenacious. He has a simple manner with clients who have his full confidence and he is never afraid to speak his mind.” – Legal 500 2022

“Keeps his eye on the ball at all times and makes fantastic legal submissions. He has a gentle but firm and persuasive approach.”...“A smiling assassin.”...“One of the best silks around, he can tell you what the jury are thinking.....” – Chambers UK 2021

“He is wonderful with clients, a great jury advocate and very hard-working; he’s fantastic.” “He is a great advocate.” – Chambers and Partners 2021

“...very impressive in his commitments skills...very quick to get to grips with the issues...” – Legal 500 2021

“An impressive cross-examiner” – Legal 500 2020

“He is very charming and reassuring and gets great results...and gives clients the Rolls-Royce treatment” – Chambers & Partners 2020

“One of the best cross-examiners of witnesses in the profession” – Chambers & Partners UK 2018

“He has a very silky touch and is disarmingly languid. He is just the classic hand of steel in a velvet glove.” – Chambers UK 2017

“A fantastic workmate, who oozes charm and commands respect – he is the complete package.” – Legal 500 2017

“A no-nonsense fearless performer.” – Legal 500 2017

“Juries really like him as he’s very down to earth and can explain complicated concepts quite simply.” Chambers UK 2017

“He is a fantastic advocate. In court he’s very funny and very persuasive in his arguments.” Chambers UK 2017

“A joy to watch. He gives a compelling performance and has a lightness of touch.” Chambers UK 2016

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“He gives very good speeches and he’s very clever. You can tell he’s thought about all the points he wants to make in depth.” Chambers UK 2016

“He is very robust in advocating his case, he never takes a bad point.” Chambers UK 2015

“A barrister of impeccable judgement.” Legal 500 2015

“A fantastic advocate, whom juries love, he fights relentlessly for his clients.” Chambers UK 2014

“An extremely able silk and a very accomplished advocate, who has a very pleasant manner with clients.” Chambers UK 2013

“...he has an impressive domestic and international fraud practice.” Chambers UK 2012

“Celebrated for being very hard working, calm and good with clients, highly praised for his ability to construct a watertight defence in seemingly unwinnable cases.” Chambers UK 2011

“A star.” Legal 500 2008

“A real fighter – he’ll leave no stone unturned and has great leadership qualities” with “a pleasing style of advocacy – he appears laid-back but can be lethal in cross-examination” and is “able to relate to clients from all spheres of society.” Chambers UK 2008

Business Crime & Financial Services

In the Chambers UK 2021, Martin is described in these terms

“Keeps his eye on the ball at all times and makes fantastic legal submissions. He has a gentle but firm and persuasive approach.”... “A smiling assassin.”... “One of the best silks around, he can tell you what the jury are thinking.....”

Throughout his career he has specialised in cases involving fraud and these have formed a substantial part of his practice. He has experience of VAT and MTIC fraud, residential and commercial mortgage fraud, banking and boiler room fraud, insurance fraud, advance fee and factoring fraud, Ponzi schemes, bribery and corruption, offshore tax evasion, money laundering, and others. He also has extensive experience of POCA and related proceedings including confiscation, restraint and asset forfeiture.

Recently he has mounted defence arguments involving Hawala banking transactions and various Islamic financial institutions. He secured acquittals for the deputy news editor of the Sun and a Daily Mirror news journalist in separate high profile trials prosecuted under Operation Elveden (misconduct in a public office) concerned with payments to public officials.

He is currently advising a national government on issues of mutual legal assistance and judicial review arising out of cross border corporate fraudulent activity.

Cases of note include:

- Dr Olivier Reymond – alleged to have fraudulently procured payments of £110k from a 96 year old French Resistance Heroine

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- Paul Sultana – the largest ever privately prosecuted fraud
- Van Osselaer (the “Lord of Fraud Plot” to rob the Sumitomo Matsui Bank of £220 million)
- Austin (appeal related to London City Bond scandal)
- Mahmood & Oths (an alleged “cash for crash” insurance fraud on a significant scale)
- Chaudry Ali & Oths (accused of masterminding a £15m gold smuggling operation)
- Aseef Vaza & Oths (well-known handbag designer charged with involvement in a £80m revenue fraud)
- Adler & Oths (doctor alleged to have submitted false medical reports as part of 20mil insurance fraud)
- Mancini & Oths (alleged family portfolio involving income tax and mortgage fraud)

Criminal Defence

Martin is currently ranked a Band 1 leading silk by Chambers UK 2021 Crime as he is

“Applauded for his style in court and his well thought out approach to cross-examinations, he gives a compelling performance and has a lightness of touch”

In the last ten years his appearances as KC have seen him defend in the well publicised trials of:

- Pesareanu (the Victoria Beckham Kidnap plot);
- Hendy-Freegard (the “bogus MI5 agent kidnapper” and subject of a Channel 4 documentary);
- Clinton McKenzie (the boxer charged with allowing his premises to be used for drug dealing);
- Mihaylov the precedent setting trial on UK/USA disclosure protocols held at the Central Criminal Court;
- Byron Coles (an alleged member of the South London PCC Gang as featured in the BBC series “Murder Blue”);
- The super-grass cases of Khan (Yusef) and Finn (Weir); Terrence Rodgers (the Lincolnshire father who killed his daughter shortly after her wedding);
- Khan & Oths (the racially motivated murder committed during the Aston Riots in Birmingham);
- Kevin Brown at Woolwich in the most expensive security trial to date;
- Terry Smith the crime author and TV pundit charged with conspiracy to rob Cash-in Transit security vehicles.
- Anthony Still (accused of blackmail of a high profile victim over a 9 year period)
- Bhaskaran & Oths
- Orlebar-Forbes & Oths (Jamal Jones murder)
- Janik & Oths (alleged murder, kidnap and prevention of burial by Lithuanian gang)
- Ahmed Shah (alleged mastermind of 500kilo heroin importations)

More recently he appeared for news journalists in the high profile trials prosecuted under Operation Elveden (misconduct in a public office) concerned with payments to public officials. Martin was able to secure acquittals in two separate cases.

Terrorism

Martin has experience of cases brought under the terrorism legislation, particularly in an international context.

He was involved in the 21/7 London bombings case, and is currently representing the Jamaat al Muslimeen leader Abu Bakr, who is accused (in a third set of cases brought in Trinidad) of terrorism and sedition with Al Qaeda links to the JFK Pipeline Bomb Plot.

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He has recently advised the Attorney General and State of Jersey Police on the question of whether a Senator's article 8 rights had been breached.

Licensing

Martin also has a particular interest in planning and licensing law, and has appeared in a number of applications relating to planning permission and conservation area issues. His extensive experience of deploying concise advocacy for lay audiences in the context of jury trials has proved extremely effective before local authority committees.

Most recently, acting on behalf of an objecting party, he achieved the unanimous refusal, on both planning and conservation grounds, of an application to redevelop a large existing site into a significantly more extensive residential development in a historic and high-value area of London.

In another matter he successfully obtained an Article 4 Directive, its first by a London Council, thereby securing the future of a community Pub from the risk of residential development.

Accreditations



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Leading Barrister

Appointments & Memberships

- 2007: Called to Trinidad Bar
- 2001: Appointed to SFO Panel
- 1989-1999: CLE Advocacy Instructor

- South Eastern Circuit
- Criminal Bar Association
- Fraud Lawyers Association

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