

## Jonathan Laidlaw QC

"a superstar" - Legal 500 2017  
"as big a name as there is" - Chambers UK 2018



Year of Call: 1982    QC: 2008

020 7353 5324

Rated in the directories as a leader in the fields of crime, financial crime, health and safety, inquests and public inquiries and sport and previously awarded "Crime Silk of the Year", Jonathan Laidlaw QC has consistently been ranked by Chambers as one of their star silks. The directories have described him as "an exceptional silk who provides superlative client care and commands the authority of the court with his formidable advocacy". They have spoken of him being "an outstanding advocate ... regularly instructed in headline-grabbing cases" who is, "also eminently well equipped to advise significant individuals on sensitive matters involving reputational issues". It has been said that he is "an extraordinarily able advocate with great style who can deal with the most difficult of cases with the greatest of ease" and that he has "lethal cross-examination skills and a mean way with closing speeches". He features in the Sunday Times/Debretts list of the 500 most influential people in Britain today.

Jonathan Laidlaw QC's practice is predominantly in business and financial crime, in defending directors and companies facing charges brought by the HSE and in professional, regulatory and disciplinary matters. Much of his work, both for individuals and companies here and abroad, is pre-charge and advisory in nature. Jonathan Laidlaw QC has also appeared in the Commercial Court, major inquests and sporting tribunals and is asked to produce reports in silk-led internal inquiries. He presently acts for the Bank of England, for a number of individuals who are the subject of SFO, FCA and DoJ investigations including Rolls Royce and ENRC; for PCP in the Barclays litigation; for The FA; for directors and companies facing gross negligence and corporate manslaughter charges; for a core participant in the Grenfell Tower Inquiry; and for Operation Kenova in Northern Ireland.

Recent instructions include acting for Rebekah Brooks in the phone-hacking case; in the cricket match fixing case; for the Football Association in the Hillsborough Inquests; for Statoil in the In Amenas Inquests; for Fluor, Hugo Boss and Cape Industries, BAM, Ferrovia and Kerr in fatality cases; for Monovan Construction Ltd and JTF Wholesale in corporate manslaughter cases; for the trainer Jim Best in hearings before the British Horseracing

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Authority; for the IAAF in a CAS hearing in Lausanne; and for Allseas in their private prosecution.

## Business Crime & Financial Services

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Chambers rate Jonathan Laidlaw QC as one of their star silks in financial crime.

He has acted for Kevin Burrage, the under-bond dealer, in one of the largest diversion frauds prosecuted in this country; for the director of a highly successful building and maintenance company who was acquitted following a long trial brought by the Central Fraud Group; for James McCormick who faced fraud charges relating to the sale of fake bomb detection equipment to the Iraq Government; and for the CEO of a major logistics company who faced allegations of tax fraud. He acts for the Bank of England, he represented GSK in their hearing before the Divisional Court; he acts for the subjects of a number of SFO, FCA, DoJ investigations including Rolls Royce and ENRC; and for PCP in the Barclays litigation in the Commercial Court.

The 2015 Chambers and Partners guide, in the Financial Crime chapter, says this of Jonathan Laidlaw QC, *“he is highly respected for his expertise in criminal fraud and regulatory issues. Often instructed in novel and challenging cases”* and those contributing to the guide say, *“he is unbeatable in my opinion. He is amongst the top QCs in the area”* and *“he is phenomenal”*. In the 2016 guide it is said that Jonathan Laidlaw QC *“has a great mind, is incredibly well organised and is very approachable. He has great client skills and is a very strong advocate – he creates trust and has a very clear style”* and *“he is very level-headed and deals with cases on a very even keel. He works very methodically.”* The 2017 guide says he is a, *“very persuasive advocate with a sure touch. He’s very, very user-friendly ... Easy to work with, very responsive and extremely straightforward.”* The 2018 guide says of him, *“an absolute class act. He is very experienced, good with clients, and someone who really knows the criminal law inside and out ... Clients love him. He is so hard-working, and he’s just a phenomenal advocate ... He combines commercial awareness with the legal ability that you are looking for in a case”*.

## Criminal Defence

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Chambers rate Jonathan Laidlaw QC as one of their star silks in crime and he is a previous recipient of the crime silk of the year award.

During his time as Treasury Counsel, Jonathan Laidlaw QC gained almost unrivalled experience in the most demanding and serious cases brought in this country during that 15 year period: from the first war crimes prosecution; the PIRA bombing of Canary Wharf trial; the Official Secrets Act prosecutions of both Tomlinson and Shayler; the Jill Dando murder trials; the CCRC reference to the Court of Appeal in the case of Jeremy Bamber; the prosecution of corrupt police officers; the prosecution of Barot and others (the al Qa’eda cell who had planned pre 9/11 attacks in the US and then bombings in this country); the al Qa’eda attack in London and on Glasgow Airport through to and including, the prosecuting of allegations of corruption against a CPS lawyer; a Saudi Prince for murder; a former BA employee charged with terrorist offences; and Delroy Grant (the ‘Night Stalker’). He also appeared in the House of Lords and frequently represented the Attorney General in the Court of Appeal. Jonathan Laidlaw QC’s involvement in prosecution work extended to advising various Government department and the intelligence agencies.

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More recently Jonathan Laidlaw QC has acted for the UK Government in Karadzic's case in the Hague; for the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police in the Miranda/Guardian case before the Divisional Court; for JC Decaux; for Rebekah Brooks in the phone-hacking trial; for Andrew Fitch-Holland in the cricket match-fixing trial; for a major property developer in a series of long-running trials in Liverpool; Keith Vaz; and for TSS in the police corruption enquiry. The 2015 edition of Chambers and Partners said, *"he is fantastic. He's the hardest-working individual I have ever come across. The work he does is phenomenal. He is top-drawer."* The 2016 edition says, *"he is very level-headed and always incredibly calm in a crisis. He is a forceful and effective advocate who is a joy to work with"* and *"he is an excellent advocate who is calm and who gives superb client care."* The 2017 guide describes Jonathan Laidlaw QC as a *"stand out silk ... now specialising only in private defence work which spans the area of general crime, business crime, fraud and regulatory work, among others"*. Sources described him as *"superb"*, *"a class act"* and *"incredibly impressive"*. The 2018 guide says, *"As big a name as there is ... He's straightforward in his approach and radiates authority in court."*

## Criminal Prosecution - Private

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Jonathan Laidlaw QC's time as Treasury Counsel has given him enormous experience in managing the pre-charge preparation of long-running investigations, developing case strategy through to trial and in running teams of investigators and lawyers.

Whilst he no longer acts for the public prosecutors he has advised a number of successful claimants in Commercial Court proceedings in respect of the bringing of private prosecutions including Highland (the Texas hedge fund) and he presently acts for the Allseas Group in their prosecution of Paul Sultana for fraud and for the Bruno Manser Fund.

The 2018 Chambers guide describes him as *"a highly able advocate in private prosecutions"*.

Jonathan Laidlaw QC also acts for Chief Constable Boutcher who is leading Operation Kenova's investigation into the alleged activities of 'Stakeknife' in Northern Ireland.

## Criminal Regulatory

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Throughout his career Jonathan Laidlaw QC has maintained a health and safety practice appearing for a large number of corporate clients which include Texaco, Gulf, BOC, Ford, Southern Cross, Esso, BHP Billiton, Fluor, Marwood and Merck. In recent years he has successfully defended BHP Billiton in a series of cases brought by the DTI, the MCA and the HSE arising from incidents at the Liverpool Bay field, acted for Southern Cross in cases involving fatalities in their care homes; successfully defended Fluor in a prosecution arising from the construction of the Inoes Chlor plant in Warrington; successfully defended Marwood Limited in a case which was to have been tried in Bradford; successfully defended one of the directors in Lion Steel one of the first corporate manslaughter trials; successfully defended the Ancient Order of Foresters; represented Cape Industries facing charges arising from a fatality; appeared for the Princes Sporting Club who faced corporate manslaughter charges; for Monovan Construction Limited, the first company to be sentenced under the new Sentencing Council Guideline; for JTF Wholesale who face corporate manslaughter charges and BAM, Ferrovian and Kier following a fatality on the Cross Rail project.

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Legal 500 rate Jonathan Laidlaw QC as one of the leading health and safety silks and for his work in this area he has been described in the Chambers and Partners guide as having “a stellar reputation” with “a health and safety pedigree stretching back over 20 years”. One source of that directory said; “He is a fantastic cross-examiner and a fantastic operator in terms of dealing with jurors. He has a very good style, combining the cut and thrust of criminal advocacy with an intellectual air”. In 2013 he was nominated by Chambers and Partners as “Health and Safety Silk of the Year”. The 2015 edition was in these terms, “Jonathan Laidlaw QC ... is frequently involved in cases relating to the construction sector, and ... receives a large number of instructions from US companies. Market sources speak about his practice in glowing terms and note his involvement in the leading corporate manslaughter cases of the day.” The 2016 edition says, “he is a very good silk and criminal lawyer.” “He is a consistent performer at the highest level and engages as part of the team” and “Jonathan Laidlaw QC has gravitas and sound judgment. He is excellent with clients, approachable and available.” The 2017 guide says, he is a “seriously impressive criminal silk who has a thriving health and safety practice. He undertakes all manner of health and safety work for a host of clients” and describe him as a “proper advocate in court, who has so much gravitas”. The 2018 guide says, he is a “man of great authority whose preparation is immaculate. He’s a stickler for detail and picks up the important minutiae of a case”.

## Inquests & Public Inquiries

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Apart from advisory and trial advocacy work, Jonathan Laidlaw QC also makes appearances in inquests and acts in public inquiries. Most recently he has represented Fluor in the Greater Gabbard Wind Farm Inquest, The Football Association in the Hillsborough Inquests, Statoil in the In Amenas Inquests and a core participant in the Grenfell Tower Inquiry. He also has experience in military inquests and coronial inquisitions arising from deaths overseas.

In respect of the Hillsborough Inquests it is said in the 2016 Chambers and Partners Guide, “he is absolutely fantastic in Hillsborough” and that there he has been “enormously impressive.” The 2017 guide says Jonathan Laidlaw QC is an “experienced criminal and regulatory silk who is frequently instructed in significant inquests and public inquiries. He has considerable experience of inquests involving health and safety” and describes him possessing “enormous deftness of touch and skill in questioning” with “amazing gravitas”. The 2018 guide says, “He has phenomenal client care and very good attention to detail. He is measured and makes himself available even though he is very busy. He instils confidence in the client ... [a] great natural talent and authority. A massive breadth of experience of crime and regulation to draw upon.”

## Sports Law

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Jonathan Laidlaw QC has considerable experience in professional disciplinary matters, particularly in the sporting field. For several years, he has acted for the Football Association in crowd control cases brought against Liverpool FC, Chelsea FC, West Ham FC and in the proceedings brought against Wayne Rooney’s agent Paul Stretford. He acted for the FA in their investigation of the racist remarks made by John Terry and assisted in the investigation of Cardiff City and of David Moyes. He also represented the trainer Jim Best in his hearings before the British Horseracing Authority and the International Association of Athletics Federations in a CAS hearing in Lausanne where the appellants were seeking to set aside findings that they were guilty of extorting monies in return for the suppression of doping sanctions against the Russian marathon runner, Liliya Shobukova. Legal

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500 have identified Jonathan Laidlaw QC as a leading silk in the area of professional discipline and regulatory law and have described him as a “*top-notch performer*” and as “*a well-respected silk with a niche in the sports world*”. They say, “*His strength is his advocacy, in particular, his cross-examination.*”

## Accreditations

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## Appointments & Memberships

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- 2013: Head of Chambers
  - 2008-2010: First Senior Treasury Counsel
  - 2000-2008: Senior Treasury Counsel
  - 1995-2000: Junior Treasury Counsel
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- Criminal Bar Association
  - Private Prosecution Association
  - Fraud Lawyers Association
  - Health & Safety Lawyers Association
  - South Eastern Circuit

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