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## CHAMBERS

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### AARON WATKINS

Called to the Bar – 2006

*“He’s unflappable and his written work is just excellent. He’s equally as brilliant when it comes to technical arguments.” “He’s a fearless advocate in court and a real fighter.”*

*“Extremely bright, a very good draftsman, and adept at thinking outside the box.”*  
Chambers & Partners

## BIOGRAPHY

Aaron is a highly regarded advocate in financial crime and regulation. He is ranked as a leading junior in the areas of fraud, business and regulatory crime (including global investigations) and extradition and international crime. He is a “rising star” described as a “clever, resourceful and hardworking barrister, who has an excellent manner with clients” and is “a very good team player.” Aaron is recognised equally as a lawyer who is “technically very strong and able to handle difficult cases and difficult clients” and as “an impressive advocate who can persuade the most difficult tribunal”.

Aaron acts for individuals and companies in domestic and international matters concerning allegations of fraud, corruption, money laundering and related conduct. He is experienced in working successfully with clients from the very earliest stages of investigation and advice through to trial and appeal. He has an impressive advisory practice and is a skilled advocate in both jury and non-jury settings. Aaron’s practice frequently involves cross-border criminal issues including multi-jurisdictional investigations, sanctions and Interpol notices. He has experience of criminal cases involving diverse jurisdictions, in particular the USA, Russia, Ukraine, France, Monaco, the Middle East and a number of Caribbean countries.

The multi-jurisdictional aspect of Aaron’s work is complemented by his recognised expertise in the areas of extradition and mutual legal assistance. Aaron is consistently ranked as a leading junior in these fields. He is most often instructed in matters which involve complex allegations of financial misconduct or in novel and demanding cases in which different areas of law overlap.

Outside the field of financial crime Aaron is a Special Advocate appointed by the Attorney General and has ‘DV’ level security clearance which enables him to undertake national security work. Aaron also has niche practices representing individuals challenging search warrants, production orders and other investigative measures. He also represents individuals before specialist tribunals such as the Investigatory Powers Tribunal and SIAC.

## WHAT OTHERS SAY

*“An impressive advocate who can persuade the most difficult tribunal through his eloquent persistence.”*

*“A clever, resourceful and hardworking barrister, who has an excellent manner with clients.”*

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*“Very experienced and sound in judgement, preparation and experience.”*

*“He has a quiet authority and ear of the court, colleagues and clients.”*

*“Bright, responsive and capable of producing superb skeleton arguments.”*

*“A calm and reassuring junior who is technically very strong and able to handle difficult cases and difficult clients.”*

*“A very good team player.”*

*“A ‘smooth operator’ highlighted by market sources for being ‘extremely bright, a very good draftsman, and adept at thinking outside the box.’”*

*“He is impressive in court, and second to none at drafting.”*

*“He is a highly experienced counsel, who has an in-depth knowledge of extradition law.”*

*“He is responsive and extremely knowledgeable, and his written advice is of a high quality.”*

*“Impresses with his courtroom manner, strategic skill, and ability to process and organise significant amounts of documentation.”*

*“It is clear that he definitely knows his stuff. He is technically strong and impresses with his manner.”*

*“A rising star”*

## RECENT & CURRENT CASES

### Domestic

- Advising a leading construction company under investigation in connection with ‘cash for contracts’ allegations;
- Advising an international law firm in relation to privilege issues in the context of an investigation by an overseas criminal investigator;
- Acting for an individual in the SFO’s longrunning GlaxoSmithKline investigation;
- Revocation of an arrest warrant obtained by the SFO for a Chief Executive of a multinational mining company;
- Staying a highvalue conspiracy to defraud prosecution as an abuse of process;
- Obtaining the withdrawal of a summons in relation to a conspiracy to defraud private prosecution;
- Advising a multinational oil and gas corporation as an interested party in confiscation proceedings;
- Advising a multinational tobacco corporation concerning potential money laundering exposure;
- Acting for a trust to discharge the registration of an overseas restraint order under ‘Protocol 36’ regulations;
- Acting for an Appellant in respect of a highprofile and long-running extra-territorial bribery and corruption prosecution.

### International

- Acting for a defendant in the Credit Suisse ‘Tuna Bond scandal’;
- Acting for a potential defendant in connection with a request for assistance by overseas investigators regarding alleged theft of intellectual property the subject of overlapping Chancery proceedings in the UK;
- Acting in a conspiracy to defraud case regarding the violation of USIran sanctions;
- Acting for the Indian government in the highly publicised *India v Mallya* fraud and money laundering litigation;
- Acting for the first defendant in Sweden’s largest pension fraud;
- Acting for the US government in the wellknown ‘Flash Crash’ market abuse ‘spoofing’ case.

## PREVIOUS CASES

- Acting for a major shareholder of a private bank accused of substantial fraud against the bank;

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- Acting for a board member of a European bank in longrunning judicial review proceedings relating to a UK investigation;
- Advising a US law firm during an internal money laundering investigation;
- Acting for two former employees of a global financial services company in claims arising out of bribery convictions concerning the privatisation of state assets;
- Acting for Francesco Becchetti when accused of money laundering and fraud offences;
- Acting for a leading industrialist accused of accounting fraud, embezzlement and other offences;
- Acting for a Managing Director of a global asset management company facing allegations of fraud;
- Acting for a senior official of a Russian bank accused of tax fraud;
- Acting for the first defendant successfully acquitted in the iSOFT fraud/false accounting trial;
- Acting for Massimo Cellino before the Football League to overturn a sanction imposed in relation to a VAT conviction;
- Acting for News Group Newspapers and a number of journalists in a claim before the Investigatory Powers Tribunal.

## EDUCATION / EXPERIENCE

MA (Oxon)

PGDL, BPP Law School

BVC, Inns of Court School of Law

Henrietta Jex-Blake Scholarship, Lady Margaret Hall, University of Oxford, 2002

Parker Scholarship, Lady Margaret Hall, University of Oxford, 2002

Andrew Lee-Jones Award, Amicus 2004

Astbury Scholarship, Middle Temple, 2005