

cloth fair

CHAMBERS

39-40 CLOTH FAIR • LONDON • EC1A 7NT
T 020 7710 6444
W CLOTHFAIRCHAMBERS.COM



JOHN KELSEY-FRY KC

Called to the Bar 1978

Queen's Counsel 2000 | King's Counsel 2022

"The best advocate in the land"

- Chambers & Partners

"Probably the leading criminal advocate in London. Great with clients and a real pleasure to work with."

- Legal 500

"He's got to be the best trial lawyer in the country. I've done various cases with him where the jury is spellbound by him. He's incredibly clever and magical in court"

- Chambers & Partners High Net Worth Guide

BIOGRAPHY

John Kelsey-Fry KC is Head of Cloth Fair Chambers. He is widely recognised as one of the leading silks at the Criminal Bar. He is outstanding in front of a jury, has exceptional advocacy skills and his wealth of experience is almost unparalleled. As one commentator says, "There is rarely a high-profile criminal case where he is not instructed, and his level of commitment and can-do approach is inspirational".

John is particularly sought after in areas of business and financial crime where his criminal expertise is matched by his commercial understanding and his strategic vision. He is exemplary at advising boards and individuals alike. He is also known for high-profile general crime and is often cited for his work involving defamation where his cross-examination skills have proved game-changing. Further, he is commended for his work in the sports sector, having a wide range of experience of sporting and regulatory tribunals.

WHAT OTHERS SAY

Chambers & Partners

Star Individual - Crime

Star Individual - Financial Crime

Band 1 - Financial Crime: High Net Worth Individuals

Band 1 - Financial Crime: Corporates

Legal 500

Tier 1 - Fraud: Crime

Tier 1 - Business and Regulatory Crime (Including Global Investigations)

cloth fair

CHAMBERS

Recent Quotes

“There is rarely a high-profile criminal case where he is not instructed and his level of commitment and can-do approach is inspirational.”

"He's got to be the best trial lawyer in the country. I've done various cases with him where the jury is spellbound by him. He's incredibly clever and magical in court."

"the premier criminal barrister in the UK."

"John gives strategic advice and is both hard-working and responsive."

"The best criminal fraud barrister in the country. Hugely sought after. Extremely intelligent. Unparalleled advocacy skills in front of both a judge and a jury. Highly analytical and strategic."

"...a fabulous brain who gives judges and juries what they want."

"He is a fantastic fraud lawyer."

"He is calm and reassuring."

"Number one fraud barrister in the country, he gets the very best in his juniors. John has a skill few people have got- representation before charges. In every era there are two or three outstanding criminal advocates. In any era, John is a superstar."

Quotes from previous years

“Probably the most charismatic trial lawyer in the country, he is a lethal cross-examiner and has a phenomenal reputation. The quality of his preparation is second to none.”

"Absolutely first class and someone who's invariably right."

"He takes an extraordinarily forensic approach to the case and looks at every conceivable issue from every angle."

“An incisive advocate who is able to assimilate facts very quickly and is great on strategy.”

"He's hugely experienced, has a vast breadth of knowledge, is in all the best cases, and has an incredible rapport with the client."

"The breadth of his lateral thinking is astonishing"

“He is highly charismatic and persuasive in front of juries”

“A heavyweight silk who has handled the 21st century’s biggest corporate scandals.”

"He is the best simple as that"

“The best trial lawyer out there”

“A star player on account of his truly remarkable performances as a jury advocate”

“He’s obviously fantastic and incredibly charismatic”.. “He is a superstar.. He has a superb courtroom manner and an ability to see points no one else would”

“An exceptional advocate, who is hard working and a natural orator with superb jury appeal”

cloth fair

CHAMBERS

"Superstar silk", "He knows how to read the court and is obviously a very brilliant legal mind."... "He is a terrific advocate who brings to bear a clarity of vision, a good turn of phrase and very good judgement."

"Superb dedication to the client's case and absolute determination to leave no stone unturned in advancing the client's position."

"Probably the best trial advocate in the country"

"His advocacy style shines out; he commands the judge's respect and ear"

"He brings an exceptional logical, strategic analysis to the cases we do"

Firmly amongst the most highly regarded crime silks.. "He is a genius in court"

"A man of excellent judgement, he's a sublime advocate.. He's adept at identifying the broad tactical considerations of a case and acting upon them"

"Megastar" John Kelsey-Fry QC wins unanimous praise from his peers, who call him "unquestionably the most prominent criminal defence advocate" out there.

"Brilliantly creative in the way he approaches cases"

The *"fantastic"* John Kelsey-Fry QC is in the *"top rank"* of criminal fraud advocates.

The *"supremely able"* John Kelsey-Fry QC continues to advise on high profile cases.... Sources were particularly enthusiastic about him, saying that he is *"an outstanding pragmatic counsel who adds considerable value to any case"*

He is one of the best defence silks of his generation. Observers say *"he is just superb. He has an outstanding way of presenting a case to a jury which has them eating out of his hand."*

"One of the Criminal Bar's brightest stars"...has a practice geared towards large and complex criminal cases, particularly on the corporate/white-collar crime side. John Kelsey-Fry QC is the type of barrister who *"takes one hour to prepare each minute at court."*

"On the fraud front he is "unquestionably in the top rank," leading one interviewee to declare; "Just occasionally exceptional talents come along – in the seventies there was Richard Du Cann QC, and nowadays we have John Kelsey-Fry QC"

He *"receives accolades for his defamation work.....with interviewees particularly commenting on his effectiveness before a jury"*.

"Has a high profile in the horse racing world.....his style has won many plaudits from the sports industry. Clients describe his manner as "disarming".

"An all-round outstanding lawyer with great ability to present cases to judge and jury". The "always spectacular" John Kelsey-Fry QC "has a stellar reputation" and is appreciated for being a "roll-up-your-sleeves-and-get-involved type of lawyer". "Outstanding with the jury" and "never bothers to try and score useless points", "he can be delicate when the situation requires, but can easily duff a witness when necessary".

"The professional's choice" and "hard to get, but once you do, you have a huge head start". Quotes from peers and clients alike include "his absolute pre-eminence in the field" and "his expert handling of each and every case he is involved in." A highly popular figure". Described as "the Man of the Moment who delivers a master class in trial advocacy every time", "breathtaking in court".

The Lawyer: *"one of the brightest stars at the Bar"*. He is described by one City partner as *"very astute and a good courtroom performer"*, while a former colleague dubs him *"quite exceptional"*. Partners pointed to the *"sensational"* acquittal Kelsey-Fry secured for controversial entrepreneur Andrew Regan, following the marathon Co-operative Bank trial, as a typical piece of courtroom wizardry.

cloth fair

CHAMBERS

RECENT & CURRENT CASES

Fraud/crime

Represented Natwest in the first ever criminal prosecution by the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) of a financial institution under anti-money laundering laws in the UK.

SFO v Barclays (winner – Most Important Court Case 2020, GIR). For the former head of investment banking in the Middle-East, acquitted of all charges re multi-billion pound capital raise in 2008 following a five-month trial at the Central Criminal Court.

Advised individuals in relation to a number of SFO investigations including ENRC, Balli and Unaoil as well as advising a Premier League Football Club in relation to an ongoing HMRC investigation.

Other notable instructions in recent years include:

- HKSAR – v - Kwok: Successfully defended the property tycoon, the only defendant to be acquitted in Hong Kong's largest ever graft case.
- R -v- Olympus Corporation: acted for the company in securing a full acquittal regarding Companies Act charges brought by the SFO
- R -v- W: Successfully defended the CEO of a raw materials company charged by the SFO with conspiracy to defraud
- R -v- Huhne: Represented the former Energy Secretary charged with perverting the course of justice
- R -v- C: Successfully represented the former Director of iSoft in criminal and regulatory proceedings

Defamation

- Advised the Sunday Times over Libel matters
- Craig Bellamy -v- News Group Newspapers (NGN): representing the claimant (settled)
- Represented Founder of EasyJet, Sir Stelios Haji-Ioannou in definition action (settled)
- Mo George -v- NGN represented the defendant
- Advised a high profile individual in a libel matter

PREVIOUS CASES

- TCI -v- Civre: Successfully represented an international developer in the Turks and Caicos Islands over corruption charges
- Represented the Director of a nationally renowned Sports company in SFO investigation
- Represented a Director of Mabey and Johnson Ltd
- Successfully represented Harry Redknapp in HMRC proceedings
- Successfully represented Steven Gerrard in the footballer's affray proceedings
- R -v- Carlisle: Represented the defendant in an insider dealing case where successful half time submissions halted proceedings
- Prosecuted on behalf of the FSA in a high-profile insider dealing trial resulting in conviction
- R -v- Dougall: Leading authority on sentencing Executive-level whistleblowers entering plea agreements in corruption cases (For SFO)
- R -v- Keith Owen: Largest and most complicated prosecution brought by DEFRA, successful plea agreement
- Represented Saudi Prince charged with murdering his aide in a London hotel
- Advising one of the largest international companies in an SFO investigation
- Advising a company and an individual in the 'Oil for Food' SFO investigation
- Advised a Director in the Balfour Beatty settlement with the SFO
- Advised in an insider dealing case in Hong Kong
- R -v- Fallon: Represented and achieved the acquittal of the Champion Jockey in criminal prosecution for alleged race fixing
- Advised Southern Water
- Advised in the Cash for Honours scandal

cloth fair

CHAMBERS

- R -v- Sheikh & Anor: acquitted of NHS fraud
- R -v- Hayter: (House Of Lords)
- R -v- Bukhari: achieved the acquittal of a defendant charged with terrorist arms dealing
- R -v- Stovold: Local Authority Finance Leasing Fraud, successful half time submission of no case to answer
- R -v- Jane Andrews: Murder of boyfriend of Duchess of York's dresser
- R -v- Matthews and Others: Acquitted in horse racing doping case
- R -v- Andrew Regan: Co-op fraud, acquitted.
- Represented, on numerous occasions, the interests of Mohammed Al Fayed, notably in the Harrods Safety Deposit Box case
- R -v- Guppy & Marsh: representing Marsh in fraud, theft and false insurance claim trial concerning a staged jewel theft and subsequent false claim for £1.8 million from the Lloyd's syndicate insurers
- The Blue Arrow fraud trial, acquitted
- The Heathrow Bullion Robbery
- R -v- Coutts: necrophiliac murder of a school teacher
- R -v- Tommy Adams et al
- Operation Goldcard appeals arising out of the Rigg Approach Flying Squad corruption Inquiry
- R -v- Donald, Cressey and David Fraser: Police corruption case
- R -v- Serafinowicz & R -v- Sawoniuk: War Crimes Trials
- R -v- Charles Kray: successful prosecution of the eldest member of the notorious crime family
- Various IRA terrorist cases
- R -v- Michael Smith: KGB spy

Defamation

- Paul McKenna -v- MGN (Daily Mirror): Representing the defendant
- Wayne Rooney -v- NGN: Representing the defendant
- Sharon Osbourne -v- NGN: Representing the claimant
- Represented NGN in the case brought by Roger Cook of 'The Cook Report' et al
- Represented NGN in the case brought by Mr Alin Turcu (The Beckham Kidnap Plot case)
- Delaney -v- NGN and Jodie Marsh: Represented the defendant
- McKeith -v- NGN: Representing the defendant
- Sharon Stone -v- Daily Mail: Representing the claimant
- Represented Roman Polanski in his case against Vanity Fair Magazine