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Jonathan Adkin KC

Year of Silk: 2013 Year of Call: 1997

“He’s a brilliant advocate who offers good judgment and good analysis. Judges like him and he pitches the case just right.”...“Is able to cut through the most complex disputes with ease.”

Chambers & Partners (Commercial Dispute Resolution)

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Practice Overview

Jonathan Adkin KC is a leading Silk at the Chancery and Commercial Bar. His high-profile practice spans a wide range of fields in international and domestic chancery and commercial law. He appears regularly in the High Court and appellate Courts in England, in domestic and international arbitrations, and in international commercial Courts and offshore jurisdictions including Bermuda, the Bahamas, the Cayman Islands, the BVI, the DIFC and Gibraltar.

In the leading legal directories (Chambers & Partners and Legal 500) Jonathan holds rankings across eight practice areas, encompassing Commercial Dispute Resolution, Commercial Chancery, Civil Fraud, Trusts and Probate, Company, Insolvency, Partnership and Offshore.

Jonathan was named the *Chancery Silk of the Year* at the Legal 500 Awards for 2023 and shortlisted for the same award in 2024. He was named *Trusts and Probate Silk of the Year* at the Legal 500 Awards for 2017. He has also been recognised as one of *The Lawyer* magazine's "Hot 100 Lawyers".

Areas of Expertise

Commercial Litigation

Jonathan has been involved in some of the largest commercial disputes to come before the English Courts, and his cases regularly appear amongst *The Lawyer* magazine's top 20 cases of the year.

Examples of recent cases include:

Mozambique v Credit Suisse & Others [2023] 1 WLR 2428, [2023] EWHC 1650 (Comm)

Jonathan acted for the Republic of Mozambique in a multi-billion dollar claim in the Commercial Court against a number of banks and an Abu-Dhabi based shipbuilder arising out of the 'tuna bonds' scandal, tried over three months from October 2023. One of *The Lawyer* magazine's Top 20 Cases of 2023.

PIFSS v Al Rajaan [2022] 1 WLR 4193, [2020] EWHC 2979 (Comm)

Jonathan acted for one of the defendants in an \$800 million Commercial Court claim by a Kuwaiti government agency alleging that multiple defendants engaged in bribery and corruption over a decades long period. One of *The Lawyer* magazine's Top 20 Cases of 2020.

Re: Bulb Energy Ltd [2022] EWHC 3105 (Ch)

Jonathan acted for British Gas in a high-profile action in the High Court concerning the collapse and administration of one of the UK's largest energy suppliers and the transfer of its business to another energy company.

Winston Wong v Grand View PTC & Others [2022] SC (Bda) 44 Com

Jonathan acted for the trustees of five trusts in a multi-billion dollar action in the Bermuda Supreme Court and Court of Appeal.

Magdeev v Tsvetkov and Others [2020] EWHC 887 (Comm)

Jonathan acted for one of the defendants at the trial of a multi-million pound Commercial Court dispute between Russian oligarchs in which each side claimed to have been defrauded by the other in relation to the operation of a very high value jewellery business.

Chancery

Jonathan regularly appears in the Chancery Division and offshore in high-profile and high-value chancery disputes and was named *Chancery Silk of the Year* at the Legal 500 Awards for 2023 and shortlisted for the same award in 2024.

Examples of recent cases include:

Re: Bulb Energy Ltd [2022] EWHC 3105 (Ch)

Jonathan acted for British Gas in a high-profile action in the High Court concerning the collapse and administration of one of the UK's largest energy suppliers and the transfer of its business to another energy company.

Re: Global Resource Trust [2022] UKPC 47

Jonathan acted for the defendant before the Privy Council in a high value claim to assets held by a Bermuda trust which concerned allegations of the use of trust powers for an impermissible purpose.

Libyan Investment Authority v King [2020] EWHC 440 (ch)

Jonathan acted for the defendants in a multi-million pound Chancery Division action alleging fraudulent misrepresentations in relation to a major property development.

Jockey Club Racecourses Ltd v Bulmers Ltd (2021-22)

Jonathan acted for the claimants in a multi-million pound Chancery Division action brought by the Jockey Club alleging breaches of the sponsorship agreement relating to the Cheltenham festival, which concerned the legal effects of the Covid pandemic relating to public events.

Civil Fraud

Civil fraud makes up a substantial part of Jonathan's practice, and he has been involved in some of the largest fraud cases to come before the English and offshore courts.

Examples of recent cases include:

Republic of Mozambique v Credit Suisse & Others [2023] 1 WLR 2428

Jonathan acted for the Republic in a multi-billion claim in the Commercial Court by the Republic of Mozambique against a number of banks and an Abu-Dhabi based shipbuilder arising out of the 'Tuna bonds' scandal, involving allegations of bribery and breach of fiduciary duty in the awarding of major procurement contracts, which was tried over three months from October 2023. One of *The Lawyer* magazine's Top 20 Cases of 2023.

PIFFS v Al Rajaan & Others [2022] 1 WLR 4193, [2020] EWHC 2979 (Comm)

Jonathan acted for one of the defendants in an \$800 million Commercial Court claim by a Kuwaiti government agency, alleging that multiple defendants engaged in bribery and corruption over a decades long period. One of *The Lawyer* magazine's Top 20 Cases of 2020.

Magdeev v Tsvetkov and Others [2020] EWHC 887 (Comm)

Jonathan acted for one of the defendants at the trial of a multi-million pound Commercial Court dispute between Russian oligarchs in which each side claims to have been defrauded by the other in relation to the operation of a very high value jewellery business.

Libyan Investment Authority v King [2020] EWHC 440 (ch)

Jonathan acted for the defendants in a multi-million pound action alleging fraudulent misrepresentations in relation to a major property development.

Yukos Finance B.V v Lynch and Others [2019] EWHC 2621 (Comm)

Jonathan acted for one of the defendants in a high profile multi-million dollar action in the Commercial Court by the liquidators of Yukos Oil against multiple defendants involved in the acquisition of one of its subsidiaries through an allegedly rigged auction. One of *The Lawyer* magazine's Top 20 Cases of 2019.

Private Client Trusts and Probate

Jonathan regularly acts in high-profile and high-value trusts and probate actions both in England and offshore, and was named *Trusts and Probate Silk of the Year* at the Legal 500 awards for 2017.

Examples of recent cases include:

Winston Wong v Grand View PTC & Others [2022] SC (Bda) 44 Com

Jonathan acted for the principal defendants in the six month trial of an action in the Supreme Court of Bermuda in which it was alleged that five Bermuda purpose trusts worth several billions dollars were invalid because of failures to comply with the requisite formalities requirements.

Re: Global Resource Trust [2022] UKPC 47

Jonathan acted for the defendant before the Privy Council in a high value claim to assets held by a Bermuda trust which concerned allegations of the use of trust powers for an impermissible purpose.

Re: A Trust (2023)

Jonathan acts in an offshore dispute relating to a high value trust concerning the validity of appointments to the role of trust protector.

JSC Mezhdunarodniy Promyshlenniy Bank v Pugachev [2016] 1 WLR 160

Jonathan acted for an appellant before the Court of Appeal in a high-profile action concerning disclosure obligations relating to discretionary trusts under freezing orders.

Williams v Central Bank of Nigeria [2014] AC 1189

Jonathan acted as lead counsel for the Claimant in the leading Supreme Court authority on the applicable limitation period for accessory liability in breach of trust claims.

Company

Jonathan has extensive experience of company disputes and advising on company law matters, both in the English Courts and offshore.

Examples of recent cases include:

Re Jardine Strategic Holdings Ltd [2023] SC (Bda) 8 Civ

Jonathan is acting for the petitioners in a very high value appraisal action in the Bermuda Supreme Court concerning the valuation of a minority shareholding in a large global conglomerate which has been taken private.

Re: 58.com

Jonathan is acting for the minority shareholders in a high value share valuation action in the Cayman Grand Court involving a prominent Chinese business.

Re: Bulb Energy Ltd [2022] EWHC 3105 (Ch)

Jonathan acted for British Gas in a high-profile action in the High Court concerning the collapse and administration of

one of the UK's largest energy suppliers and the transfer of its business to another energy company.

Re: Changyou.com Ltd CICA (Civil) Appeal No 6 of 2021

Jonathan acts for the respondents in a high-profile Cayman dispute before the Privy Council concerning an important and novel issue of Cayman company law.

Re: Nord Anglia (Cayman Grand Court, March 2020)

Jonathan acted for the petitioners in one of the largest offshore share value appraisal cases in recent years, brought under s.238 of the Cayman Companies Act.

Insolvency

Jonathan has acted in a number of high-profile insolvency matters, including the litigation arising from the collapse of *Haliwells* and *Glasgow Rangers*.

Examples of recent cases include:

Re: Bulb Energy Ltd [2022] EWHC 3105 (Ch)

Jonathan acted in a high-profile action in the High Court concerning the collapse and administration of one of the UK's largest energy suppliers and the transfer of its business to another energy company.

Yukos Finance B.V v Lynch and Others [2019] EWHC 2621 (Comm)

Jonathan acted for one of the defendants at the trial of a high profile multi-million dollar action in the Commercial Court by the liquidators of Yukos Oil against multiple defendants involved in the acquisition of one of its subsidiaries through an allegedly rigged auction.

Glasgow Rangers Football Club plc (in liquidation) v Collyer Bristow & Ors [2015]

Jonathan acted as lead counsel for one of the Defendants in a multi-million pound dispute arising from the collapse of Glasgow Rangers football club. One of *The Lawyer* magazine's top 20 cases of 2013.

Belltrey v Victor Chandler Ltd [2014] (Chancery Division)

Jonathan acted as lead counsel for the Claimant in a multi-million pound corporate insolvency dispute concerning the well-known gaming business.

Partnership and LLP

Jonathan has acted in and advised on a number of partnership disputes.

Previous cases include:

Fennel v Haliwells LLP [2014] EWHC 2744

Jonathan acted as lead counsel for the claimant in a complex dispute concerning the collapse of the well-known Manchester law firm.

W v S [2014] 21 IoM

Jonathan acted as lead counsel for the Defendants in a multi-million pound dispute concerning the operation of an Isle of Man limited partnership.

Berwin v Schneider [2013] (Chancery Division)

Jonathan acted as lead counsel for the Claimant in a high value solicitors' partnership dispute arising out of an

allegedly fraudulent partnership agreement.

International and Offshore

Jonathan has a substantial offshore practice and regularly appears before the Courts in a number of offshore jurisdictions including in Bermuda, the Bahamas, the Cayman Islands, the BVI, Gibraltar and the DIFC.

Examples of recent cases include:

Winston Wong v Grand View PTC & Others [2022] SC (Bda) 44 Com

Jonathan acted for the principal defendants in the six month trial of an action in the Supreme Court of Bermuda in which it was alleged that five Bermuda purpose trusts worth several billions dollars were invalid because of failures to comply with the requisite formalities requirements.

Re Jardine Strategic Holdings Ltd [2023] SC (Bda) 8 Civ

Jonathan is acting for the petitioners in a very high value appraisal action in the Bermuda Supreme Court concerning the valuation of a minority shareholding in a large global conglomerate which has been taken private.

Re: 58.com (2022-)

Jonathan is acting for the minority shareholders in a high value share valuation action in the Cayman Grand Court involving a prominent Chinese business.

Re: Changyou.com Ltd CICA (Civil) Appeal No 6 of 2021

Jonathan acts for the respondents in a high-profile Cayman dispute before the Privy Council concerning an important and novel issue of Cayman company law.

Re: A Trust (2023)

Jonathan acts in a Bahamas dispute relating to a high value trust concerning the validity of appointments to the role of trust protector.

Arbitration

Jonathan frequently appears in domestic and international arbitrations, including under the rules of the ICC and LCIA.

Recommendations

Commercial Dispute Resolution, Chancery: commercial, Fraud: civil, Company, Offshore (*Chambers & Partners UK Bar 2024*)

Commercial Dispute Resolution, Commercial Chancery, Offshore (*Chambers Global 2024*)

Commercial Litigation, Civil Fraud, Private client: trusts and probate, Company, Insolvency, Partnership, English Bar Offshore (*The Legal 500 2023*)

Civil Fraud (*Who's Who Legal UK Bar 2023*)

Quotes

"Extremely practical and can read different judges really well as he instinctively understands the way they think. He's

absolutely unflappable when facing an aggressive courtroom, proving extremely persuasive, calm and forceful in his submissions." (Chambers and Partners, 2024)

"A very impressive barrister with great gravitas in court." (*Chambers and Partners, 2024*)

"With Jonathan you get a very experienced senior silk, who has no issue with getting stuck into the weeds." (*Chambers and Partners, 2024*)

"Jonathan is a very fine draftsman and a powerful advocate." (*Chambers and Partners UK Bar, 2023*)

"He is very good at cross-examination and is very user-friendly." (*Chambers and Partners UK Bar, 2023*)

"Very commercial and bright." (*Chambers & Partners UK Bar, 2023*)

"User-friendly, easy to deal with and good at cross-examination, he takes a difficult case and runs with it." (*Chambers and Partners UK Bar, 2023*)

"Extremely capable and a master tactician." (*Chambers and Partners UK Bar, 2023*)

"He is very modern in his approach. He is both collaborative and hands on." (*Chambers and Partners UK Bar, 2023*)

"He is a really smooth, persuasive advocate who commands the room." (*Chambers and Partners UK Bar, 2023*)

"He is my go-to man in the Cayman. He is always at the top of my list because he is a real heavyweight with detailed knowledge of the area." (*Chambers and Partners UK Bar, 2023*)

"Jonathan has an uncanny ability to distil and apply complicated legal principles to the detailed facts of a particular case." (*The Legal 500*)

"Jonathan has powerful analytical skills and can unpick any problem. He thinks creatively, and his advice is always practical and realistic. He is an excellent tactician and is ruthless at jettisoning bad points and honing in on the winning points – a hallmark of first-class silk." (*The Legal 500*)

"He wins cases. Direct and sees the bigger picture, he is a fantastic advocate who reads the court perfectly. Clients are always impressed." (*The Legal 500*)

"A true star and one of the very top go to Silks for fraud related litigation. Tremendously able as an advocate with a compelling corporate-ness and an absolute delight to work with." (*The Legal 500*)

Other

Called to the British Virgin Islands Bar and called ad hoc to the Bars of the Cayman Islands, Gibraltar and Bermuda.

Education & Qualifications

MA (Hons), Balliol College, Oxford

Dip. Law, City University

Memberships

Commercial Bar Association

Chancery Bar Association
