

Neil Saunders

Call: 1983



Neil Saunders is a specialist criminal and serious fraud advocate in all criminal courts.

Represents professional individuals and companies being investigated or accused of crime. Also involved in dealing with court summons to produce documents or evidence.

Regularly instructed as leading counsel by large city and specialist white collar fraud firms providing strategic advice during all stages of investigation, including pre charge. Substantial experience in cases where charges not brought following representations being made.

Inquests – advising individuals or institutions re potential verdicts and procedure.

He has advised and appeared in a number of very high profile cases that received considerable media and press attention including cases which involved highly reputable families where children or relations became involved in either violence in night clubs or allegations of rape at house parties.

Neil has defended in numerous police discipline cases including allegations of dishonesty, excessive force, matters of sexual impropriety by police officers whilst on duty; also in cases directed by IOPC. Police disciplinary proceedings both before Metropolitan and Provincial forces.

Previous Grade 4 prosecutor.

Appears on behalf of respondents to special procedure hearings and in sports disciplinary hearings.

Appeared in Divisional court cases involving drink driving legislation and custody time limits.

Crime

- Serious crime including murder, human and drug trafficking and serious sexual allegations
- Money laundering/complex commercial fraud
- Mortgage fraud
- Banking/advance fee/derivative frauds
- Share dealing allegations
- Tax and VAT fraud
- Bribery/corruption
- Cartels and price fixing/computer misuse

Notable Crime cases

- **DM**

Defended acting police sergeant accused of misconduct in public office and perverting the course of justice namely in making up a false account and unlawfully arresting an individual following a routine stop and search. Case initially involved failed prosecution of the allegations in magistrate's court. Major issues of mistake of the part of other uniformed officers and lies by civilians.

- **PW**

Represented ex Inspector who was alleged to have unlawfully assaulted a Spurs fan whilst escorting Arsenal fans into White Hart Lane. Further alleged to have then perverted the course of justice in writing a false account of the events.

- **SH**

This individual was alleged to have committed grievous bodily harm by using his car to inflict injury on a 70 year old protestor at the US Airbase outside Harrogate. The incident was filmed on CCTV and a number of significant eye witnesses were called in the case including significant character witnesses who testified to his good standing.

- **CS**

This defendant a French national was arrested 6 months after an audacious plan to steal £4.5m of diamonds from Boodles New Bond Street in a switch or confidence trick. He was the only member of the team to face charges and having pleaded guilty was sentenced to 42 months imprisonment.

Financial Crime

- Criminal confiscation ; search and seizure orders
- Restraint, third party rights and contempt; civil recovery under Proceeds of Crime Act 2002

Notable Financial Crime cases

- **MC (2013-2019)**

Alleged to have defrauded employer's company in overseas inheritance scam. Expert evidence needed to explain possible reason for material on emails. Case took over 5 years to come to trial after civil proceedings and applications to stay due to delay and loss of significant items of evidence in the case. Many defence witnesses considered although some not available due to passage of time.

- **DB**

Defendant was responsible for opening multiple bank accounts in names of a deceased individual over a sustained period of time. Charged with various offences including use of many credit cards and failing to repay sums outstanding. He received a suspended sentence having repaid the money.

- **WW (2013-2018)**

Instructions began some years earlier by advising a Nigerian businessman accused of Money laundering. Many millions were defrauded from various NHS Trusts by a variety of fraudsters. The defence case was that he understood those he dealt with were foreign exchange currency dealers and that he paid the equivalent in Naira. Neil had advised this client for some time prior to trial.

- **R v D & Others (2016)**

Neil was part of the FSA/FCA prosecution team for 4 years as this investigation took some years before coming to trial. There were 5 defendants involved in a 5 month trial resulting in convictions of the principle bankers Martyn Dodson and an accountant Andrew Hind. Both men were sentenced to substantial terms of imprisonment. The value of this insider trading was several million pounds with a profit of some £2.6m.

Inquests & Inquiries

Neil advises families in individual deaths and investigations.

Neil has also represented housing association clients in unfortunate deaths in accommodation.

Notable Inquests & Inquiries cases

- **Edson Da Costa (2018-2019)**

Lead counsel for the 5 plain clothed officers involved in stopping a vehicle in which the deceased was a passenger. No dispute that Mr Da Costa, unbeknown to the officers, placed numerous packages of crack cocaine and heroin into his mouth on exiting the vehicle. Soon after a struggle he became unresponsive and medical attention was sought. Several days later he died in hospital. The officers were all granted anonymity in giving evidence in the 5 week inquest due to threats that had been made against them.

- **Rashan Charles (2018)**

Neil represented two officers who gave evidence anonymously using cyphers. The principle officer was involved in a struggle with Mr Charles who swallowed a package which prevented him from breathing. The inquest was heard in June 2018 and lasted 3 weeks.

- **Hicks Inquest (2016)**

Represented four officers in three week inquest who denied they were in pursuit of a young man Henry Hicks riding a stolen and upgraded motor cycle. Inquest heard evidence from the officers (who were all granted total anonymity and gave evidence using pseudonyms) as well as from collision investigators and leading experts on definition of pursuit. Judicial Review was inserted in relation to anonymity issue.

- **Fraser MacLennan (2012)**

Neil advised the family of a man who died following a road traffic accident. The family wanted to ensure that all matters were fully investigated by the police and that any issues that needed to be addressed by the coroner would be properly taken into consideration.

- **7/7 Inquest (2010-2011)**

Represented 10 families at the hearings from Oct 2010 to April 2011 from the four bomb sites. The hearing lasted for over 5 months as well as months before preparing. Neil acted for more families than any other counsel and was present for all the evidence at each of the four bomb sites. There were a large number of joint and individual conferences with the families in advance. He also made submissions on many of the recommendations that were adopted by Lady Justice Hallett.

Professional Discipline

Substantial experience representing police officers of all ranks in serious and high profile cases.

- Police misconduct in disciplinary hearings and PATs
- Misfeasance in a public office
- Regulatory crime/health and safety

Notable Professional Discipline cases

- **PD (2018)**

Officer alleged to have used excessive force in restraining young person in possession of a 22 inch machete who had rendered a fellow officer unconscious. Officer used martial arts training in restraint.

- **BP (2018)**

Allegations made concerning honesty and integrity by family who were known to the officer for some time.

- **MD (2018)**

Officer disciplined for excessive force when working on close protection detail. Panel found that force used was necessary but in the circumstances excessive. Officer retained his position in the service.

Notable Cases

Crime

DM

Defended acting police sergeant accused of misconduct in public office and perverting the course of justice namely in making up a false account and unlawfully arresting an individual following a routine stop and search. Case initially involved failed prosecution of the allegations in magistrate's court. Major issues of mistake of the part of other uniformed officers and lies by civilians.

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RM

2016

This officer pleaded guilty to misconduct in public office having accepted that he was not authorised to carry a firearm. It was clear that this officer suffered from PTSD and it manifestly affected his position for some period of time.

MS

2016

The defendant pleaded guilty to attempting to pervert the course of justice. He received a suspended sentence due to the effect imprisonment would have on a number of colleagues and employees.

NW

2015

This case was the final "hacking" case to be tried. Neil Wallis was the deputy editor of the News of the World under Andy Coulson's reign. The co-accused had pleaded guilty. Mr Wallis' defence was that he had never been involved or party to

any agreement to hack the telephones of any personality. The main witness was a fellow journalist Dan Evans who was cross-examined for several days as to the detailed and contradictory accounts he had previously given.

CB

2013-2014

Prepared, advised and represented the husband of the principal defendant for nearly two years in the “hacking case”. The trial lasted over 8 months. Neil was sole counsel (every other team co-defending and prosecuting had at least one silk). The allegations he faced were for perverting the course of justice.

Financial Crime

MC

2013-2019

Alleged to have defrauded employer’s company in overseas inheritance scam. Expert evidence needed to explain possible reason for material on emails. Case took over 5 years to come to trial after civil proceedings and applications to stay due to delay and loss of significant items of evidence in the case. Many defence witnesses considered although some not available due to passage of time.

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Defendant was responsible for opening multiple bank accounts in names of a deceased individual over a sustained period of time. Charged with various offences including use of many credit cards and failing to repay sums outstanding. He received a suspended sentence having repaid the money.

WW

2013-2018

Mr Wagbatsoma is a Nigerian businessman accused of Money laundering. Many millions were defrauded from various NHS Trusts by a variety of fraudsters. The defence case was that he understood those he dealt with were foreign exchange currency dealers and that he paid the equivalent in Naira. Neil has advised this client for some time prior to trial

R v D & Others: Southwark Crown Court

2016

Neil was part of the FSA/FCA prosecution team for 4 years as this investigation took some years before coming to trial. There were 5 defendants involved in a 5 month trial resulting in convictions of the principle bankers Martyn Dodson and an accountant Andrew Hind. Both men were sentenced to substantial terms of imprisonment. The value of this insider trading was several million pounds with a profit of some £2.6m.

R v BW: Guildford Crown Court

2015

Instructed to defend in relation to allegations of fraud by false misrepresentation and forgery involving officials at HMRC and the SRA. Considerable number of legal argument as well as client’s medical difficulties.

R v PM: Southwark CC

2013

Prosecuted for FSA (now FCA) a senior equities dealer from Legal and General Investment Management Holdings Ltd

who obtained shares as part of the team on the firm's Equity Central Dealing Desk for Insider Trading. This defendant was in possession of information which was used by his accomplices to place significant spread bets. He had been an approved person and was FSA (now FCA) registered. On conviction sentenced to 2 years imprisonment and received significant confiscation order.

R v N: Central Criminal Court

2012

Prepared in 2012 for a trial involving an alleged fraud involving imported garlic into the UK. Just before trial the defendant absconded and was tried in his absence with no representation. On conviction he was sentenced to a substantial term of imprisonment.

R v JW: Southwark CC

2012

Pleaded guilty to various offences of fraud from the Royal Academy of Music when she was the finance and administration director by means of a false invoicing system. Classic allegation of serious breach of trust that involved her repaying over £400,000 back to RAM at the outset of the investigation.

Inquests

Edson Da Costa

2018-9

Lead counsel for the 5 plain clothed officers involved in stopping a vehicle in which the deceased was a passenger. No dispute that Mr Da Costa, unbeknown to the officers, placed numerous packages of crack cocaine and heroin into his mouth on exiting the vehicle. Soon after a struggle he became unresponsive and medical attention was sought. Several days later he died in hospital. The officers were all granted anonymity in giving evidence in the 5 week inquest due to threats that had been made against them.

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2017

Alleged Misconduct of anonymous Officers A, B, C and D following the death of Henry **Hicks**. MPS Gross Misconduct hearing centred on issue of whether or not officers were engaged in a pursuit. Due to threats officers remained anonymous throughout the proceedings even though they were held in public. All officers were cleared of all allegations brought in IPCC directed hearing.

JC

2016

Main officer accused of sexual impropriety whilst driving his private vehicle in the vicinity of a bus stop where 2 young women were standing. He denied this and a subsequent allegation that he and his brother also a police officer attempted to pervert the course of justice in fabricating a false alibi. This case was more involved due to the use of cell site analysis.

CL

2016

This case alleged that officers during the student riots had perverted the course of justice in giving untruthful accounts of

the events on the evening in question. Having been acquitted in the Crown Court the Gross Misconduct allegations were stayed as an abuse of the process due to the identical issues being alleged with no new material at all after 5 years. Also there was clear prejudice as a result of the failure to subsequently investigate legitimate lines of enquiry.

Regulatory

SIA v Sabrewatch & Others

2009-10

Prosecuted as lead counsel this first major trial for the Security Industry Authority.

This case was brought against a well-known company and three of its principal directors for failing to adhere to the licensing policy and ensuring its guards were licensed under the Security Industry Act. Following a two month trial at Southwark convictions against all the defendants' significant costs, fines and confiscation orders were made. The case was defended by a variety of silks and leading juniors. The preparation for this trial took many months in advance of the jury being sworn in. the process of bringing the case to trial took a number of years due to issues raised by the defence teams.

Directory Recommendations

"Neil is a highly approachable, user-friendly counsel whose advocacy could charm the birds off the trees. He has the knack of winning the unwinnable." **Legal 500 2024: Fraud – Crime**

"Neil instantly brings a degree of confidence within any defence team. He is great on the detail and within a few minutes of meeting any client, instills a sense of calm and positivity. He is a brilliant advocate and very well liked by judges. His advocacy style is robust but very very persuasive." **Legal 500 2024: Crime**

"His knowledge of the law and presentation of legal arguments is universally respected by judges and fellow counsel alike. His breadth of practice attests to his versatility." **Chambers UK 2024: Financial Crime**

"Neil's client care is brilliant and juries love him." **Chambers UK 2024: Financial Crime**

"Always highly engaged with the subject matter, he is a tremendous advocate and a good tactician." **Chambers UK 2023: Crime**

"Neil is the most well-respected junior in the whole field. He is fantastic with clients." **Chambers UK 2023: Financial Crime**

"Neil is the consummate jury advocate. His skill is in reading the room and bringing the jury with him on even the most tricky of defences." **Legal 500 2023: Fraud – Crime**

"He has immense presence in court, is extremely well-respected by judges, is incredibly hard-working." **Legal 500 2022: Crime**

“His judgement is excellent and strategic acumen unparalleled.” **Legal 500 2022: Crime**

“He is in a class of his own as a leading junior.” **Chambers UK 2022: Crime**

“His wealth of experience is immensely reassuring to clients, and he takes a thoughtful approach to cases.” **Chambers UK 2022: Crime**

“He is just superb and really focuses on getting the right result for the client.” **Chambers UK 2022: Financial Crime**

“He is really clever, great with clients and his approach to matters is fantastic.” **Chambers UK 2022: Financial Crime**

“Very affable, likeable and good with tribunals.” **Chambers UK 2022: Professional Discipline**

“He is in a class of his own as a junior. He has immense presence in court, is extremely well-respected by judges, is incredibly hard-working and dedicated to his clients. His judgement is excellent and strategic acumen unparalleled.”
Legal 500 2022: Crime

“Neil’s pre-eminent strengths are his charming and persuasive jury advocacy and his ability to turn the evidence in a case on its head. He is attentive to clients and always delivers.” **Legal 500 2022: Fraud – Crime**

“The best jury advocate at the Bar. A force on his feet. Exquisitely insightful tactically. Brilliant with clients; robust where necessary, whilst always compassionate.” **Legal 500 2021: Crime**

“Neil’s huge strength is his advocacy – his ability to have a jury hanging on his every word and eating out of the palm of his hand. He is extremely good at gaining the confidence of the client – he commands respect with a very light touch. And he is great fun to work with.” **Legal 500 2021: Fraud – Crime**

“A fantastic jury advocate with a real presence in court, who is willing to fight hard on any case.” **Chambers UK 2021: Crime**

“A force of nature, he is superb with clients and a phenomenally persuasive advocate.” **Chambers UK 2021: Crime**

“He is one of the best strategists at the Bar.” **Chambers UK 2021: Crime**

“An amazingly good and persuasive advocate.” **Chambers UK 2021: Financial Crime**

“Outstanding and wonderful with clients.” **Chambers UK 2021: Financial Crime**

“Hugely experienced and has marvellous client-handling skills.” **Chambers UK 2021: Financial Crime**

“His knowledge of the law and presentation of legal arguments is universally respected by judges and fellow counsel alike.” **Chambers UK 2021: Financial Crime**

“He is a supreme tactician, extremely hard-working and commands great respect both inside and outside the courtroom.”
Chambers UK 2021: Financial Crime

“Neil has the most jury-friendly demeanour that you could hope to have in an advocate representing you.” **Chambers UK High Net Worth 2021: Financial Crime**

“Neil Saunders has an unequalled practice as a leading junior and his knowledge of the law and presentation of legal arguments is universally respected by judges and fellow counsel alike.” **Chambers UK 2020: Crime**

“A polished and persuasive advocate.” **Chambers UK 2020: Crime**

“Very easy to work with, very well respected and very experienced, he is one of the best thought-of junior counsel in financial crime.” **Chambers UK 2020: Financial Crime**

“With his experience and his charisma, he’s at the top of the pile when it comes to juniors.” **Chambers UK 2020: Financial Crime**

“He always appears to be five steps ahead of everyone else.” **Legal 500 2020: Crime**

“He is excellent at handling difficult clients.” **Legal 500 2020: Fraud: Crime**

“A phenomenon. He’s brilliant with the jury and incredibly smooth with the judge.” “Juries are very receptive to him as he is down-to-earth and both a very good cross-examiner and a great speech maker.” **Chambers UK 2019: Crime**

“Saunders is widely regarded as a go-to leader in high-profile cases and has been instructed by the FCA in a number of major criminal prosecutions. He is valued for his ability to advise at the pre-charge stage of investigations.” “Outstanding and wonderful with clients.” “He has a lot of experience to draw upon.” **Chambers UK 2019: Financial Crime**

“Meticulous in his preparation, and with great fluidity and charm as an advocate.” **Legal 500 2019: Crime**

“Highly experienced – anyone who instructs him is lucky to have him.” **Legal 500 Fraud 2019: Crime**

“Probably one of the best juniors practicing at present.” **Legal 500 2019: Business & Regulatory Crime**

“Praised for his extremely persuasive advocacy which is ‘plainly silk standard’.” **Chambers UK 2018: Crime**

“Offers gravitas and efficacy in equal measure.” “In terms of his client care and the way he prepares the case, you can’t fault him.” **Chambers UK 2018: Crime**

“He has an unequalled practice as a leading junior and his knowledge of the law and presentation of legal arguments is universally respected by judges and fellow counsel alike. His breadth of practice attests to his versatility.” **Chambers UK 2018: Financial Crime**

“Great with clients, he can see the shape of a defence case and knows how to present it to a jury.” **Chambers UK 2018: Financial Crime**

“One of life’s eternal geniuses.” “Masterful and very well respected by judges and prosecutors alike, as well as co-defending counsel.” “Neil Saunders has an unequalled practice as a leading junior and his knowledge of the law and presentation of legal arguments is universally respected. His breadth of practice attests to his versatility.” **Chambers UK 2017: Crime**

“He has tremendous client care skills and makes the client feel safe.” “He’s a very eloquent advocate and you know if you instruct him on a case he’s as good as many silks.” “He is incredibly client-friendly and good at conveying unwelcome

advice when he has to.” **Chambers UK 2017: Financial Crime**

“Regarded as the leading junior of the Criminal Bar, he has ‘unequalled and highly versatile practice’.” “He is tremendous – he’s very astute, very easy to get on with, very good with clients, and respected by judges. His strategic acumen is second to none among juniors.” **Chambers UK 2016: Crime**

“A very powerful court presence – he really takes control of the court.” “Very good on detail and has an excellent jury manner.” **Chambers UK 2016: Financial Crime**

“He is a cheerful and personable man which is important in these difficult cases.” “His advocacy is admirable, and judges and juries love him.” **Chambers UK 2016: Inquests**

Memberships

- Association of Regulatory and Disciplinary Lawyers
- Criminal Bar Association
- Fraud Lawyers’ Association
- Health & Safety Lawyers Association
- South Eastern Circuit

Education

- BA (Hons) Law

Appointments

- Appointed Visiting Professor of BPP University Law School
- Bencher, Middle Temple (2015)
- South Eastern Circuit Committee (2006-2009)
- Recorder, South Eastern Circuit (2004-)
- Governor ICSL (1999-2001)
- Advocacy Trainer, Middle Temple (1998-)
- Bar Council and CBA Member (1996-1999)

Other Information

- Golf, 22 handicap; competent skier; and willing bridge partner.
- RFU Referee Levels 1 and 2, ex member of London Society of Referees.
- Qualified RFU mini/midi coach level 1 and 2, ex player at London Welsh RFC.
- Previously licensed and qualified pyrotechnic and DCPS choral society.

Accreditations



Privacy Statement

I, Neil Saunders, am a data controller and can be contacted at 3 Raymond Buildings, Gray's Inn, London WC1R 5BH or by telephone on 020 7400 6400 or by email at neil.saunders@3rblaw.com. My Data Protection Policy can be found below.

All personal data that I process is for the purposes of providing legal services, legal research for cases or publications, conducting conflict-checks, marketing, defending potential complaints, legal proceedings or fee disputes, keeping anti-money laundering records, training other barristers and pupils or judicial considerations and appointments and when providing work-shadowing opportunities, and/or exercising a right to a lien. The types of data I process vary upon the nature of the legal matter in relation to which I am engaged to advise, but can include names, contact details, biographic details and 'special category personal data' (such as details of racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, health, sex life and criminal convictions and proceedings).

Depending upon the circumstances of the case, the legal bases upon which I process personal data are (i) the performance of a contract to which the data subject is a party or in order to take steps at the request of the data subject prior to entering into a contract, (ii) the processing is necessary to comply with legal obligations to which I am subject, or (iii) the processing is necessary for the legitimate interests set out above, except where such interests are overridden by the interests or fundamental rights and freedoms of the data subjects which require protection of personal data, in particular where the data subject is a child. When I rely on (iii) legitimate interests, my 'Legitimate Interests Assessment' can be found [here](#). When I process data which has not been obtained directly from the data subject (e.g. personal data contained in evidential materials), it will have been supplied to me as part of my instructions in circumstances covered by legal professional privilege or confidentiality.

Depending upon the circumstances of the case, I may share the personal data with:

1. my Chambers, which supplies professional and administrative support to my practice;
2. Courts and other tribunals to whom documents are presented;
3. my lay and professional clients;
4. potential witnesses, in particular experts, and friends or family of the data subject;
5. solicitors, barristers, pupils, mini pupils and other legal representatives;
6. ombudsmen and regulatory authorities;
7. current, past or prospective employers;
8. education and examining bodies;
9. business associates, professional advisers and trade bodies.

I retain personal data for no longer than 15 years after the case has come to an end or as otherwise required by law save in cases such as murder or historic cases where extended retention may be necessary subject to any possible ongoing review. Also if there is a case where I have acted or advised and there is a potential that further proceedings or enquiries may require my access to the original material and details of my actual involvement for the purposes of any further proceedings, conflict checks or additional AML checks.

I do not intend to transfer data to any country which is not either within the European Union, 'white listed' by the EU or otherwise permitted by EU law (e.g. to the USA under the provisions of the 'Privacy Shield').

Under the GDPR, data subjects whose personal data I process have the right to request from me access to, and rectification or erasure of, their personal data, the right to the restriction of processing concerning them, the right to object to processing as well as the right to data portability. Data subjects also have the right to lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner's Office (ico.org.uk).

In cases where there is a contract between me and the data subject, the provision of personal data is a contractual requirement and the data subject is obliged to provide the personal data in order that I can supply legal services. A failure to provide such data may mean that I will not be able to provide the legal services.

Rev 1.1 18.02.2019

[Data Protection Policy](#)

[Legitimate Interests Assessment](#)

Direct Access

Neil Saunders is qualified to accept instructions direct from clients under the Bar Council's [Public Access](#) Scheme. This means that members of the public who seek specialist advice can come direct to him. In addition, he welcomes instructions from solicitors, in-house law departments, qualified foreign lawyers, and clients licensed by the Bar Council to give instructions direct to barristers under the Bar Council's [Licensed Access](#) Scheme.

For further information please contact our [Clerks](#).