



Lawrence Cohen QC

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Clerks' Details

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“A terrific strategist with great teamworking skills, who shows real empathy with the clients.”

Chambers & Partners, 2016

Practice Overview

Lawrence's practice centres on complex, high-value business disputes and transactions, often with an offshore or international aspect. Mental agility and a dynamic approach focused on solutions has drawn an enviable international client base.

He has wide experience of financial market and security transactions and investment funds of most kinds. His background in structuring and insolvency as well as offshore trusts and vehicles has been invaluable in recent years of financial market difficulty.

Vitaly important tools in Lawrence's work are skills in accountancy and valuation as well as good knowledge of the inside workings of banks and funds. Commercial acumen is an essential in understanding the subject matter and, more importantly, resolving the issues.

Lawrence has appeared numerous times in the Cayman Islands, the British Virgin Islands, the Turks and Caicos Islands and other less usual jurisdictions.

Recent examples of Lawrence's cases give a good feel for his practice:

Symrise AG v Baker & McKenzie Successfully defending B&M for negligence in €1.8 billion takeover for alleged defects in structuring and tax advice in Mexico of largest subsidiaries outside Germany – no damage suffered 2015 EWHC 912 (Comm)

Planck v Vitrol Holdings II SA and Tinsel SA Acting for Claimant in Rotterdam proceedings challenging conversion of shares which had received dividend rights of about \$200m into preferred shares with no rights to profits. This involved a Dutch law shareholders agreement for a Luxembourg company holding shares of all US shareholders of world's largest oil trader. Alleged to be an improper squeeze out in breach of shareholders' agreement. Judgement (transcript available) obtained for Claimant in late 2015 now under challenge in proceedings in 2016/17 which have taken evidence from 17 witnesses. Judgment awaited.

Re Eurasia Drilling Ltd A Petition in the Grand Court of the Cayman Islands to fix fair value of dissenters shares under s238 of the Companies Law after a merger.

Older cases have included appearing for the BCCI liquidators (obtaining \$2.1 billion judgment after full trial for conspiracy) and defending the estate of the late Gen Abacha (accused of stealing c\$13 billion from Nigerian Treasury whilst Head of State).

Memberships

- Chancery Bar Association
- ComBar
- MCIA

Publications

- [The effect of 'social evils' on trustees' decisions](#) (2014) *Trusts & Trustees* 20 (9): 882-890
- [Trustee exculpation - the law, the quirks and the business sense](#) (2014) *Trusts & Trustees* 20 (9): 933-942



Trusts, Tax, Probate and Estates

The special type of private client work fits perfectly into the wider offshore and business practice of this highly experienced and mature silk. He undertakes only a small number of cases each year. All are very high value (often measured in billions rather than millions), complex and require intensive work, sometimes over prolonged periods. Over recent years, he has been instructed by family offices and a small number of very large trusts in connection with their structures and operations.

Three points differentiate Lawrence's practice: (1) almost all trust cases are offshore or international in character rather than domestic, (2) clients are usually the super rich or their family offices or equivalent, (3) he often works on non-contentious issues.

Where litigation is involved, it is often in one of the Caribbean offshore jurisdictions such as Cayman, where he has appeared in court on literally hundreds of occasions. To thrive in this highly competitive arena of world class players is itself probably the greatest testimony to his standing in this market.

He has a charming but penetrating style that always cuts right through to the heart of the issues. His advocacy is simple, clear and compelling.