



Brian Altman KC

Call 1981

Silk 2008

Brian Altman KC's main specialisms are public inquiries, fraud and bribery, corporate governance, compliance and regulatory work. A large part of his practice is advising prominent private and corporate clients, as well as the UK Government, on a wide range of high-profile and esoteric issues. His work involves both private prosecution and defence.

Brian's clients have included high-net-worth individuals, foreign multinational corporations and UK PLCs and other organisations, as well as a Middle Eastern Royal Family. Typically, his instructions emanate from well-known and respected City solicitors, but also from in-house Counsel.

Brian has long and successful experience as leading counsel in the most serious, high-profile cases of murder and terrorism, and has headed and advised teams of lawyers and investigators countless times over several years.

In June 2013, Brian ended his highly successful tenure as Treasury Counsel at the Old Bailey, having been Treasury Counsel for some 16 years, the last two-and-a-half of which had been as First Senior Treasury Counsel.

Notable work

In May 2021, Brian was commissioned by the Director of the Serious Fraud Office to investigate and report into the collapse of the Serco trial of R v Woods and Marshall in April 2021. His report was published by the Serious Fraud Office on 21 July 2022.

The link to the Director's statement and the Report and Annexes may be found at:

<https://www.sfo.gov.uk/2022/07/21/publication-of-brian-altman-qc-and-sir-david-calvert-smith-reviews/>

In January 2017, Brian was appointed Lead Counsel to the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) (to see The Times report of the appointment [click here](#)). Brian provided strategic and legal advice to the Chair and Panel on all aspects of the Inquiry, as well as overseeing the large counsel team. He appeared as Lead Counsel in a number of the Inquiry's high-profile investigations. The final report was published in October 2022. See <https://www.iicsa.org.uk/reports-recommendations/publications/inquiry/final-report>

In the spring of 2021, Brian was appointed as Lead Counsel to the Brook House Inquiry, whose terms of reference were to examine the mistreatment of detained individuals at the [Brook House Immigration Removal Centre](#) in Gatwick, then run by G4S, which was exposed in a BBC Panorama programme in September 2017. The Inquiry concluded in September 2023 with the publication of its report. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/brook-house-inquiry>

Brian is representing the Secretary of State for Defence and the Ministry of Defence in the Independent Inquiry relating to Afghanistan established in December 2022.

He is also instructed on behalf of Boris Johnson, the former Prime Minister, in Module 2 of the Covid Inquiry.

During his time as Treasury Counsel, Brian advised on, and prosecuted, some of the best-known cases of the day such as the case of John Downey, alleged to be an IRA man guilty of the 1982 Hyde Park bombing, who had erroneously received a comfort letter indicating he was not wanted in the UK; the notorious abduction and murder of Milly Dowler and the killing of Amelie Delagrangue and Marsha McDonnell and the attempted murder of Kate Sheedy; the so-called 'Babes in the Woods' murder case – the killing of 9 year old Karen Hadaway and Nicola Fellows in Brighton by Russell Bishop in 1986. In March 2020, Brian led for the prosecution in the first trial concerning the death of PC Andrew Harper who was dragged to his death by a car driven by three young men escaping from their theft of a quad bike. That trial had to be aborted due to Covid-19. Brian was unable to prosecute the retrial in June 2020. The three were convicted of PC Harper's manslaughter.

In March 2021, Brian, leading Simon Baker KC, Jacqueline Carey KC, Charlotte Brewer and Helen Jones (all of 2BR), instructed by Nick Vamos of Peters & Peters and Hannah Laming (then Peters & Peters, now at Squire Patton Boggs), appeared on behalf of Post Office Ltd in the Court of Appeal Criminal Division in relation to 42 cases referred by the Criminal Cases Review Commission (CCRC) in what was the largest conjoined appeal ever heard by the Court of Appeal Criminal Division (R v Hamilton & Others [2021] EWCA Crim 577. You can read the full judgment [here](#).)

The appeals all related to individuals who had been prosecuted by the Royal Mail Group and post-2012 by Post Office Ltd between 2000 and 2013 relying on evidence from the Horizon accounting system which has since been found to suffer from bugs, errors and defects. None of the counsel team, nor Peters & Peters, had been involved in prosecuting any of the cases during this period, and were brought in to conduct a thorough review of the cases to ensure proper disclosure was made and to advise on and conduct the appeals. Leading a team of over 60 review counsel, the counsel team oversaw an enormous post-conviction disclosure review exercise (with over 4 million documents subjected to review and substantially over 300,000 pages of material disclosed) to enable the appellants to advance their appeals.

Following advice from the counsel team, the appeals of the 39 successful appellants had been conceded on grounds of limb one abuse of process (with four of those 39 appeals conceded on grounds of both limb one and limb two abuse of process). Only three of the 42 appeals were opposed on all grounds, and the Court of Appeal upheld all three of those convictions.

Testimonials

Over the years Brian has consistently been acknowledged to be 'a leader in his field' by both Chambers & Partners and the Legal 500. In 2007, Brian was nominated by Chambers & Partners as 'Crime Junior of the Year' and in 2011 as 'Crime Silk of the Year'. In 2013, he was nominated by Legal 500 as 'Crime Silk of the Year' and in 2022 as 'Public Inquiries Silk of the Year'. Brian was also selected by Lawyer Monthly as winner of the 2015 'White Collar Crime Barrister of the Year – UK'.

The Times has named Brian in its Law 100 list as one of the country's 100 most influential lawyers. He was also listed by The London Evening Standard in the law section of the list of London's 1000 most influential people for 2011, and in 2012 he was named by The London Evening Standard as one of London's top three

'Golden Legal Eagles' in crime.

Brian was also featured in The Times on 17 December 2020 as their Lawyer of the Week for his work as Lead Counsel to the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse. See [The Times](#).

Media and Select Committees

On 12 February 2024, Brian gave evidence alongside Sir John Saunders (Chair of the Manchester Arena Inquiry) and Kate Eves (Chair of the Brook House Inquiry) in the first evidence session of the House of Lords Select Committee looking into statutory inquiries, following on from the House of Lords' Committee's 2014 report on its post-legislative scrutiny of the Inquiries Act 2005. Watch here: [Parliamentlive.tv – Statutory Inquiries Committee](#)

The House of Lords Committee report was published on 16 September 2024. You can read it here: [House of Lords – Statutory Inquiries Committee](#)

Brian was interviewed on Times Radio about public inquiries on 8 December by Ruth Davidson and on 10 December by Calum Macdonald.

The interview with Ruth Davidson is available on the following link (between 53.43 and 59.45): <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/radio/show/20231208-17909/2023-12-08> and the interview with Calum Macdonald is available on the following link (between 02.48.10 and 02.55.52): <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/radio/show/20231210-15971/2023-12-10>

On 19 October 2022, Brian appeared before the Justice Committee in Parliament to give evidence about the report into the collapse of Serco trial of R v Woods and Marshall in April 2021. He appeared with Sir David Calvert-Smith (former DPP and High Court Judge) and Anthony Rogers (His Majesty's Inspector of the Crown Prosecution Service) in relation to their report into the SFO's mishandling of the Unaoil case. Watch [here](#).

The case of Ash-Smith (an historic murder of a 16-year-old schoolgirl in which Brian successfully led for the prosecution) was one of two historic cases featured in Episode 3 of the BBC4 documentary series 'The Prosecutors' in which cameras were allowed into court buildings for the first time. The programme in which Brian was interviewed followed milestones in the preparation and prosecution of the case to its successful conclusion. See [BBC iPlayer: the prosecutors](#).

Brian also featured in the 2019 BBC2 documentary 'The Babes in the Wood Murders: The Prosecutors' about the successful quashing of Russell Bishop's acquittal in 1987 for the murder of two 9-year-old Brighton girls in 1986 and his retrial and conviction at the Old Bailey in 2018 in which Brian led for the prosecution. See [The Times](#).

Media agencies frequently ask Brian for his opinion and input on current legal affairs, and he has been quoted and mentioned in many media articles. In a Channel 4 News online article by Patrick Worrall 'Why is there no courtroom drama like the real thing', dealing with the issue of cameras in the courtroom, Patrick wrote:

"Court reporters sit around and argue over top prosecutors the way that fight fans talk about boxers. Who's the best, pound-for-pound? We all had our favourites. Mine was Brian Altman QC, vanquisher of Milly Dowler's repulsive killer Levi Bellfield, among others. Mr Altman is an expert cross-examiner, breaking down the hardest of the hard men with patient, remorseless logic, trapping them with their own lies." See [Channel 4](#).

Brian has been interviewed by Clive Coleman, the former BBC legal affairs correspondent, for the Radio 4 Today programme broadcast on 4 April 2013 about the end of his tenure as First Senior Treasury Counsel and the workings of the Treasury Counsel system. See [BBC News](#).

He has been quoted in several articles and often gives talks and seminars to legal professionals on practical and current legal issues.

Practice Areas

Public Inquiries

In January 2023, Brian was appointed to the team of counsel representing the Secretary of State for Defence and the Ministry of Defence in the Independent Inquiry relating to Afghanistan, established by the Secretary of State in December 2022. The Inquiry has been set up to examine and report on allegations of unlawful killings by British Army personnel in Afghanistan between 2010 and 2013, as well as the adequacy of investigations by the Service Police and alleged cover-up.

Brian has been instructed on behalf of Boris Johnson, the former Prime Minister, in Module 2 of the Covid Inquiry.

In January 2017, Brian was appointed Lead Counsel to the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) (to see The Times report of the appointment [click here](#)). Brian provided strategic and legal advice to the Chair and Panel on all aspects of the Inquiry, as well as overseeing the large counsel team. Brian was Lead Counsel in the Inquiry's high-profile investigations into Cambridge House, Knowl View and Rochdale, Allegations of Child Sexual Abuse linked to Westminster, The Roman Catholic Church, Institutional Responses to Allegations of Child Sexual Abuse involving the late Lord Janner of Braunstone QC and Effective Leadership of Child Protection.

IICSA was set up by the then Home Secretary (the former Prime Minister, Theresa May) in 2015 to investigate institutional responses into allegations of child sexual abuse made against State and non-State institutions in England and Wales. The Inquiry was one of the highest profile and largest statutory inquiries ever to be established by the Government and lasted in excess of seven years.

The Inquiry ended in 2022 when it published its final report on October 2022. The Inquiry has attracted a large amount of domestic and international publicity and continues to do so.

See <https://www.iicsa.org.uk/reports-recommendations/publications/inquiry/final-report>

In the spring of 2021, Brian was appointed as Lead Counsel to the Brook House Inquiry, whose terms of reference are to examine the mistreatment of detained individuals at the [Brook House Immigration Removal Centre](#) in Gatwick, then run by G4S, which was exposed in a BBC Panorama programme in September 2017. The Inquiry concluded in September 2023 with the publication of its report. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/brook-house-inquiry>

Appeals

Brian has appeared in courts up to and including the Supreme Court.

Notable appeals cases

R v Hamilton & Others [2021] EWCA Crim 577

The conjoined appeals by 42 subpostmasters before the Court of Appeal on references by the Criminal Cases Review Commission (CCRC) for offences prosecuted by Royal Mail Group and Post Office Ltd between 2000 and 2013.

R v Bishop [2019] 1 WLR 2489

The successful prosecution appeal to quash the 1987 acquittal of Russell Bishop for the notorious 'Babes in the Woods' murders in Brighton in 1986 on grounds of 'new and compelling evidence'.

R v Sarwar & Ahmed [2015] EWCA Crim 1886

Sentences for offences under section 5 Terrorism Act 2006 of individuals returning from Syria.

R v Ekaireb [2015] EWCA Crim 1936

Safety of a conviction for an historic missing body murder where the QC acting for the appellant was said to have been incompetent. The Court of Appeal, presided over by the Lord Chief Justice, refused to allow the appeal and refused also to interfere with the appellant's sentence (see [2016] 1 Cr.App.R.(S.) 54).

R v D [2014] 1 W.L.R. 525

Adverse inferences from silence at trial in the case of an ADHD sufferer. The case dealt with the tension between the adverse inference from silence at trial and ensuring vulnerable defendants have a fair trial.

R v Gnango [2012] 2 W.L.R. 17 [SC]

Landmark Supreme Court judgment by 7 Supreme Court Justices which by a majority of 6-1 overturned the decision of the 5 judge Court of Appeal [2010] 2 Cr.App.R. 345 on a novel and unique issue of joint enterprise and transferred malice in murder.

R v Beesley & Coyle [2012] 1 Cr.App.R.(S.) 15

Court of Appeal decision whether or not psychological assessment is permissible at the appeal stage to overturn an inde-terminate sentence.

R v Boggild & Others [2011] 4 All E.R. 1285

First prosecution appeal to Court of Ap-peal under the Football Spectators Act 1989.

R v Stewart [2009] 2 Cr.App.R. 500

Guidance by the Lord Chief Justice in diminished responsibility cases where the abnormality is said to be alcohol dependency syndrome.

R v Gian & Mohd-Yusoff [2009] EWCA Crim 2553

Causation in homicide; half-time submissions; and hearsay.

Crime

Brian has prosecuted and advised the Crown Prosecution Service (“CPS”) and the Attorney General in many serious cases both as Treasury Counsel and since involving:

- Advising solicitors in Singapore on behalf of a client charged with serious drugs offences in relation to trial and appeal proceedings taking place in Singapore
- Advising Police Scotland on a highly sensitive enquiry arising out of the RUC shooting of two men in a hayshed in Northern Ireland in the 1980s
- Murder, manslaughter
- Corporate manslaughter
- Breaches of the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974
- Medical manslaughter
- Police misconduct
- War crimes
- Official secrets and terrorism

Brian’s defence work is highly regarded. He was instructed privately by David Sonn of Sonn Macmillan Walker to represent a businessman, RF, at Snaresbrook Crown Court in September and October 2015. RF was accused of a large-scale drugs conspiracy. RF was acquitted following successful arguments regarding the admissibility of evidence which led to RF’s discharge on one of two counts he faced on the indictment, and he was finally discharged on the remaining count following a successful submission of no case at the close of the prosecution case.

In 2015, Brian was instructed privately by Ian Kelcey of Kelcey & Hall of Bristol to represent LW, one of four serving police officers, accused of misconduct in public office arising from a high profile murder case in Bristol in July 2013. Brian’s client was acquitted by the jury unanimously after a seven week trial at Bristol Crown Court which ended just before Christmas 2015.

In June 2017, Brian, who was instructed privately by Ian Kelcey of Kelcey & Hall of Bristol, secured the acquittal of GD, a former senior police chief in Avon & Somerset, who was accused of sexually assaulting women on cross country trains in the west country. GD had been accused by 3 women of 5 sexual assaults, but, following a 5 day trial at Bristol Crown Court, the jury acquitted GD of all the charges.

He is regularly instructed by the Crown Prosecution Service Counter Terrorism Division to prosecute terrorism offences including, most recently, those arising from the conflict in Syria, and by Complex Casework Units of the Crown Prosecution Service in a variety of high profile, difficult, and often historic, homicide cases.

Notable crime cases

R v GD

Brian acted for a former Chief Superintendent who was accused of a series of sexual assaults on women on trains in the west country. Following a trial in June at Bristol Crown Court, GD was acquitted of all charges.

R v AB

A multimillion pound money laundering case where Brian led for the main defendant. Despite the defendant pleading guilty to most of the charges only just before trial, and in spite of the amount said to have been laundered, Brian was able to secure a non-custodial sentence for AB.

R v LW

A high profile case in which the prosecution alleged that three police officers and one PCSO had misconducted themselves in public office in July 2013 in Bristol in relation to their dealings with a man called Bijan Ebrahimi. Brian represented one of the officers, LW, who it was alleged had failed to deal properly with Ebrahimi's 999 call one evening in which he alleged that his neighbour, Lee James, had assaulted him in his home and had accused him (wrongly) of being a paedophile. It was said also that LW had failed to deal with Lee James' behaviour at the scene, in particular James's threats to kill Ebrahimi. Thus the prosecution alleged against LW that she had failed to arrest Lee James, or deal adequately with his behaviour, and that she had failed to investigate Ebrahimi's complaint all due to her alleged antipathy towards him. LW faced a further allegation relating to a separate occasion when she had refused to speak to Ebrahimi when he had tried calling her when she was on other duties. Within an hour Ebrahimi was murdered by Lee James with an accomplice offering him assistance. LW was acquitted by the jury unanimously after a seven week trial at Bristol Crown Court.

R v Khalid Ali

Khalid Ali disappeared from London in 2011 and found his way to Afghanistan where he joined the insurgency, becoming a bomb-maker for the Taliban and the affiliated terror organisation, Al Qaeda. Ali returned to the UK in 2016 and in the following months began plotting to kill a policeman, military person or a politician in the Whitehall area which he had reconnoitered on two occasions before making his way to the area on 27 April 2017 armed with three knives in order to carry out his intentions. The plan was thwarted by armed police who intercepted Ali as he crossed Parliament Street. In later interviews with the police, Ali admitted to having been a Taliban bomb-maker and to having detonated over 300 IEDs to cause explosions. He freely admitted to being a trained Taliban fighter and a mujahid. He said he had returned to deliver a 'message' to the decision-makers in the UK. He said he had pledged his allegiance to successive leaders of the Taliban and to the leader of Al Qaeda. He resiled from this account at trial, claiming he had been captured by the Taliban or their affiliates and forced under threat of execution to make IEDs. He said that on 27 April 2017 he had only been carrying knives into town for his own protection and had not

planned to carry out any acts of terrorism. The jury saw through his account and convicted him unanimously of making explosive substances and preparation of acts of terrorism.

R v Hassane, Majeed, Hamlett & Cuffy

This was the first prosecution of a major Islamic State-influenced plot to kill in the UK. The terror plot was successfully disrupted by the Security Services and police in late September and October 2014 with the arrests of several individuals. Hassane and Majeed plotted to kill servicemen or policemen in drive-by style shootings with a firearm with which they had been supplied by Hamlett and Cuffy. The plot was directed and funded from abroad, most likely from Syria, and while Hassane, who in July 2014 had pledged his allegiance to Islamic State, led the plot chiefly from Sudan where he was studying medicine, Majeed who had been studying physics in London acquired the gun from Hamlett and he was tasked to arrange for an untraceable moped and a lock-up, while engaging in secret communications with his controllers abroad on a laptop. The plot received further impetus in late September 2014 when the official spokesman for Islamic State issued a fatwa to extremists in the West to kill.

R v Khawaja, Bhatti & Ali

In this case Khawaja went to Syria in 2014 to join with Rayat al Tawheed, and IS-related jihadist insurgent force in Syria, where he received weapons training with a view to fighting. He returned to the UK after Rayat al Tawheed put out a false story on social media that Khawaja had been killed in battle in order to provide cover for his secret return. His cousin Bhatti assisted him to get back into the UK, and Ali had helped fund his journey into Syria. All pleaded guilty to a variety of terrorism offences.

R v Sarwar & Ahmed

Two young men pleading guilty to engaging in conduct in preparation of terrorism, having been in and returned from Syria after five months with Al Nusra, an Al Qaeda-affiliated group, fighting Assad's regime.

R v Begg

Former Guantanamo detainee charged with terrorism offences but dropped in light of material undermining the case.

R v Downey

'On the run' IRA man accused of 1982 Hyde Park bombing but not prosecutable having erroneously received a letter of assurance from the government in 2007 that he was not wanted in the UK.

R v Naseer, Khalid & Ali

Convictions of Birmingham terror bomb plotters at Woolwich Crown Court in February 2013 following a 5 month trial.

R v Lewington

Conviction of white supremacist for offences under the Terrorism Acts 2000 and 2006 and the Explosive Substances Act 1883.

R v Boukhezer

Terrorism Act offences arising from the raid on Finsbury Park mosque.

Operation Odin

International plot to bomb the Christmas market in Strasbourg.

R v Rivas & Others

News of the World scoop about a plot to kidnap Victoria Beckham.

Murder & Manslaughter

Brian has advised in and prosecuted some of the biggest homicide cases of the day and continues to do so. He has been instructed in several defence homicide cases.

Notable murder & manslaughter cases

R v Long, Bowers & Cole

Brian led for the prosecution in the high-profile case concerning the untimely death of PC Andrew Harper, a Thames Valley Police Officer who was killed in the line of duty in August 2019 in Berkshire. The three defendants had been involved in the theft locally of a quad bike and were fleeing in their car when PC Harper tried courageously to apprehend them. Caught by his ankles in a tow rope tied to the boot of their car, he was dragged to his death by the car for over a mile. The first trial which Brian prosecuted in March 2020 was aborted in the third week due to the loss of jurors owing to the impact of Covid-19. Brian was unable to prosecute the retrial in June 2020 because of other pre-existing professional commitments. All three defendants were convicted of PC Harper's manslaughter.

R v Russell Bishop

Brian led for the prosecution in this notorious murder case from 1986. Both victims were 9-year-old girls. Bishop led the little girls into woods within half a mile of their Brighton homes and strangled them to death and sexually assaulted them. He was charged and tried with the murders at Lewes Crown Court but acquitted in December 1987. However, in 1990 he went on to abduct, attempt to murder and sexually assault a 7-year-old girl for which he was convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment. In the meantime, the murder case remained open and was reviewed over the decades. Eventually new scientific evidence led

to the quashing of the acquittals by the Court of Appeal in December 2017 and the ordering of a new trial. In October 2018, the new trial began, and in December 2018 (in fact on the very same day 31 years after his acquittals) Bishop was convicted of the murders and sentenced to life imprisonment with a minimum term of 36 years. The case is the oldest to be tried under the double jeopardy rule.

R v Hampton

This was the high profile case of the murder and sexual assault of 17 year old Melanie Road in Bath in 1984. The prosecution case was that she had been stabbed to death and sexually assaulted in a residential street as she returned home from a night out. A DNA sample provided by the defendant's older daughter in 2014 following her arrest for a minor matter provided a familial match to DNA from the crime scene. The defendant voluntarily provided an elimination sample which led to his eventual arrest and charge. The defendant pleaded guilty to Melanie Road's murder at Bristol Crown Court on 9th May 2016 and was sentenced to life imprisonment with a minimum term of 22 years. Brian was instructed to advise and represent the defendant by Kelcey & Hall Solicitors of Bristol.

R v SW

High profile case of 15 year old girl of previous good character accused of secondary participation in murder by the beating of a man on the street with an older youth. W's erstwhile best friend who had been present at the scene gave evidence against her of direct participation in the attack and of filming the event on her phone, and another young witness alleged she had later confessed to it, despite which W was acquitted by the jury within an hour.

R v Collins

The defendant was one of three young men accused of involvement in a revenge knife murder following a gun attack on the home of a co-defendant. The defendant was convicted following a trial at the Old Bailey in 2014. The 24 year minimum term of his life sentence was later reduced to 22 years on appeal to the Court of Appeal.

R v Ash-Smith

Historic murder of 16 year old Claire Tiltman who was savagely stabbed to death in a dark alley in Greenhithe, Kent, in January 1993.

R v Ekaireb

The defendant was convicted in 2013 of the historic missing body murder of his pregnant wife who went missing without trace in October 2006.

R v Desuze & Desuze

16 year old Darrell Desuze pleaded guilty at his trial to the unlawful killing of 68 year old Richard Mannington Bowes during the 2011 summer riots in Ealing, having punched the deceased hard to the jaw,

causing an unprotected fall on to his head, from which he died; he also pleaded guilty to violent disorder and to four burglaries during the same night's disturbances. His mother, Lavinia Desuze, was later convicted of perverting the course of justice by destroying and disposing of the distinctive articles of clothing her son had been wearing that night.

R v Bikubi & Bamu

This was the case of the murder of 15 year old Kristy Bamu, and assaults on two others of his siblings, on Christmas Day 2010 in the defendants' east London flat during days of a process of deliverance or exorcism, which was grounded in the belief that Kristy and the other children were practising on another child of the family a form of witchcraft, known in the Congo as 'kindoki'.

R v Kanagasingham

Killing of well-known immigration and human rights solicitor David (also Sonia) Burgess who was pushed under a tube train at King's Cross in October 2010 by the defendant who was convicted of manslaughter on grounds of diminished responsibility.

R v Bellfield

2011 convictions of serial killer Levi Bellfield for the 2002 abduction and murder of Amanda Dowler in Walton-on-Thames and 2008 convictions for the 2003/2004 murders of Amelie Delagrange and Marsha McDonnell, and the attempted murder of Kate Sheedy.

R v Sweeney

First joint Anglo-Dutch murder investigation funded by 'Eurojust' and conviction of canal murderer John Sweeney who killed and dismembered former American model and photographer, Melissa Halstead, in Holland in 1990, and disposed of her remains in a Rotterdam canal, and Paula Fields in London in 2000, whose dismembered body parts were found in the Regent's Canal in 2001.

R v Thomas, Alexander & Burke

Convictions for manslaughter of Ian Baynham in Trafalgar Square in September 2009 following homophobic abuse.

R v Gnango

Murder of a Polish care worker who was killed in the crossfire of a gunfight between the defendant and another youth, where the defendant had not fired the fatal bullet and the victim had been the unintended target. Having passed through a 5 judge Court of Appeal, in December 2011, the Supreme Court, consisting of 7 justices, overturned the Court of Appeal's judgment by a majority of 6-1, and restored the offender's murder conviction on novel and unique issues of joint enterprise and transferred malice.

R v Dixie

Croydon murder of model Sally Anne Bowman.

R v Mulcahy

Second offender prosecuted and convicted for the 1980's railway murders; John Duffy who was convicted of the offences in the 1980s gave evidence for the prosecution against his former partner in crime, David Mulcahy.

R v Suleyman & Others

First Damilola Taylor prosecution.

R v Campbell

Missing body murder of Danielle Jones who was killed by her uncle.

R v Morton

Missing body homicide from 1997 where the defendant had killed and disposed of the body of his wife, Gracia Morton.

Business Crime

While Brian's main area of practice is in serious crime, his practice sees him regularly advising both private and corporate clients across a wide and esoteric range of commercial activities and issues, including on private prosecutions.

In addition to significant high net worth individuals, and household name corporations, Brian advised the Competition & Markets Authority (formerly the Office of Fair Trading) over several years in a high-profile UK-wide cartel investigation involving the construction industry, which concluded with the sentencing in September 2017 of Barry Cooper who had pleaded guilty to a cartel offence.

Brian has also advised the SFO in major blockbuster cases, and the FCA on insider dealing, and over the years he has defended, and advised, in large-scale fraud (such as the high profile Butte Mining PLC and Brent Walker frauds) including mortgage and tax fraud, insider dealing and other serious fraud and corruption cases.

In May 2021, Brian was commissioned by the Director of the Serious Fraud Office to investigate and report into the collapse of the Serco trial of R v Woods and Marshall in April 2021. His report was published by the Serious Fraud Office in July 2022. See [Publication of Brian Altman QC and Sir David Calvert-Smith reviews - Serious Fraud Office \(sfo.gov.uk\)](#)

On 19 October 2022, Brian appeared before the Justice Committee in Parliament to give evidence about the report. He appeared with Sir David Calvert-Smith (former DPP and High Court Judge) and Anthony Rogers (His Majesty's Inspector of the Crown Prosecution Service) in relation to their report into the SFO's mishandling of the Unaoil case. Watch [here](#).

Notable business crime cases

Advising a European-based corporate client on a private prosecution regarding a sophisticated pan-European fraud.

Advising on a potential private prosecution involving allegations of conspiracy to defraud and conspiracy to pervert the course of justice, among other possible substantive offences, arising out of High Court commercial litigation involving parallel imports of luxury items.

Advising a nationwide firm of solicitors on issues arising under the Official Secrets Act.

A US based global aerospace corporation on issues of Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 compliance during a \$100m acquisition of a UK company.

City administrators involved in tracing the £100 millions of assets of a PLC were there have been previous allegations of fraud.

A Swedish multinational company on suspected fraud during a £1.7bn reverse takeover involving a British PLC.

Significant high net worth individuals following the judicial review of unlawfully obtained search warrants by a prosecution authority.

A well-known British construction and civil engineering PLC on compliance with the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002.

A global information services group on the Data Protection 1998 processes of a target company during due diligence in the course of the target company's acquisition.

The Bar Council on the application of the Bribery Act 2010 to Bar referral fees.

A City firm of solicitors on judicial review proceedings arising out of the unlawful execution of a search warrant.

LOCOG prior to the London 2012 Olympics on internet-based ticket-touting offences.

A significant high net worth individual on issues arising from the phone hacking enquiry.

Directory Quotes

- “Brian has got an amazing grasp of detail ... He is a fantastic leader and a brilliant advocate ... excellent strategically.” **Chambers Bar Guide 2025 (Inquests & Public Inquiries)**
- “He is brilliant, one of the rock stars of the Bar. What Brian hasn’t done or doesn’t know isn’t worth doing or knowing. He is great on his feet, enormously respected by judges and opponents fear him.” “Brian is very hard-working, considered and a complete fighter.” “He is just an all-round brilliant barrister.” **Chambers Bar Guide 2025 (Financial Crime: Corporates)**
- “He is incredibly capable and knows his briefings in and out.” **Chambers Bar Guide 2025 (Crime)**
- “Brian is an excellent advocate ... has the ability to understand complex information very quickly and has an analytical and forensic mind.” **Legal 500 2025 (Inquests and Inquiries)**
- “If you need a heavyweight barrister in a serious matter, look no further ... One of the absolute best around.” **Legal 500 2025 (Business & Regulatory Crime (Including Global Investigations))**
- “A stalwart of the criminal Bar who has attracted widespread commendation for his work at the helm of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse.” **Chambers Bar Guide 2024 (Inquests & Public Inquiries)**
- “Incredibly thorough, impressive in court and has a huge legal knowledge.” “A master of the detail. His real strength is in mastering the detail and presenting that in a form that is digestible to the jury.” “Carries a degree of gravitas that doesn’t come often. He will always be one of the greats of the Bar in his generation.” **Chambers Bar Guide 2024 (Crime)**
- “Widely recognised for his ability to handle both complex and novel issues of law. He is involved in some of the most high-profile cases regarding crime and fraud.” **Chambers Bar Guide 2024 (Financial Crime: Corporates)**
- “The heavyweight champion of the inquiry world. A brilliant operator.” **Legal 500 2024 (Inquests and Inquiries)**
- “A colossus of the Bar who deservedly commands the respect of the judiciary, opponents, clients and all of his team. His advocacy is pitched perfectly, and he combines gravitas and legal mastery with a common touch. He is a brilliant tactician and clients, lay and professional, love him. Simply one of the best.” **Legal 500 2024 (Crime)**

- “One of the best of his generation. There are few that equal his ability and skill.” **Legal 500 2024 (Business & Regulatory Crime (Including Global Investigations))**
- “One of only a handful of go-to barristers for inquiries. His criminal experience makes him a very effective counsel to the inquiry or chair of an inquiry; and he can manage huge teams and vast quantities of material, which makes him ideal for this sort of work. He has all the skills to get the best out of witnesses, opponents and panellists, and his advocacy is focused, clear and strategic.” **Legal 500 2023 (Inquests and Inquiries)**
- “One of the big beasts of the criminal Bar. He combines a ferocious work ethic, incredible attention to detail and strategic vision. He commands the confidence of the court as well as he commands his brief – a superb appellate advocate.” **Legal 500 2023 (Business & Regulatory Crime (Including Global Investigations))**
- “He has an extraordinary amount of experience and is a real perfectionist who dedicates himself to his cases entirely.” **Chambers Bar Guide 2023 (Crime)**
- “He is a force of nature. He is extremely driven and hard-working.” “He brings all the forensic ability of one of the great criminal practitioners into the inquest arena.” **Chambers Bar Guide 2022 (Inquests & Public Inquiries)**
- “He is always on top of the facts and brilliant in his lateral thinking. His advocacy is second to none in terms of the way he cross-examines and conveys his points.” “Brian makes himself available and brings a lot of gravitas to the case.” “So hard-working, he understands the issues and gets to the point.” **Chambers Bar Guide 2022 (Crime)**
- “Brian is formidable. He sets high standards for all involved and has complete mastery of the detail of a case. Nothing gets past him and he is very effective in his advocacy in the role of counsel to the inquiry.” **Legal 500 2022 (Inquests and Inquiries)**
- “Brian is hugely experienced, strategically astute, has impeccable judgment of risk and commands the respect of both the client and the judiciary. An inspirational leader who demands high standards of himself and others. He is a role model in his capacity for hard work, attention to detail but never losing sight of the bigger picture.” **Legal 500 2022 (Business & Regulatory Crime (Including Global Investigations))**
- “Brian is unstoppable. Like a steam-roller, once he’s set his course, he won’t deviate from his path and will crush anything that gets in the way. He has an absolute wealth of experience in dealing with the highest profile cases.” **Legal 500 2022 (Crime)**
- “A class act. Very well prepared and in control of proceedings.” **Chambers Bar Guide 2021 (Inquests & Public Inquiries)**
- “He’s a stunningly good cross-examiner. He’s a regular prosecutor at the Old Bailey and brings that skill to this work. He’s unquestionably at the top of his game.” **Chambers Bar Guide 2021 (Inquests & Public Inquiries)**
- “He is an absolutely top silk and is very determined.” “Fearless in his approach to cases.” “A real class act who displays huge attention to detail.” **Chambers Bar Guide 2021 (Crime)**
- “Strategic nous and his judgement is impeccable. He works incredibly hard and delivers, and is someone you can trust with absolute confidence on a difficult case.” **Legal 500 2021 (Inquests & Inquiries)**
- “A leader who cuts through to the essence of a case. When you instruct him, he inspires huge confidence. A true luminary. Above all, in heavy business and regulatory crime and investigatory cases, he is truly fearless.” **Legal 500 2021 (Business & Regulatory Crime)**
- “A real heavyweight at the Criminal Bar. He is very hard working and hard as nails. His attention to detail is excellent but does not stop him from making the broad points in a very jury-friendly manner.” **Legal 500 2021 (Crime)**
- “Pre-eminent silk. He now boasts a flourishing defence practice and undertakes work in murder and

drug trafficking cases among others.” “Brian’s attention to detail and mastery of the facts is second to none.” **Chambers Bar Guide 2020 (Crime)**

- “Having had a long tenure as Treasury Counsel at the Central Criminal Court, he has deep insight into the mechanics of prosecuting criminal cases. He is frequently sought out by global corporations to advise on the potential criminal ramifications of officer conduct and corporate transactions. His deep expertise in financial crime cases encompasses significant SFO and CMA investigations.” **Chambers Bar Guide 2020 (Financial Crime: Corporates)**
- “He has an incredible legal and tactical brain.” **Legal 500 2020 (Business & Regulatory Crime)**