

Watson Pringle

Call 2005

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Watson specialises in commercial chancery litigation, for which he is ranked in Band 1 in *Chambers UK* and *Chambers Global*. He was shortlisted for 'Chancery - Junior of the Year' in the 2016 *Chambers UK* Bar Awards and was highly recommended in *Legal Week's* 'Stars of the Bar 2014'.

His practice includes civil fraud and asset tracing, jurisdiction and conflicts of laws issues, enforcement and recognition of judgments, contractual disputes, breach of warranty claims, shareholder disputes; and personal and corporate insolvency matters

He is an experienced junior in large, multi-jurisdictional commercial litigation, having been junior Counsel for the Family Defendants in *Berezovsky v Abramovich*, and for the Claimants in *Gudavadze v Anisimov* and *Blue Tropic v Chkhartishvili*. He was instructed by the Applicants in *Browder v Nogotkov*, *Re Dalnyaya Step LLC* and is currently acting for the Defendant in *Slater & Gordon's £637 million fraud claim against Watchstone Group Plc.*

Where possible he appears unled, and as sole Counsel he is experienced in both trial and application advocacy in the High Court and Court of Appeal.

Civil Fraud

Watson is particularly effective in fraud cases, and is experienced in both obtaining and resisting the full range of pre-action and interlocutory remedies that typically arise, including freezing injunctions and orders under the Norwich Pharmacal and Bankers Trust jurisdictions. He has worked alongside criminal investigations, and with IT and accounting experts, to locate stolen assets. He is experienced and effective in cross-examination, a skill that he honed during his early practice in frequent multi-day trials in the county courts.

Commercial Litigation

Watson has been involved in some of the biggest commercial disputes in the courts in recent years, which have regularly involved him in issues of disclosure, privilege, conflicts of laws, forensic accountancy and foreign law experts. He is at home in both the Commercial Court and Chancery Division, and is familiar with the technology involved in modern commercial trials, including online trial bundles and disclosure databases, the e-disclosure protocol and simultaneous interpretation.

He has a particular interest in jurisdictional and private international law disputes, and has recently written articles and been invited to deliver seminars and webinars on jurisdictional issues including the impact of the Brussels Regulation Recast.

Insolvency

Watson is regularly instructed in insolvency disputes that involve allegations of fraud or jurisdictional issues. He has acted in private examinations and claims involving transactions at an undervalue, wrongful trading, misfeasance, and phoenix companies. He has recently been involved in two significant cases under the Cross-Border Insolvency Regulations 2006, and has also acted in cases concerning the centre of main interests of a German bankrupt, and whether a debtor has “carried on a business” in the UK for the purposes of s.265 of the Insolvency Act 1986.

Notable Cases

Slater & Gordon v Watchstone (2017): Junior Counsel for the Defendant in a claim in the Commercial Court for £637 million in damages for fraudulent misrepresentation and breach of warranty arising out of the sale of the personal injury law firm Quindell in 2015.

Re Dalnyaya Step LLC; Browder v Nogotkov [2017] EWHC 3153 (Ch): Junior Counsel for the successful Applicants in an application to set aside a recognition order under the Cross Border Insolvency Regulations 2006 made on the ex parte application of the purported Russian liquidator of a Russian company. The Applicants’ case was that the recognition order was the latest manifestation of a politically motivated campaign by the Russian state against Bill Browder, a well-known human rights activist.

Re Powa Group Companies [2017]: Junior Counsel for the Applicants in relation to rival applications to appoint administrators over the Powa group of companies, the main asset in the administration being a claim in damages in relation to the sabotage of a tech start-up with a multi-billion pound valuation.

Goncharova v Zolotova [2015] EWHC 3061: Sole Counsel for the successful Claimant in a claim under the Evidence (Proceedings in Other Jurisdictions) Act 1975, alternatively the Civil Jurisdiction and Judgments Act 1982, for an order permitting her to transport DNA samples taken from the body of a deceased a Georgian oligarch and which were being held by the Westminster Coroner to Moscow, to prove, in Russian inheritance proceedings, that he was her father and thereby claim a share of his valuable estate.

Blue Tropic & anr v Chkhartishvili (2015-17) Junior Counsel for the Claimant (and sole Counsel in a number of applications) in a claim by two BVI companies for damages under the Georgian law of delict in relation to the misappropriation of real estate assets in Georgia worth millions of dollars. The case involved a protracted jurisdiction dispute in relation to the reflexive application of the Brussels I Regulation (and subsequent appeal): [2014] EWHC 2243 (Ch); [2014] I.L.Pr. 33; a two-week trial in the Chancery Division: [2015] EWHC 3640 (Ch); a forum non conveniens stay application: [2015] EWHC 3260 (Ch); a substantive permission to appeal application: [2016] EWCA Civ 816; and an appeal to the Court of Appeal: [2016] EWCA Civ 1259.

Gudavadze & ors v Anisimov (2014): Junior Counsel for the Claimants, the widow and daughters of the late Georgian billionaire Arkadi Patarkatsishvili, in their claim for over \$1.5 billion in damages from Vasily Anisimov, based on an oral agreement that had been reached in 2004 between Mr Anisimov and Mr Patarkatsishvili as to the use that they would make of \$600 million that the latter had received following the sale of a shareholding RusAl, a large Russian

Berezovsky v Abramovich; Berezovsky v Hine & ors [2012] EWHC 2463 (Comm); (2012) 109(37) L.S.G. 18: junior Counsel for the Family Defendants at the trial of claims brought by Boris Berezovsky against Roman Abramovich and the Family of Arkadi Patarkatsishvili, based on oral agreements allegedly made between in the 1990s and in 2000 relating to Sibneft and RusAl, both large Russian energy companies.

TST Group Limited [2012] EWHC 4059 (Ch): sole Counsel for the company in a disputed debt winding up petition involving the application of the principles set out by the Court of Appeal in BNY Corporate Trustee Services v Eurosail

Roder v West & anor [2011] EWCA Civ 1126; [2012] QB 752; [2012] 3 WLR 469; [2012] 1 All ER 1305; [2012] 1 All ER (Comm) 659; (2011) 161 NLJ 1450; [2011] NPC 101: sole Counsel for the Appellants in an appeal to the Court of Appeal

relating to the interpretation of the Statute of Frauds (Amendment) Act 1828 in a claim in deceit.

Rolf v De Guerin [2011] EWCA Civ 78: sole Counsel for the Appellants in an appeal to the Court of Appeal against a costs decision (*Rolf v De Guerin* [2011] EWCA Civ 78).

Official Receiver v Mitterfelner [2009] BPIR 1075: sole Counsel for the debtor in the trial, on the OR's application to annul, of his centre of main interests (COMI) for the purposes of the EC Regulation.

Memberships

Chancery Bar Association
Commercial Bar Association
Fraud Lawyers Association
Commercial Fraud Lawyers Association

Qualifications

MA (Oxon) Jurisprudence

Languages

French (fluent)
German (competency)



Recommendations

Chambers UK

Chancery: Commercial

"Very clever, straightforward and polite, and someone you can trust. "He is very, very compelling as an advocate and can more than hold his own against leading counsel. Judges warm to him immediately." (2019)

"His written advocacy is first rate." "Very bright, very knowledgeable and very down-to-earth." (2018)

"Charming, down-to-earth and very user-friendly. He gets the judge's ear from the get-go and really presents well." (2017)

"He trades on being clever, hard-working and very affable. He will do very well. Lots of solicitors really rave about that holy trinity of characteristics." (2016)

"Extremely hard-working, has a fantastic eye for the detail and can ferret out the critical points in a case" (2015)

"He works with diligence, speed, accuracy, and a great deal of good humour and good grace. He is clearly a star of the future." (2014)

"Has been attracting a great deal of attention and respect, despite his recent year of call." (2013)

Chambers UK/Chambers Global

Fraud Civil

"Gets to the problem very quickly and sifts through the fluff" (2014)

"Particularly excellent when it comes to civil fraud... always churning the issues over in his head and coming up with new angles" (2013)

Chambers Global

Dispute Resolution: Commercial Chancery

"Very clever, straightforward and polite, and someone you can trust. "He is very, very compelling as an advocate and can more than hold his own against leading counsel. Judges warm to him immediately." (2019)

"His written advocacy is first rate." "Very bright, very knowledgeable and very down-to-earth." (2018)

"Works with diligence, speed, accuracy, and a great deal of good humour and good grace" and "is clearly a star of the future." (2015)