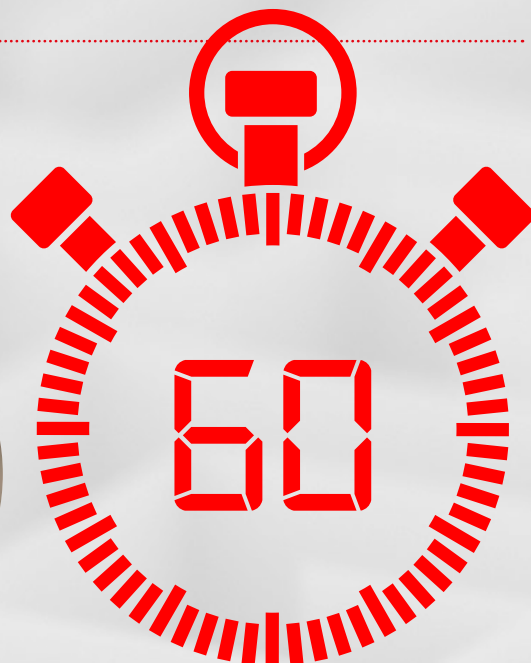


60-SECONDS WITH:

JESSICA BROOKE BARRISTER WILBERFORCE CHAMBERS



Q What do you see as the most important thing about your job?

A Making sure that you are on top of everything, both facts and law; it's difficult to formulate effective tactics unless you really understand a case inside out. Running a case is also much more enjoyable when you have limited the unknowns that could potentially derail your position.

Q As a member of the Advisory Board for Women in FIRE why are these initiatives in your view important for the industry?

A Fraud and insolvency work remains pretty male-dominated, and quite often women can feel disconnected. Women in FIRE initiatives are a reminder that this is an industry full of brilliant and talented women, and a place in which women can and do thrive. For me, connecting with interesting women working in the same area has not only been very inspiring, but great fun; it's simply much more enjoyable to work in an environment which includes people you know and admire.

Q As we approach the end of 2023, what has been the most interesting case or development you have seen this year?

A I was involved in a case earlier this year representing a client whose co-director had caused the company to sell luxury goods into Russia in breach of UK sanctions legislation. We obtained a passport order against the respondent and an array of injunctive relief, stripping him of his directorship and preventing him from contacting customers or employees, or approaching the company's premises, and requiring him to hand over his mobile phone and laptop to be imaged. The respondent was out of the jurisdiction at the time of the application, and we arranged for a process server to serve him when he flew into Heathrow; he attempted to avoid service and took the process server on a car chase through London. It was a fascinating case to be part of.

Q What do you see as the most significant trend in your practice in a year's time?

A I'm sure there will be an increase in contentious insolvency work this year - this forms a significant part of my practice alongside commercial, fraud and international work. The industry has been expecting a substantial up-tick in insolvency disputes since the pandemic, and although that has not quite happened yet, I've definitely felt things heating up this year.

Q What has been your greatest work-related achievement in 2023?

A Getting a great result for my clients in a hard-fought 7-day trial in the High Court involving a shareholder dispute. I particularly enjoyed cross-examining over several days, and the adrenaline kick when its going well really makes this job worthwhile. And winning a case is always a great feeling.

Q What has been the best piece of advice you have been given in your career?

A Every case is the most important case to your client. I try to make sure that every time I step into court I remember that everything I do really matters to those I am representing, whatever their circumstances.

Q What is one important skill that you think everyone should have?

A Having a sense of humour. Working in this industry is intense and interactions between opposing teams can be really aggressive; it is easy to get bogged-down in these negative interactions. Having light-hearted moments whilst working in a team - and with your opponents too - reminds you of the real focus of the case.

Q What cause are you passionate about?

A Social mobility at the bar. I went to a state school and it is really dispiriting to think that people from different backgrounds might be put off from applying to the bar because they are intimidated or feel that they won't fit in. The bar is, in fact, welcoming and there is a much wider spectrum of people than first appears, so it is important to spread that message - although there is still a lot of work to do.

Q Where has been your favourite holiday destination and why?

A New Zealand, which is an adventure playground for grown-ups; highlights include skydiving, hiking ice glaciers, caving, and whale watching.

Q If you could bring back a fashion trend, what would it be and why?

A All the terrible clothes of the noughties (think Marissa and Summer in The OC), although it looks like Gen Z have already caught on.

Q Reflecting on 2023, what three words would you use to sum up the year?

A Fast-paced, exciting, intense.

Q What is one goal you have for 2024?

A To work as hard as I can and to keep improving, so as to keep advancing in my career - and allowing me to continue being a part of the sort of fast-paced and interesting work that I've been fortunate enough to see in recent years. This job is hard work, but working on exciting, intellectually challenging cases with a great team makes things feel easy.

