

## Retired City lawyer, 67, to stand trial in multiple High Court cases involving explosive allegations of kidnapping, torture, cyberhacking and even a 'perjury school' to teach witnesses to lie

- Neil Gerrard, 67, could be facing most serious fraud case in English legal history
- High Court cases place him in a spider's web of explosive allegations
- The man once tipped to lead the Serious Fraud Office denies claims against him

By [ADAM LUCK](#) and [TOM KELLY FOR THE DAILY MAIL](#)

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With his £3.6million sprawling estate, luxury cars and high society life, Neil Gerrard was the model of a City lawyer.

But the man once tipped to lead the Serious Fraud Office will this month be accused in the High Court of being involved in what could turn out to be one of the most serious fraud cases in English legal history.

He allegedly stands at the centre of a spider's web of court cases involving explosive allegations of kidnapping, torture, cyberhacking and even a 'perjury school' to teach witnesses to lie. Mr Gerrard denies all the allegations.

In one of the cases, brought by two Jordanians who claim they were tortured, a High Court judge described the shocking allegations in that case as some of the most serious ever faced by a UK lawyer in civil proceedings.

The latest case threatens to shed fresh light on London's role in illicit commercial espionage.

Mr Gerrard, 67, seems an unlikely character to get caught up in such lurid allegations. He was a senior partner at Dechert, an American legal giant that boasts the Serious Fraud Office and HMRC among its clients.

Mr Gerrard made no secret of the fact that he enjoyed the high life courtesy of a series of exotic and phenomenally wealthy clients, but it is this work that has left him contemplating a dramatic fall from grace.



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**Neil Gerrard (pictured) allegedly stands at the centre of a spider's web of court cases involving explosive allegations of kidnapping, torture, cyberhacking and even a 'perjury school' to teach witnesses to lie. Mr Gerrard denies all the allegations**

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The origins of this story, it is claimed, lie in a royal feud in tiny Ras Al Khaimah (RAK), one of the seven sheikhdoms alongside Dubai that make up the UAE.

Its ruler, Sheikh Saud bin Saqr Al Qasimi, has long been locked into a political struggle with his half brother Sheikh Khalid, who has a home and family in London, after Khalid was ousted as heir to the throne in 2003.

According to court documents, he sent out instructions to 'target' people he believed were trying to undermine his regime, including Iranian-American millionaire Farhad Azima, a man reportedly linked to the CIA.

Mr Gerrard stands accused of carrying out some of this targeting, alongside British private eye Stuart Page, who the Daily Mail unmasked as helping to wage an unrelated campaign of intimidation on behalf of Dubai's Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum.

Mr Gerrard will be at the heart of the new High Court hearing, due to start on October 17, in which Mr Azima will claim the British lawyer helped frame him for fraud.

Mr Azima is seeking permission to set aside the fraud verdict, claiming the High Court found against him only after 'a massive fraud was perpetrated on the court' by Mr Gerrard and Dechert through hacking and systematic perjury by witnesses. The trial is expected to take place in 2024.

Like Mr Gerrard, Dechert strenuously denies any part in the hacking of Mr Azima's data, any coaching of witnesses, or any involvement in the provision of false evidence. It says the claims are inconsistent and have continually shifted.



**But the man once tipped to lead the Serious Fraud Office will this month be accused in the High Court (pictured) of being involved in what could turn out to be one of the most serious fraud cases in English legal history**

Mr Gerrard also stands accused in a separate case, which will come before the High Court next year, of being partially responsible for the torture of two men who claim they were targeted because they were seen as associates of the ruler of RAK's enemies.

Those claims are made by two Jordanian citizens: former senior RAK official Karam Al Sadeq, and Jihad Quzmar, formerly a senior judge, against Dechert and Mr Gerrard, among others.

Both men claim they were pawns in the royal feud, kidnapped, interrogated, tortured, and wrongfully detained in RAK, while they were under the effective control of Mr Gerrard and Dechert.

The law firm, Mr Gerrard and the other defendants have denied the claims 'in the strongest possible terms'. It has been a bruising and costly year already for Mr

Gerrard, and in May the High Court, in an unrelated case, branded him 'a highly unreliable and at times dishonest witness ... and on more than one occasion, he was plainly lying.'

Mr Gerrard retired from Dechert in 2020 and sold his estate last year when facing mounting legal bills.

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