



New Park Court

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Matthew Donkin

Year of call 2004

For enquiries please call +44 (0)113 243 3277 or email

Matthew Donkin is trusted to conduct cases of gravity and complexity, and is recognised for his ability to manage demanding evidence and legal issues.

Crime

Having developed a strong reputation for defending and prosecuting cases of general crime, Matthew is now typically instructed in cases of homicide and serious organised crime. Matthew has particular experience and interest in cases involving complex medical evidence. As well as conducting cases alone, he has a long history of acting as a leading junior and of being led by King's Counsel.

Inquests & Inquiries

Matthew accepts instructions to appear in Inquests and has done so in cases concerning fatal traffic accidents and police misconduct.

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Regulatory

Matthew accepts instructions to represent diverse parties in a broad range of regulatory proceedings.

Homicide & Serious Violence

Representative Cases

- *R v Asgar Sheikh, Khalid Sheikh, Shabnam Sheikh, Shagufa Sheikh and Sakalayne Sheikh*

Causing or Allowing a Vulnerable Adult to suffer Serious Physical Harm

Perverting the Course of Justice.

Leeds Crown Court. Mrs. Justice Lambert.

Led by Robert Smith K.C.

Successful prosecution of five members of the same family for offences of causing or allowing a vulnerable adult to suffer serious physical injury, contrary to section 5 of the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004.

The victim, Ambreen Fatima Sheikh, had been brought to the United Kingdom from Pakistan in 2014 following an arranged marriage with one of the sons of the family, Asgar Sheikh. Ambreen had been a bright and happy young woman, educated in Pakistan and described as ambitious. Nine months after arriving in the United Kingdom and moving in with the defendants she was admitted to hospital in a profoundly unconscious state. She has remained unconscious since admission and is diagnosed as being in a “persistent vegetative state”, without awareness of herself or her environment and survives only because she is being fed through a gastric tube. Prior to her admission to hospital, Ambreen had become increasingly isolated and was the subject of violence by the occupants of the household including by the application of a caustic substance to her back and buttocks causing a large chemical burn which was left untreated.

The cause of Ambreen’s collapse was ultimately identified as being the deprivation of glucose to the essential systems of the brain which had caused her to fall into a deeply obtunded state in which she was left by the defendants for some 48 to 72 hours before she aspirated stomach content, having lost her ability to protect her own airway. The glucose deprivation was the result of the unlawful administration, by trick or by force, of the anti-diabetic drug gliclazide. Ambreen was not diabetic and the administration of that blood-sugar reducing drug was catastrophic.

The defendants denied any responsibility for Ambreen’s condition and together provided a false history to the treating medical practitioners and attempted to dispose of Ambreen’s clothing and bedding to disguise her true condition.

The case was heard before the Hon. Mrs. Justice Lambert at Leeds Crown Court in October 2023, lasting for 8 weeks. During the trial the prosecution called medical experts in the fields of neuroradiology,

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diabetology, dermatology and plastic surgery, electrophysiology, neurology, physiology, anaesthesia and intensive care and pharmacology. The case was described by the Court as being as complicated and demanding, medically, as criminal trials can be. Four members of the family were convicted of the offence contrary to section 5. All defendants were convicted of counts of perverting the course of justice.

Robert and Matthew were instructed by Mr. Hall of the Complex Casework Unit, CPS Yorkshire and Humber and the investigation was conducted by the West Yorkshire Police Homicide and Major Enquiry Team.

The case is reported here:

[Huddersfield: Family members jailed after abusing son's wife – BBC News](#)

[Husband and his parents jailed for leaving wife in vegetative state after arranged marriage | UK News | Sky News](#)

- *R v Darren Jacques.*

Causing Death by Driving Whilst Disqualified. Newcastle Crown Court. H. H. Judge Adams.

Prosecution of the defendant for causing the death of a 5-year-old child by driving whilst disqualified. The defendant had been driving a work's vehicle towing a trailer loaded with a mini-digger and parked on a pavement to visit a nearby shop and buy a bottle of lager to drink on his drive home. The deceased climbed onto the parked vehicle and was playing on it when the defendant returned to his vehicle and began to drive away, causing the child to fall from the trailer and the wheels ran over him causing fatal injuries. Substantial legal argument was made on the interpretation and application of *R v Hughes* [2013] UKSC 56.

Matthew was instructed by the North East Complex Case Unit.

Media reporting of the case can be found below:

[Layton Darwood death: Disqualified driver jailed over crash – BBC News](#)

[Darren Jacques: Disqualified driver guilty over death of five-year-old Layton Darwood | UK News | Sky News](#)

- *R v JP*

Section 18 – Causing Grievous Bodily Harm with Intent. Sheffield Crown Court. HHJ Harrison. Junior alone.

Prosecution of the defendant for inflicting grievous bodily harm, with intent, upon a 3-month-old baby, J. J suffered an immediate collapse and sustained a severe and permanent brain injury together with a fractured skull. He had been shaken by the defendant who initially denied causing any injury. The medical findings were thrombosed bridging veins and sheared subdural membranes leading to multicompartmental collections of mixed fluid, hypoxic ischaemic injury and damage to the brain tissue itself. Bilateral retinal haemorrhages were also identified. Several months later J suffered a re-bleed and required surgery to drain the bleeding from within the skull. The issues in the case were proving that a non-accidental trauma was the cause of the injury, together with issues of the levels of force required to cause the injury. At a first trial in November 2022, the Judge ruled that the case was insufficient to be left to the jury to prove intention. Matthew successfully appealed that terminatory ruling and the case was heard by a second jury. Matthew led evidence from a neurosurgeon, paediatric neuroradiologist, ophthalmologist and



paediatricians.

- *R v KR and ME*

Causing or allowing serious physical injury to a child. Sheffield Crown Court. HHJ Reeds KC. Led by Robert Smith K.C. Instructed by the Complex Case Unit of CPS Yorkshire and Humber. The successful prosecution of the parents of 3-month old baby C who had been born with a number of medical difficulties. Once discharged home C was subjected to repeated violent assaults causing numerous fractures of different ages including a fracture to the skull, 'classical' abusive fractures to the lower limbs and a fractured humerus. Both defendants denied causing any injury or being aware of any injury. The issues in the case were the age and cause of the injuries and whether a carer might be aware of those injuries against a background of C's other medical history and complications. Significant expert evidence was called in the form of paediatric radiology, paediatric neuroradiology and an independent consultant paediatrician.

- *R v PM - Murder. Leeds Crown Court*

The successful defence of PM who was accused, along with another man, of the murder of Bradley Wall. Mr. Wall had met with the two defendants in the early hours of the morning in June 2022 in Beeston. After returning to their flat, a short time later Mr. Wall's body fell from a first-floor window into a basement area. He was subjected to a sustained and brutal attack in which he suffered over 130 injuries including multiple fractures to the skull and face and a fracture to the larynx. CCTV recordings showed paving slabs being dropped onto the body of Mr. Wall where he lay following the attack and a fire was lit to destroy his body. PM was found to have been in possession of items belonging to Mr. Wall including his jacket and mobile telephone.

In the immediate aftermath of the killing the two defendants left together to go shoplifting and the co-defendant used further violence against the employees at a nearby garage. The prosecution alleged that the two defendants had robbed Mr. Wall and then gone on to kill him. Evidence was heard that the co-accused described the killing as being "ISIS style". At trial each defendant asserted that the other was responsible for the death. There were particularly complicated features of law involving the correct determination of causation of injury, how the jury were to be unanimous, R v Brown directions and joint enterprise.

PM was acquitted of both murder and manslaughter.

- *R v Keith Hall - Manslaughter. Teesside Crown Court*

Led by Jonathan Sandiford K.C. Instructed by Northumbria CPS Complex Case Unit.

The prosecution of Keith Hall for the killing of Rachel Wilson, a vulnerable teenager, in 2002. The defendant had disposed of his victim's body by dumping it in a drainage ditch on farmland where it remained undiscovered until 2012. By then the state of decomposition was such that the cause of death could not be determined. This investigation and subsequent prosecution was the longest and largest homicide enquiry in Cleveland Police history.

- *R v Jamie Gray - Attempted Murder*

Attempted Murder. Newcastle Crown Court. HH Judge Moreland.



Junior alone. Instructed by CPS Northumbria.

In a pre-planned attack the defendant broke into the complainant's home address and proceeded to attack him, delivering multiple blows with a meat-cleaver before leaving the flat and complainant with significant head injuries.

- *R v Jonathan Garner and Samantha Gregson - Murder*

Murder and Allowing the Death of a Child. Sheffield Crown Court. Mr. Justice Goss.

Led by Robert Smith KC. Instructed by Complex Case Unit of CPS Yorkshire and Humber.

The prosecution, some time after the event, of Jonathan Garner for the murder of Mia Gregson aged 23 months, and her mother for allowing the death of a child. The original post-mortem investigation was inconclusive as to cause of death but subsequent review by a Home Office approved pathologist identified injuries to the mucosal surface of the lips which had not been referred to in the original pathological report and which were consistent with smothering. Significant areas of expert evidence included forensic odontology, paediatric pathology, paediatric cardiology, radiology. This case also required the exclusion of natural disease or cause of death or infliction of injury during resuscitation.

- *R v AC – Manslaughter*

Junior to Robert Smith KC. Newcastle Crown Court. 2018. Prosecution of a father for the manslaughter of his fifteen-week old son. Issues of neuropathology, paediatric cardiology, ophthalmic pathology and other complex medical evidence to prove that the causation of the sudden deterioration and subsequent death of the child was due to traumatic head injury arising from an episode of shaking.

- *R v Adam Parkin - Murder*

Murder and attempted murder. Newcastle Crown Court. The Honorary Recorder of Newcastle.

Led by Robert Smith KC. Instructed by CPS Special Crime and Counter-Terrorism Division.

The defendant was accused of the murder of his wife and the attempted murder of his two step-children. Issues of the defendant's psychiatric state of mind and background.

The defendant had been employed in a management role at CPS Northumbria with regional and national responsibilities. Immediately after the charge of the defendant, Matthew was instructed to conduct the prosecution of this sensitive case.

- *R v Brendan Teague - Attempted Murder*

Attempted murder. Newcastle Crown Court. HH Judge Moreland.

Junior alone. Instructed by CPS Northumbria.

The defendant carried out a pre-arranged plan to attend at his victim's home under the pretence of supplying him with cannabis, and when his attention was diverted, he stabbed him three times with a kitchen knife before fleeing the scene. The victim survived only by virtue of the prompt arrival of the emergency services.

- *R v Daniel Johnson - Murder*

Murder. Newcastle Crown Court. Mr. Justice Males.

Led by Robert Smith KC. Instructed by CPS Northumbria.



The defendant came across a male late at night, robbed him and took his house keys. He then used those keys to access the male's flat where he found his victim asleep in bed and brutally murdered him. The defendant then left the scene and remained at large for fifteen months. The case involved issues of digital image and facial morphology comparison, gait and height comparison, DNA analysis and voice and accent recognition evidence.

- *R v Liam Morris - Manslaughter*

Manslaughter. Sheffield Crown Court. Mr. Justice Goss.
Junior alone. Instructed by Law24 solicitors, Sheffield.

Defence of a young man accused of a 'one-strike manslaughter' who had been in Sheffield city centre with friends when approached by the deceased who wished to sell a watch, which he had recently stolen from a shop, for the purpose of receiving cash to buy some heroin. In a short scuffle the defendant swung his arm once, causing a blow to the deceased that knocked him to the ground. The deceased's head struck the ground causing a fracture to the skull and fatal subdural haemorrhage. Issues of self-defence and causation of death.

- *R v Duggan, Lamont & Others - Murder*

Murder. Newcastle Crown Court. Mr. Justice Globe.
Led by Robert Smith KC. Instructed by CPS Northumbria.

Prosecution of four defendants for the horrific killing of a man using knives and a pipe-cutter of a man in an alley in Sunderland. The deceased had attended following a report of an attack on his own son, and when he arrived the perpetrators emerged from a rear yard armed with weapons. Issues of causation, infliction of injury and joint enterprise – primary and secondary offenders.

- *R v VB & CN - Causing the death of a child*

Causing/Allowing the Death of a Child. Newcastle Crown Court. Mr. Justice Jay.
Led by Robert Smith KC. Instructed by CPS Northumbria.

A baby girl was found limp and not-breathing and died shortly thereafter. Her mother and partner had been involved in an alcohol and drug-fuelled row in the early hours of the morning, although neither would account for the collapse of the child or her injuries. Issues of causation of sudden collapse and death and the identification of how she had come about her injuries.

- *R v Michael Parkin - Attempted Murder and Arson*

Attempted Murder. Sheffield Crown Court. The Honorary Recorder of Sheffield.
Junior alone. Instructed by CPS Yorkshire and Humberside.

Against a background of domestic violence and control, the defendant beat his partner and doused her in petrol and attempted to spark a lighter to set fire to her and then to the home, causing the victim to flee leaving her infant son inside the house.

- *R v O'Brien, Walters, Walters and Poppe - Murder and Perverting the Course of Justice*

Murder, manslaughter and perverting the course of justice. Sheffield Crown Court. The Honorary Recorder of Sheffield.



Led by Robert Smith KC. Instructed by CPS Yorkshire and Humberside.

The victim was stabbed death over a drugs debt that the defendants had taken on as they attempted to exert their control over the Darnall area. There was no direct evidence of who was responsible for the murder. Issues of DNA comparison, telephone attribution and cell-site and voice recognition. A particular issue is that of the two male voices heard at the time of the stabbing one of them shouted “stop”. This defendant was convicted of manslaughter.

- *R v Wilson - Attempted Murder*

Attempted murder. Nottingham Crown Court. The Honorary Recorder of Nottingham.

Junior alone. Instructed by Elliot Mather Solicitors, Chesterfield.

The defendant had deliberately driven his car at his own father, then repeatedly driven backwards and forwards over him when on the ground. Convicted of causing grievous bodily harm with intent contrary to section 18. The issues surrounded the defendant’s state of mind and intention.

- *R v Andrew Knapper - Murder*

Murder. Nottingham Crown Court. HH Judge Teare.

Led by Shaun Smith KC. Instructed by Elliot Mather Solicitors.

The defendant learned of an affair between his wife and best-friend and immediately drove to his home address and stabbed his wife repeatedly in the presence of their two sons. Issues of loss of control and mental health.

Serious & Organised Crime

Representative Cases

- *R v MH and others - Operation Florida*

Newcastle Crown Court. September 2021 to February 2022. H. H. Judge Gittins.

Leading [Ian Cook](#). Instructed by Michael Henderson Solicitors.

Matthew represented MH who was accused of conspiracy to supply Class B drugs, together with six co-accused. The case ran, under Covid-secure conditions, for twenty-two weeks.

During the course of the case the police investigation was exposed as being fundamentally flawed and an expert drugs officer, challenged by Matthew for the content of a report, was compelled to admit that he had put untrue matters in his expert report and then given untrue evidence to the jury. MH was acquitted of the conspiracy.

- *Operation Elba – 1, 2 and 3.*

Newcastle Crown Court, HH Judge Clemitson

Leading Michael Bunch, CPS. Instructed by CPS North East Complex Casework Unit.

Matthew was instructed to prosecute three separate sets of proceedings arising from events in August

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2019 when one defendant, KT, fired upon a vehicle in the Elswick area of Newcastle.

Following that shooting, seven hours later KT's son was then shot in retaliation by associates of the victim of the original shooting.

The first set of proceedings was brought against KT on the basis of evidence given by an, originally, anonymous witness who was asked to hide the gun.

The second set of proceedings were against KT's son and another for attacking that witness once his identity was disclosed.

The third set of proceedings was against those who conspired to carry out the retaliation shooting.

That case began in November 2020 and was the biggest trial heard on Circuit since lockdown in terms of size and length. The case involved over fifty separate participants, required two separate courtrooms using live-link between them and significant technology. This challenging prosecution was brought without any report from the victim of the shooting, no eye-witness and no scene of the crime established whether through scientific or other evidence at the location.

The case completed in the sixth week of sitting in Covid-safe conditions.

- *R v Roemol Taylor and Others*

Conspiracy to Possess Firearm. Sheffield Crown Court. HH Judge Reeds KC.

Junior alone. Instructed by Law 24, Sheffield.

Following a covert surveillance operation following a co-defendant's movements around Sheffield, the defendant was observed getting into a red Audi vehicle following which there was an intercept carried out by armed police officers. The defendant was observed leaving the vehicle, following which a loaded semi-automatic pistol was found on the road surface under the vehicle.

- *R v Conroy, Appleby and others – Operation Eton 2*

Conspiracy to possess a firearm with intent to endanger life. Newcastle Crown Court 2019. HH Judge Batiste.

Leading junior, leading Richard Holland. Instructed by Complex Case Unit, CPS Northumbria.

Prosecution of six members of an organised crime group who – in furtherance of a feud with a rival group in the West end of Newcastle, carried out shootings targeting the homes of their rivals. This successful prosecution required the careful and structured presentation of a number of different areas of evidence including DNA and fingerprint comparison, mobile telephone attribution, call data and RF survey cell-site evidence, comparison of firearms and ammunition and the enhanced interpretation of recordings from CCTV cameras.

- *R v AB - Operations Haymarket and Sidra 2.*

Conspiracy to possess a firearm and conspiracy to supply cocaine. Newcastle Crown Court and Teesside Crown Court. HH Judge Moreland and HH Judge Sherwin.

Junior alone. Instructed by Michael Henderson & Co. Solicitors.

Matthew represented a client who was prosecuted in two separate trials for his alleged role in organised crime in Sunderland.

The first trial alleged a conspiracy to possess a firearm associated with drug-related offending. The issues in the case concerned the extensive covert surveillance operation conducted by police, PII and the extent



of the involvement of a registered informant and mobile telephone evidence.

The second trial was an allegation of involvement in a widespread conspiracy to supply cocaine over a period of over 12 months. The evidence in this case principally concentrated on the role of a registered informant and assisting offender – ‘CW’ – and the account that he gave about multiple persons, along with telephone evidence said to support those allegations.

- *R v Roman Rafael and others – Operations Cluster and Trojan*

Modern Slavery. Teesside Crown Court. HH Judge Armstrong.

Led by John Elvidge KC. Instructed by Complex Case Unit, CPS Northumbria.

Prosecution of nine members of a Slovakian organised crime family group based in Newcastle who had, for a number of years, trafficked targeted vulnerable EU citizens into the UK. Once in the UK the slaves were kept ignorant of their status and sufficiently housed and fed so that they would not complain. The defendants controlled all of their money, took out loans and made benefits claims in their names.

This was an enormous case, one of the most complex and high-profile cases brought under the Modern Slavery Act in the country, and which also involved the instruction of a second junior advocate, Richard Holland. The trial lasted for fifteen weeks.

The case attracted national media attention.

- *R v Zaman and others – Operation Emerald*

Conspiracy to supply Heroin and Cocaine. Newcastle Crown Court. HH Judge Moreland.

Leading junior, leading Graham O’Sullivan. Instructed by Complex Case Unit, CPS Northumbria.

Prosecution of members of an organised crime group who were importing bulk quantities of heroin and crack cocaine into the North East for distribution in Newcastle and Cleveland where it was disbursed to ‘street level’ dealers. The case relied upon the presentation of months of surveillance and mobile telephone evidence.

This case also involved the use of a police intelligence source known as ‘XY’, a convicted rapist who had assisted the broad police investigation as an informant. In October 2016 the defendants sought to have the proceedings stayed on the grounds of an abuse of process, along with other defendants in a case known as Operation Shelter. In the abuse of process proceedings Matthew acted as a further junior to John Elvidge QC.

The case attracted national media attention.

- *R v Hassan, Foster and Ismail*

Kidnap, False Imprisonment and Possession of Firearms. Sheffield Crown Court. HH Judge Moore.

Junior alone. Instructed by Complex Case Unit, CPS Yorkshire and Humber.

Prosecution of three defendants who had arranged a meeting for an apparent drug deal, but then produced a firearm and kidnapped the two complainants. Ransom demands were made and the police conducted an urgent live operation of negotiating with the defendants whilst identifying where they were holding the victims captive. The incident resolved when armed police officers intercepted the defendants who were driving to the arranged location for transfer of money and captives. Issues of identification, DNA evidence and voice recognition.

Serious Sexual Offences

Representative Cases

- *R v WO*

Rape. Assault by penetration and sexual activity with child family member. Newcastle Crown Court. Junior alone. Instructed by RASSO unit, CPS Northumbria.

Non-historical case of a father of previous good character who for a number of years had committed serious sexual offences against his daughters.

- *R v NS*

Sexual Activity with a child family member. Newcastle Crown Court. HH Judge Sherwin. Junior alone. Instructed by RASSO unit, CPS Northumbria.

Father who had sexually assaulted his daughter. The sole evidence was from his daughter who gave her account aged 3 and was aged 4 by the time of the trial.

- *R v Mohammed Ghani*

Indecent assault and sexual activity with a child. Leeds Crown Court. Mr. Recorder Wynn. Junior alone. Instructed by RASSO unit, CPS Yorkshire and Humber.

Prosecution of a local Imam who was well-known and highly respected in West Yorkshire for many years of sexual abuse of a girl at times when he was teaching her Urdu and studying the Koran.

- *R v DW*

Rape and Sexual Assault on a Child. Newcastle Crown Court. HH Judge Mallett. Junior alone. Instructed by RASSO unit, CPS Northumbria.

The defendant raped and sexually assaulted his 10-year-old daughter on days when she would stay at his home as part of ongoing contact arrangements. The principle evidence arose from the child who was aged 11 at trial.

- *R v TB*

Rape. Sheffield Crown Court. HH Judge Kelson KC. Junior alone. Instructed by Khan Solicitors.

Representing defendant in multi-handed case in which multiple complainants living in the care system in South Yorkshire alleged grooming and sexual abuse by large numbers of men.

- *R v CU*

Derby Crown Court. HH Judge Gosling.

Junior alone. Instructed by Elliot Mather Solicitors.

The defendant, a man with significantly reduced functioning following a road traffic accident and brain injury when aged 12, was known to the complainant and she accused him of entering her home when she

slept and sexually assaulted her. The defence case was that this was a fabrication for the purpose of obtaining money from him, knowing that he had received a substantial compensation payment. The defendant had the benefit of an intermediary at trial. The successful defence included raising issues of disclosure, of motive and bad character of the complainant and the unique feature of being resolved at a re-trial in which a juror from the original trial was called to give evidence by the Judge hearing the case.

Fraud, Financial Crime, Confiscation & Associated Cases

Representative Cases

- *R v Jaspreet Oberoi, Ricky Collins and others. Operation Ultimatum.*

Conspiracy to Steal.

Sheffield Crown Court. H. H. Judge Reeds K.C. Leading Vince Ward. Instructed by the Serious Economic Organised Crime and International Directorate, CPS.

The prosecution of twenty defendants who were conspiring to steal rail in substantial quantities from locations all around the country. The principal organisers were a scrap metal dealer based at Kiveton Park, a former railway worker and a manager at Network Rail and those in lesser roles including a number of defendants who worked on the railway or were involved in the stealing. Some 3000 tonnes of rail were stolen and shipped abroad at a loss to Network Rail of over £1 million and generating substantial quantities of cash for the conspirators.

There were essentially two conspiracies. One involved the thieves travelling to locations where they had been tipped off about rail available to be taken, and simply loading it up and driving away with it. The other conspiracy was more involved and was successful due to the manager – Ricky Collins – making arrangements for rail to be loaded onto vehicles to be stolen, but under the guise of legitimate, authorised, removals.

Due to the size of the case, the prosecution of the defendants needed three separate trials to be conducted over a period of 20 months. A vast volume of documentary and other evidence was obtained by British Transport Police officers and needed to be distilled down into manageable form for each jury, without contaminating one trial with evidence of a separate conspiracy. Cell-site evidence and telephone data was of such a volume that over one hundred separate Sequence of Events charts were prepared by an analyst to cover the 125 separate individual thefts that took place. Fourteen defendants were convicted.

- *R v Pilling and Best*

Conspiracy to convert criminal property.

Durham Crown Court. H. H. Judge Adkin. Junior alone.

The two defendants were metal-detectorists and amateur coin collectors and enthusiasts who acquired 46 extremely rare and highly valuable Anglo-Saxon coins, dated c876 – c879AD when Alfred the Great was ruler of Wessex and a man name Ceolwulf II the ruler of Mercia. The coins demonstrate a monetary alliance between Wessex and Mercia that was not previously understood together with having other unique



features such as one coin being the earliest known example of the Viking practice of ‘pecking’ coins to check for the quality of the silver.

The coins are believed to have been part of the Herefordshire Hoard that was dug up in 2015 but not all recovered as a number of those coins were dissipated on the black market. Roger Pilling had acquired a number of them and kept them at his home in Lancashire. In 2018/19 the two defendants conspired together to sell the coins unofficially and without declaring them to an American buyer. Their asking price was over £400k but the coins approximate value at legitimate auction was close to double that figure. The American buyer with whom Craig Best was dealing was an undercover officer and when a meeting took place in early 2019 at a hotel in Durham the police swooped and made arrests and recovered the coins. At trial the defendants claimed that they were unaware of the significance of what they possessed and also that they were not seeking to sell the coins, but to have them authenticated only. The jury rejected that defence and convicted them of conspiracy.

The case involved the evidence of the undercover police operation along with extensive expert evidence including from the leading expert Dr. Gareth Williams of the British Museum to explain what the coins were and their historical significance. It was the evidence of Dr. Williams that such is the importance of these coins, had the Durham Police team not recovered them our knowledge of the history of the unification of England would not be correct.

[Anglo-Saxon coins: Illegally held hoard rewrites English history – BBC News](#)

[Two men guilty of conspiring to sell history-changing Anglo-Saxon coins | Crime | The Guardian](#)

- *R v Colin Nesbitt*

Fraud by Abuse of Position, Theft, Supplying False Information to the Charities Commission.

2021. Bradford Crown Court. HHJ Gibson. Junior alone.

Matthew represented the defendant in this case that attracted considerable local and national media interest. The defendant was the sole carer for his grandson who had been diagnosed with cancer at a very young age and had years of being very unwell. Motivated by his experiences, the defendant founded and developed a local children’s cancer charity for the purpose of supporting and improving the lives and experiences of sick children and their families. The defendant also developed a number of schemes and products for this purpose. The charity was extremely successful drawing high levels of corporate sponsorship and support and featured on the Channel 4 program “Secret Millionaire”.

The prosecution case was that the charity had been founded with the correct intentions, but that over time the defendant had used the charity money as his own, retained sole control of the charity finances contrary to Charity Rules and the explicit instructions of the Charity Commission and by using various different bank accounts he was able to take money for his own purposes. The total alleged misappropriated funds at the outset of the case was over four hundred thousand pounds. The defence case was that the management of the charity finances had been chaotic, but not dishonest. Over the five-week trial there was extensive examination of multiple bank accounts and the evidence of financial experts was a critical feature of the case.

The defendant was acquitted on five of the ten counts, and the value of the offences for which he was convicted was reduced to around ten percent of the original allegedly misappropriated funds.



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- *R v CK and others*

Section 19 Costs Application. Newcastle Crown Court. HH Judge Spragg.

Led by Robert Smith KC. Instructed by Specialist Fraud Division of the CPS.

Following an unsuccessful prosecution of defendants for a large-scale insurance fraud, Matthew and Robert Smith KC. were instructed to represent the Crown Prosecution Service following significant applications for costs made on behalf of the defendants. Issues of the appropriateness of charge and continued prosecution, disclosure exercise, the conduct and responsibilities of legal representatives.

- *R v Roman Rafael and others*

Confiscation proceedings. Teesside Crown Court. HH Judge Armstrong.

Junior alone. Instructed by CPS Northumbria.

Matthew is conducting the confiscation proceedings arising from this Modern Slavery Case, with a combined total value of over £1 million.

- *R v Devalapally and others*

Fraud and Money-Laundering. Leeds Crown Court. HH Judge Mairs.

Junior alone. Instructed by CPS Yorkshire and Humberside.

The defendants were part of a nationwide network of criminals responsible for fraud and money-laundering of hundreds of thousands of pounds, money was then swiftly dissipated across dozens of bank accounts held in multiple names before being realised as cash or transferred out of the country.

- *R v Ali, Zaman and others*

Conspiracy to handle stolen goods and Trademarks Act offences. Bradford Crown Court. The Honorary Recorder of Bradford.

Leading junior, leading James Gelsthorpe. Instructed by Complex Case Unit, CPS Yorkshire and Humber.

Prosecution of seven defendants for conspiracy to handle stolen goods and selling counterfeit goods, including the two architects of this high value conspiracy. The defendants were close to criminal gangs responsible for thefts of bulk quantities of electrical goods which were then sold through an ever-changing network of eBay, PayPal and other accounts. Issues in the case included the identification of controlling email accounts and IP addresses to link the selling and money-receiving online accounts, and linking those to multiple bank accounts from which money was withdrawn.

In 2017 Matthew conducted the high-value Proceeds of Crime Act proceedings, in which the Benefit Figure was in excess of £1 million.

Inquests & Inquiries

Matthew accepts instructions to appear in Inquests and has done so in cases concerning fatal traffic accidents and police misconduct.

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Representative Cases

- *Inquest into the death of Irene Collins*

Matthew represented the family of the deceased who had allowed the police access to her property to carry out a search with a dog, but the police dog then attacked and savaged the deceased. The case attracted national media attention.

Senior Courts Experience

Representative Cases

- *R v Johnson & Others [2020] EWCA Crim 482*

Appeal against conviction, with leave granted, to argue that the overall charge of conspiracy was not appropriate, was contrary to *R v Shillam [2013] EWCA Crim 169* and did not show a common design and awareness and the case should therefore have been stopped at the conclusion of the prosecution case.

- *R v Shoulder (Michael) [2019] EWCA Crim 2072*

Appropriateness of length and form of sentence for causing serious injury by dangerous driving, including where the appellant has participated in the restorative justice program.

- *R v (Liaquat) Ali [2019] 1 Cr. App. R. (S). 27*

Appropriate sentence for causing death by dangerous driving. The application of the Criminal Practice Direction and Community Impact Statements.

Matthew accepted this instruction as a 'dock brief' and addressed the Court on these technical issues with only a very short time to read the papers and prepare submissions.

- *R v Nichola Collins [2018] EWCA Crim 2369*

The safety of convictions on adverse inferences and circumstantial evidence where there was unassailable evidence of conspiracy to supply heroin and the applicability to a charge of conspiracy to supply cocaine.

- *R v Aamer Ali & Naveed Zaman [2017] EWCA Crim 2691*

Appropriateness of the terms of a Serious Crime Prevention Order.

- *R v Jozef Gorol [2014] EWCA Crim 570*

Appeal against sentence for an attempted robbery at knifepoint of a vulnerable female.

- *R v Dean Scrimshaw [2010] EWCA Crim 142*

Sentencing of young offender for violent offending.

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New Park Court

- *R v Jamal Richards [2009] Crim App. R. (S). 48. Court of Appeal (Criminal Division)*
Appropriate sentence for dog inflicting serious injury. Cited in Banks on Sentence as a guideline case.

What the directories say

"Matthew Donkin is exceptional in his field. He has a fantastic eye for detail. He has a calm, considered and sensitive approach to his cases. Nothing appears to phase him."

Chambers and Partners 2024

"Matthew is very hard-working." "He is a good operator."

Chambers and Partners 2023

'A very calm and smooth operator.'

Chambers and Partners 2022

"His written work is very thorough and he is meticulous in his preparation."

Chambers and Partners 2021 (Crime)

'Is able to assimilate heavy quantities of material and find the points that have not been considered by other advocates and deploys effective strategies to counter any perceived weaknesses in his case.'

Legal 500 2021 (Crime)

"He is extremely capable, thorough and a very good team player."

Chambers & Partners 2020 (Crime)

"He is very well respected and very hard-working."

Chambers & Partners 2020 (Crime)

"Frequently instructed on complex crime cases. His practice spans a broad range of matters, including homicide and fraud offences"

Chambers and Partners 2020 (Crime)

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New Park Court

Appointments & Memberships

CPS Specialist Counter Terrorism Panel at Level 4

CPS Level 4 Prosecutor

CPS Specialist Panel for Serious Crime at Level 4

Approved Advocacy Trainer

North Eastern Circuit

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