



Robert Smith KC

Year of call 1971 Silk 1986



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I was Called to the Bar in 1971 and commenced practice on the North Eastern Circuit at 5 King's Bench Walk. These chambers had produced many 'high powered' appointments to the Bench including Lord Justice Cumming-Bruce, Mr Justice Veale and Mr Justice Payne and I was privileged to begin my career there. 5 King's Bench Walk was later to become a Circuit based set of chambers located in Leeds where they have remained ever since and became Park Court Chambers. In 2011 they amalgamated with the outstanding set of chambers at Broad Chare in Newcastle upon Tyne to become New Park Court Chambers.

I have remained in the same set of chambers throughout my career. When I began my career, Circuit work and pupillage was multi-disciplinary and with my pupil master, Gerald Coles, who was in due course to be appointed Queen's Counsel and ultimately Recorder of Bradford, I saw criminal and civil practice in the last year of the Assize and Nisi Prius system before it was swept away with the reform of the Courts. I had the opportunity to see and to listen to advocacy at the very highest level and to be taught the discipline of the common law, involving both criminal and civil litigation and some specialized work. I had the opportunity of being led in many cases as a junior by particularly able criminal trial advocates such as Harry Ognall QC and Gilbert Gray QC. My notable early cases as a junior included the defence of the company secretary of Kagan Textiles before Mr Justice Roderick Smith and The Selby Caravan Murder before Mr Justice Caulfield.

Once appointed to Silk in 1986 I continued to conduct both criminal and civil litigation with a strong emphasis on serious personal injury cases and clinical and professional negligence. I have been engaged in a number of notable civil cases, including acting for the victims of the Bradford City Football Stadium disaster in the successfully conducted contested litigation before Cantley J at Leeds Crown Court and advising in relation to passenger claims in the context of the Warsaw Convention (prior to amendments created by the Montreal Convention in May 1999) in a number of notable aviation accidents. These included the East Midlands airport crash which involved a British Midland Boeing 737-400 which landed on the M1 motorway at Kegworth on the 8th January 1989 when the flight crew mistakenly shut down the one remaining good engine.

Eventually, more and more serious criminal cases were presented to me to advise upon and to act in and, coincidentally with the 'Woolf' reform of the civil courts, I became a specialist criminal practitioner. I still conduct some civil litigation but invariably do so when conducted jointly with the assistance of specialist civil practitioners (both juniors and leaders) and often where some issue arises which involves criminal expertise or civil fraud. I remain, primarily, a trial advocate specialising in regulatory and medico legal cases and the defence of companies and individuals under investigation by The Serious Fraud Office, regulators such as The Financial Conduct Authority and The Health and Safety Executive and by police forces.

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In recent years my professional work load has involved the prosecution and defence of complex and particularly serious criminal cases, with a particular emphasis on medico-legal and scientific issues, the defence and prosecution of professional defendants such as medical practitioners and health care professionals and the defence of corporate bodies, their senior managers and directors.

My cases have involved and continue to involve a wide range of situations in which the criminal law has been engaged including scientific issues, aviation, industry, coal mines, railways, food and consumer safety, educational establishments, the pharmaceutical industry, newspaper publishing and medico-legal issues. I have also advised on matters involving Parliamentary Privilege and allegations of contempt of the House of Commons. I have conducted cases involving Human Rights issues in both the Court of Appeal and the House of Lords. I have acted for North West Fire Control Limited in the long running Public Inquiry into the Manchester Arena Bombing. Publication of the Inquiry's Report is expected in the latter part of 2022.

I have advised upon and conducted litigation in the field of regulatory criminal law [in particular health and safety, bribery and corruption and the prosecution and defence of corporate bodies particularly in the context of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, the Prevention of Corruption Act 1906 and the Bribery Act 2010] and related litigation, including civil actions involving the police, administrative court cases, extradition issues and cases involving misfeasance in public office.

I have a particular interest in gross negligence manslaughter, particularly in the context of medical failings and in cases involving the medical implications of non-accidental head injury in children ('NAHI' – formerly described as 'shaken baby syndrome') and have been involved in many cases, both for the prosecution and the defence, in which the 'triad' of signs and their interpretation has arisen.

I have conducted a significant number of cases of fraud and alleged corruption, representing both individual and corporate defendants under investigation by the Serious Fraud Office. I am familiar with the practice of the US Department of Justice and the US Securities Exchange Commission in the context of the United States Foreign Corrupt Practices Act and the United States Exchange Act.

I remain committed to conducting a number of publicly funded criminal cases and consider that the criminal Bar has an obligation to do so.

I am committed to conducting, annually, a number of cases on a pro bono basis. Most of my pro bono work has involved advising upon and reviewing complex cases which have already been decided at first instance. These have included medico-legal and regulatory issues. I have also advised and acted pro bono in a number of recent cases involving lawyers and individuals from other professions facing regulatory process or investigation at first instance. Many of the clients in such circumstances do not have the financial means to consider avenues for redress where the legal system has failed them at first instance or where a full and effective defence would be financially onerous. I am prepared to consider a limited number of cases annually in respect of this service where instructing solicitors are in a position to provide a full file for initial assessment by me as to merit.

I have been closely involved in presenting lectures and seminars on topics of current and historical legal and academic interest. Recent work includes presentations in respect of legal professional privilege in conjunction with the University of Northumbria in relation to reform of the law, sponsored by The Modern Law Review.

I am currently writing for publication a historical study of the advocates of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and their leading cases, entitled 'The Age of Advocacy'.

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Expertise

Recent Major Corporate Defence Cases

Notable Recent Major Corporate Defence Cases cases

Manchester Arena Bombing Inquiry

Currently retained on behalf of North West Fire Control Limited to represent the company in the Manchester Arena Bombing Inquiry.

News UK

Retained over a three year period on behalf of News UK to advise the company in relation to the investigation by the Metropolitan Police into the 'phone hacking' scandal. Investigation closed by the Crown Prosecution Service.

Retained to advise News UK in relation to the investigation by the House of Commons Committee for Privileges in relation to allegations of contempt of Parliament. Investigation closed by the House of Commons Committee for Privileges.

GlaxoSmithKline PLC

Retained over a three year period to advise GlaxoSmithKline Plc in relation to the Serious Fraud Office Investigation into bribery and corruption in China arising out of the conviction of the company's subsidiaries in that jurisdiction. Investigation closed by the Serious Fraud Office.

Harron Homes Ltd

Acted on behalf of Harron Homes Ltd in relation to an investigation and prosecution by the Environment Agency.

Mansel Davies & Son Limited

Acted on behalf of Mansel Davies & Son Limited in proceedings before Swansea Crown Court in relation to allegations of forgery and associated offences arising out of an investigation by the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency.

Health & Safety

Notable Health & Safety cases

R v Jackson Transport (Ossett) Ltd

This case was the first successful prosecution and conviction of a company for an offence of corporate manslaughter at common

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law [with linked HSWA charges against the company and the Chairman and Managing Director]. The defendant company was a firm of road tanker hauliers which failed to take proper action to protect the workforce from splashback of dangerous chemicals with fatal consequences.

R v Next Plc

Instructed on behalf of the company in circumstances which involved the death of an employee using escape equipment during a training exercise and giving rise to charges under section 2 of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.

R v Next Plc

Defence of the company arising out of the death of a senior engineer engaged on maintenance work on a high rise garment picking system in warehouse premises. The prosecution was stopped at the conclusion of the prosecution case on the Judge's ruling and on the ground that the prosecution were unable to establish a breach of the qualified duty imposed by section 2 of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.

R v Connolly & Kennett (Tebay - West Coast Main Line Fatalities)

This was a major and complex prosecution for the Crown Prosecution Service and the Health and Safety Executive in respect of charges of manslaughter and breaches of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 arising out of multiple fatalities on the West Coast main railway line at Tebay in Cumbria. The prosecution resulted in the conviction for manslaughter of the principal in a small business and his foreman. The case involved the deliberate disconnection of the braking system on flat rail bogies in order to permit them to be coupled to road/rail vehicles. As a result, the bogies ran away in darkness just south of Shap Fell and struck a railway work force which was carrying out maintenance work on the line causing the deaths of four men and multiple injuries to others. The convictions were upheld by the Court of Appeal.

Shoreham Docks

Advised the DPP and HSE on complex potential prosecution arising out of a mercantile shipping fatality in Shoreham Harbour.

R v JA

Instructed for the defence of the manager of Daw Mill Colliery in Warwickshire, being one of the largest coal mines in Europe. The defendant was a highly talented and experienced manager who faced charges in respect of manslaughter and alleged contraventions of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, arising out of the death of a Deputy who was overcome by methane gas during operations to re-open 101's face for the purpose of salvaging powered supports. The case was evidentially complex, particularly from the point of view of the technical evidence. The prosecution case was demonstrated in the course of evidence at the Crown Court trial to be flawed to such an extent that it had to be abandoned by the Health and Safety Executive and Crown Prosecution Service before the conclusion of the prosecution case.

R v York College

Instructed on behalf of the prosecution in proceedings against York College arising out of the death of a young child in their nursery who was caught up in a rope attached to a slide. The child's death had occurred in the absence of supervision. York College was convicted at the conclusion of a trial at Leeds Crown Court before Coulson J.

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Homicide

Notable Homicide cases

R v Hall

Advised in relation to a long running investigation by Cleveland Police into the circumstances of the disappearance of Rachel Wilson on 31 May 2002. Rachel's body was discovered by chance, ten years later, on the 27 June 2012, lying in a shallow ditch at the side of a farm track at Newham Hall Farm, which is adjacent to the B1635 Stokesley Road at Coulby Newham. Her body was decomposed as a result of the passage of time. She had been deposited at that location without clothing and without any personal possessions. No cause of her death was identified at the post mortem examination given the limited amount by way of remains and the absence of body tissue. Her identity was confirmed by DNA profiling and comparison. After a long and detailed police investigation the defendant was charged with her murder on the basis of complex circumstantial evidence and pleaded guilty immediately before his trial commenced.

R v Campbell and Siswick

Prosecution for murder and offences contrary to Section 5 Domestic Violence Crime and Victims Act 2004 arising out of the death of a young child in 2016. The case required expert evidence from a range of clinicians and pathologists in relation to the disputed cause of death which was due to an inflicted abdominal injury.

R v Garner and Gregson

Prosecution for murder and offences contrary to Section 5 Domestic Violence Crime and Victims Act 2004 arising out of the death of a young child in 2014 as a consequence of smothering. No cause of death was identified at the post mortem examination conducted at that time and the defendants were not charged with any offence. Family Court proceedings resulted in the case being referred to the police and a complete reinvestigation as a result of the clear and persuasive conclusions reached by a forensic pathologist called in those proceedings. Once the police investigation commenced it required a detailed re-assessment of the original post mortem examination involving new experts in paediatrics, forensic odontology, paediatric pathology and forensic pathology from experts at the University of Aberdeen and in England. The defendant Garner was convicted of murder at Sheffield Crown Court and the child's mother of an offence contrary to Section 5.

R v Zoorah Gulam Shah

Instructed on behalf of the prosecution in the first case of arsenic poisoning in England and Wales in the latter half of the 20th century. The defendant was charged with the murder of her husband by arsenic poisoning. This was the first investigation by pathologists and scientists in the context of non-accidental arsenic poisoning for decades. Pathologists, toxicologists and scientists were required to refer to historical research on the effects of arsenic poisoning. A hospital post mortem had determined that the deceased had died from natural causes. The case came to light as a result of the decision by the Coroner's Officer to seize a bucket containing the deceased's vomit and submit it for analysis. This resulted in a finding of a massive concentration of arsenic in the contents of the bucket which could not be explained other than by deliberate poisoning. The source of the arsenic was its concealment in a particular form of carrot cake (gajar ka halwa) which the deceased had a liking for. The deceased was exhumed and his hair analysed to reveal significant concentrations of arsenic. Motive was established. The defendant was convicted of murder.

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R v Anthony Vickers

Instructed to represent the prosecution before the Court of Appeal in a case involving a review of expert medical evidence relating to the death of the wife of a medical practitioner. Anthony Vickers was a general practitioner who was successfully prosecuted for the murder by Harry Ognall QC (later to become Mr Justice Ognall) instructed on behalf of the DPP. Vickers was alleged to have administered a drug (CCNU – Lomustine) to his wife which was ordinarily used in the treatment of cerebral tumours. One of the side effects of the drug is the destruction of blood platelets and consequent anaemia. His wife died as a consequence of gross haematological disorders caused by the administration of the drug. The case was heard by the Court of Appeal 12 years after Vickers' conviction when he presented fresh medical and expert evidence to the Court. The fresh medical evidence was rejected and the conviction for murder upheld.

R v Thomas Shanks

Prosecution for the murder of a nurse at Pinderfields Hospital Wakefield. The prosecution alleged that the defendant shot her with a semi-automatic firearm in a public car park in the course of an act of jealous revenge. The defence was one of diminished responsibility based upon 'Gulf War Syndrome'. The defendant was a doctor employed at the hospital who had seen service with the SAS and the RAMC and who had had a distinguished military career, latterly in the first Gulf War. He had brought back from the Iraq war an AK47 firearm which he had concealed and which he had used to kill the deceased. His medical defence that he suffered from an abnormality of mind as a consequence of 'Gulf War Syndrome' was rejected by the Jury and he was convicted of murder.

R v Bieber

Prosecution for the murder of a police officer and the attempted murder of another police officer in the City of Leeds by the defendant using a self loading pistol. The defendant was an American citizen who denied responsibility for the murder. He was sentenced by Moses J at the end of his trial at Newcastle upon Tyne to a whole life term. The case was referred to the Court of Appeal in respect of the human rights issue of whether a whole life term was compatible with Article 3 ECHR. The principle of whole life imprisonment was upheld by the Court of Appeal as consistent with Article 3 ECHR although a specified minimum term substituted.

R v Janet Charlton

Successful defence of a woman responsible for killing her partner by the infliction of multiple axe wounds to the head. The deceased was a sexual pervert who, over an extensive period of time had demanded that the defendant should engage in various extreme sexual activities with him and with other men both publicly and in private. The defendant took a fireman's axe and struck the deceased over the head with it while he was kneeling, blindfolded and handcuffed and with a gag in his mouth in the bedroom of their home. The deceased had asked the defendant to handcuff him as part of the sexual activity which he had insisted upon. The defendant went on to inflict 17 further blows to the head of the deceased with the axe and then draped her suspender belt over the remains of the head. The defence advanced on her behalf was provocation/defence of another [her daughter] and that the defendant was suffering from battered woman's syndrome arising from the deceased's persistent depravity. The defence of self defence was rejected by the jury but the defendant was acquitted of murder and convicted of manslaughter on the ground of provocation. She was sentenced to 5 years' imprisonment for manslaughter which was reduced on appeal to 3 years' imprisonment.

R v Dr Howard Martin

Prosecution of a general practitioner charged with the murder of three of his patients by the use of excessive doses of morphine

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and other drugs. All of the patients were either dying or in advanced stages of fatal illness. It was alleged by the prosecution that the defendant had hastened their deaths by administering strong opiates. The case involved the application of two important legal principles (1) the 'but for' principle in terms of causation and (2) the principle of "double effect." The defendant was acquitted by the jury in respect of all three charges.

R v Muzzaker Shah & Four Others

Prosecution of a number of defendants for the motiveless murder of PC Beshenivsky, a police officer on duty in the City of Bradford who was shot by one of the defendants in the course of the robbery of a travel agents. The co-accused were charged with murder on the basis of joint enterprise. The case also involved the attempted murder of PC Milburn, her colleague, who was also shot but survived. P C Beshenivsky and P C Milburn had answered a call to go to the travel agents just before they finished duty for the day and were shot on the pavement as the robbers emerged. The officers presented no threat to the defendants and the shooting was gratuitous.

R v Colin Norris

Instructed on behalf of the prosecution to advise and thereafter to conduct the prosecution of a male staff nurse in relation to the alleged murder and attempted murder of elderly patients in hospitals operated by the Leeds National Health Service Trust. The five patients in question had all been admitted to hospital for surgical repair in respect of fractured hips. They were all elderly. One of these patients died in circumstances which gave rise to analysis of the deceased's blood and which showed that she had a massive quantity of insulin in her body. There followed an investigation of all suspicious deaths of this nature at these hospitals. The five patients the subject of the charges had all suffered sudden and unexplained hypoglycaemia. None of them was diabetic. There was evidence that insulin had disappeared from the ward fridges. The defendant, Colin Norris was working on the wards at the material times when they died. Colin Norris was convicted in respect of all five patients. The Court of Appeal reviewed and dismissed an appeal against conviction.

R v Guang Hui CAO

The prosecution of a member of the Chinese community resident in Newcastle upon Tyne for the murders of two Chinese students in the City. Their deaths were particularly brutal. The likelihood is that the murders were carried out by way of retribution for non-compliance with orders given by a Chinese gang involved in an internet betting fraud.

R v Anthony Morley

Unsuccessful defence of a man who was by occupation a chef – charged with murder – stabbed the victim to death and then removed sections of his flesh which was seasoned with herbs and then cooked with Provençal olive oil and eaten. Unsuccessful defence of diminished responsibility based upon a dissociative state due to confused sexuality. Court of Appeal [the Lord Chief Justice] – confirmed that the starting point for "cannibalism" was 30 years.

R v Stephen Griffiths

Prosecution at Leeds Crown Court of a serial killer of prostitutes in Bradford. The defendant was responsible for dismembering and eating parts of their bodies.

R v Ness & Awan

Prosecution at Newcastle upon Tyne Crown Court of the two accomplices of the notorious Raoul Moat. Ness was convicted of

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being a party to the murder by Moat of Christopher Brown. Ness and Awan were each convicted of being parties to the Attempted Murder of Police Constable David Rathband, shot on duty by Raoul Moat while the two defendants waited in a getaway car. Both defendants were also convicted of conspiracy to murder police officers and armed robbery.

R v Mann & Parr

Prosecution of two prisoners responsible for the murder of a fellow prisoner in a cell at Frankland prison. The defendants cut open the abdomen of the deceased with the intention of eating parts of him. Both defendants were in custody in respect of offences of murder and attempted murder. The psychiatric state of one of the defendants resulted in the acceptance of a plea of guilty to manslaughter on the basis of diminished responsibility. The other defendant [Parr] pleaded guilty to murder.

R v Sudhanshu Garg

Prosecution of a consultant urological surgeon charged with the manslaughter by gross negligence of a 32 year old patient at Bradford Royal Infirmary.

R v Thompson

Prosecution of a defendant who caused the death of a man in the course of sado masochistic activity involving penetration of the rectum and sigmoid colon with instruments, including a wooden rolling pin and an electric toothbrush. The actions were found by the jury to have caused the death of the deceased after the wall of the colon was ruptured and material that had been introduced into the colon as a lubricant had entered the deceased's blood stream. The deceased had suffered many injuries by way of burns and cuts to the penis some of which had been inflicted after death. The defence case was that the deceased had consented to the activity in question and that it had not been 'dangerous.' The case resulted in consideration of the decision in *R v Brown* [1994] 1 A.C. 212 and a number of subsequent authorities. The defendant was charged with and convicted of 'deliberate and unlawful act' manslaughter and an offence of assault occasioning actual bodily harm.

R v Donald Graham

Prosecution for murder arising from the disappearance of a woman named Janet Brown some 12 years before trial. The defendant was eventually charged with and convicted of her murder. The case involved complex circumstantial evidence and the application by Northumbria Police of the protocol for the investigation of missing persons. The deceased had booked space on a car ferry to France for a holiday. She left her dog in the care of a friend and left her home, seemingly to go on holiday. She never returned. Her family received postcards from France informing them that she had taken up residence abroad and was in employment there. Extensive enquiries were made via Interpol and various international agencies, ferry and airline operators. The defendant could be shown to have travelled to France at or about the time when the postcards had been sent to Ms Brown's parents. The defendant was proved to have obtained without authority all of Ms Brown's substantial cash deposits and to have defrauded her elderly parents. The deceased's body was never found, despite extensive searches by Northumbria Police of areas of farmland occupied by the defendant.

Principal cases involving Non Accidental Head Injury in Children

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Notable Principal cases involving Non Accidental Head Injury in Children cases

R v B [His Honour Judge Murphy QC Sheffield Crown Court]

Successful defence of the father of an 11 week old baby charged with causing her permanent brain damage and disability by shaking. The case involved the so called “triad” of signs. The defence case was that the signs were due to infection with herpes simplex virus. The prosecution case and the diagnosis by paediatricians was demonstrated to be flawed. The prosecution was abandoned after extensive investigation of expert evidence during trial.

R v VS [Mr Justice Forbes & Mr Justice Holland - Trial & Re-trial]

Successful defence of a mother charged with murder/manslaughter of her ten week old baby. The case involved the so called ‘triad’ of signs ie subdural haemorrhage, retinal haemorrhage and swelling of the brain. The prosecution advanced the conventional theory that the ‘triad’ was ‘diagnostic’ of shaking – the defence case was that this was systemic infection. Particular focus was directed to the fact that the baby had been vaccinated some days before her collapse by nursing staff who had not sterilized the area of skin where the vaccination was performed. The jury were unable to agree at the conclusion of the first trial. The prosecution abandoned their case against the defendant at the commencement of the second trial.

R v C [Mr Justice Holland]

Successful defence of a father charged with causing grievous bodily harm to his child [permanent and serious brain damage]. The prosecution case involved an allegation that the baby had been shaken. The defence case was that this was pertussis infection. The case involved complex evidential issues relating to haematology, ophthalmology and neuro-radiology.

R v O’D [Mr Justice Globe – Leeds Crown Court]

Successful defence of a young mother charged with manslaughter by shaking her baby. The baby was born prematurely and was suffering from lung disease. He was permanently in receipt of oxygen and suffered from apnoea. The prosecution based their case on the ‘triad’ of signs and claimed that additional features of the eye pathology lent further support to the triad and that the evidence supported the conclusion that the subdural bleeding, retinal and optic nerve sheath haemorrhaging and hypoxic ischaemic brain damage was due to an act of shaking. The case involved contested paediatric and neurosurgical evidence on both sides.

I have conducted numerous prosecution cases involving NAHI in children and those involving prosecution pursuant to section 5 of the Domestic Violence Crime and Victims Act 2004.

Defence cases involving Professionals, Managers & Company Directors

Notable Defence cases involving Professionals, Managers & Company Directors cases

R v P D

Successful defence of a well-known Solicitor practising in the North East of England who was charged with attempting to pervert the course of public justice. The actions of Durham Police involved listening to a private and potentially privileged consultation between PD and his client using remote monitoring equipment which had been installed by Durham Police in such a way that the

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Police could eavesdrop on the conversation after the defendant and his client had been left together in the Interview Room where an interview under caution had just been conducted. The officers involved were responsible for numerous breaches of good practice. Their credibility was in tatters after an abuse of process hearing by way of a voir dire in a trial listed at Leeds Crown Court before Sir Geoffrey Grigson. Application to stay the proceedings as an abuse of the process of the Court on the ground that the conduct of the Police amounted to “directed” and “covert” surveillance within RIPA 2000 and was conducted without lawful authority. The prosecution was abandoned after the police officers gave evidence. There was a concurrent issue arising out of unlawful searches of the defendant’s home by Durham police exercising inappropriate powers under Section 32 PACE – and involving the seizure of computers without a Special Procedure Warrant and the reading of legally privileged files.

R v B

Successful defence of the chairman of a major public company (FTSE 250) for alleged personal contraventions of an Improvement Notice. The case brought by the Health and Safety Executive failed after submissions were made on the defendant’s behalf that Sections 36 and 37 HSWA were inapplicable since: (i) causation was required to be proved (ii) in the absence of an ability to lift the corporate veil the acts or omissions of the accused were only within the scope of his authority as chairman of the holding company and the default lay with its subsidiary company.

R [VOSA / DVSA] v X & Y

Retained on behalf of the Chairman and Sales Director of a particularly successful company (subsidiary of Close Brothers) engaged in the sale and leasing of commercial vehicles. The directors and two of their managers were charged with particularly serious common law offences including an offence of conspiracy to defraud the Traffic Commissioners of Great Britain arising out of the use of Operator Licences issued by the Vehicle and Operator Services Agency (now DVSA). The case involved a considerable body of technical evidence. It was tried at Leeds Crown Court over a 5 month period. Both defendants together with the two managers were acquitted by the jury at the end of this long trial.

Appointments

- Head of New Park Court Chambers (2000-2022)
- Editorial Advisory Board of Blackstone’s Criminal Practice (2010-date)
- Visiting Professor at the University of Northumbria
- Bencher of the Inner Temple
- Deputy Judge of the High Court (1994-2008)
- Recorder of the Crown Court (1982-2008)
- Criminal Injuries Compensation Board (1989-1992)

Publications

Achieving your ambition – Appointment as Queen’s Counsel and the route to get there.

General Criminal Law:

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- The Art of Cross-Examination
- Advocacy – A Guide for Higher Courts Advocates
- Gross Negligence Manslaughter – Principles and Practice – The Preparation and Presentation of Prosecutions
- Medical Manslaughter – Is the bar too high? – A critical analysis of the criminal process in cases involving ‘gross negligence’ medical manslaughter
- Non-accidental Head Injury in Children
- Infant Deaths – Common Law and Statute – A Guide for Prosecutors for the Charging Decision
- Witness Anonymity: A Practical Application of the Principles
- Shaken Babies – A Syndrome or a Miscarriage of Justice?
- Conspiracy and Incitement to Murder – is Duress still a defence?
- Fitness to Plead – The Legal Test
- Low Template DNA Evidence – the Safety Margins and Evaluation for the Jury

Health and Safety:

- Legal Professional Privilege in the context of Health and Safety Investigations
- ‘Risk’ in Health and Safety – Where are we now?

Published book reviews in equestrian literature:

- The Pure Bred Spanish Horse – The Works of Juan Carlos Altimirano
- Twisted Truths of Modern Dressage – Philippe Karl
- Training the Horse in Hand – The Classical Iberian Principles – Alfons Deitz
- Classical versus Classique – a debate between Philippe Karl and Christophe Hess

Published Equestrian Articles:

- Masters of Equitation Part 1 – “*The Emergence of Classicism*”
- Masters of Equitation Part 2 – “*The Refinement of Classicism*”
- Masters of Equitation Part 3 – “*Balance and Lightness*”
- Masters of Equitation Part 4 – “*The Forward Impulse and the Survival of Classicism*”

A series of four articles on the Principles of Lightness in Equitation under the title of:

“*Lightness and the French Classical Tradition*”

Part 1: *The Meaning of Lightness*

Part 2: *The Refinement of Lightness*

Part 3: *True and False “Lightness”*

Part 4: *Lightness – Continuing the Tradition*

“*Preserving the Carthusian Horse – a profile of Antonio Dominguez Galiano and ‘Los Tercios’ stud*” [published in Horses for Life magazine Issue Number 65 and pending publication in a Spanish language translation in Spain and South America].

Anyone wishing to gain access to these articles should contact [Kirsten Frankland](#) on 0113 203 5501 or by [email](#).

The author is currently researching and writing a major text book on the development and refinement of classical horsemanship.

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Directory Quotes

"Robert is the best of the best."

Chambers and Partners 2025 [Crime]

"He is a guru of the circuit."

Chambers & Partners 2024

"He is very experienced and has a very good reputation." "He is a class act."

Chambers & Partners 2023

"Has significant expertise in homicide, corporate manslaughter, and health and safety cases. He is also particularly well versed in medico-legal matters and demonstrates deep knowledge of human rights issues."

Chambers & Partners 2022

"Absolutely brilliant. His preparation is just beautiful."

Chambers & Partners 2021 (Crime)

"A go-to for complex homicide and fraud cases."

Legal 500 2021 (Crime)

"He has an ability to explain things in a way that juries understand."

Chambers & Partners 2020 (Crime)

"He is regarded as one of the most experienced and excellent silks in the country."

Chambers & Partners 2019 (Crime)

"His approach is meticulous, he is a very able advocate and he has an outstanding reputation."

Chambers & Partners 2019 (Crime)

"Highly recommended for a panoply of serious criminal cases."

Legal 500 2018 (Crime)

"The doyen of the North Eastern criminal Bar. He is simply the crime de la crime. You want him on every criminal case."

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Chambers & Partners 2018 (Crime)

“Very experienced across a range of heavyweight cases.”

Legal 500 2017 (Crime)

“He is the go-to silk for serious crime. He is extremely polished, authoritative and vastly experienced.”

Chambers & Partners 2017 (Crime)

“A leading silk in the North East.”

Legal 500 2016 (Crime)

“A gifted advocate, very thorough, conscientious and persuasive.”

Chambers & Partners 2016 (Crime)

“He is the top person. Any problem you have, you go to him. His intellect, ability to relate to people and his advocacy all combine to make him brilliant.”

Chambers & Partners 2016 (Crime)

“His practice includes cases that are scientifically and medically complex, or involve psychiatric issues.”

Legal 500 2015 (Crime)

“A revered criminal practitioner who is the North Eastern Circuit's go-to-silk for complex health and safety litigation.”

Chambers & Partners 2015 (Health & Safety)

“The Godfather of silks on Circuit.”

Legal 500 2014 (Crime)

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