

Ben Hargreaves

Call 1989



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Ben is a highly skilled and capable criminal law barrister with over 30 years' experience. He is routinely instructed in the most serious and complex criminal cases by professional clients from across the UK, in particular, London, Birmingham, Manchester, Leeds, Preston and Bradford.

As an experienced defence advocate, Ben has appeared in a number of high-profile cases, including:

- the murder of schoolboy Rhys Jones, who was shot and killed in August 2007 in Liverpool as he was walking home from football practice. This infamous case was the subject of a Bafta winning series, Little Boy Blue.
- a global Sky satellite fraud prosecuted by FACT/Premier League (R v Rolston and others 2019), and
- in the leading authority on life imprisonment and LASPO provisions at the Court of Appeal (R v Bursinkas, Phillips and others 2014 EWCA Crim 334)

Ben is a specialist criminal defence advocate and adviser with particular expertise in representing young defendants and handling vulnerable witness. He is adept at dealing with cases with gang material, ANPR/phone data, bad character applications and s28 hearings.

His calm manner combined with his forensic attention to detail makes him a popular choice with instructing solicitors. Ben is utterly committed to providing every client with a first-class service. His down to earth manner and determined approach allow him to act for a variety of clients from all areas of society.

Expertise

Crime

Ben has been instructed in serious criminal defence work for over 30 years and instructed as a leading junior since 2006. He has been instructed in numerous S28 cases and is familiar with GRH and ensuing hearings.

Ben has lectured on the provisions of S 41 YJCE Act 1999 and was the first speaker at the Carmelite Lockdown Lectures in 2020.

Murder & Manslaughter

Ben has been instructed as junior counsel in homicide matters since 2000. He has been involved in a number of prosecutions brought under Operation Trident and general murder allegations.

General Crime

Ben is fortunate to have a wide base of professional clients that provide a huge variety of work which he enjoys. His wide ranging experience, means he advises and represents in cases involving death by dangerous driving, death by careless driving, arson with intent to endanger life, kidnap and extortion.

He represented [Jerome Chauris who closed down Gatwick Airport BBC News](#). Jerome Chauris cleared after Gatwick security alert. He also acted for [Sharon Day](#) who was accused of defrauding her employee, and was acquitted. Ben represented a pensioner who was discovered to have an enormous hidden stash of weapons in his house which was only discovered as his house was burned down by accident, press coverage can be found [here](#).

Sexual Offences

Ben has been instructed in a very wide range of sexual offences. He has completed the vulnerable witnesses program and is accustomed to dealing with very young complainants in sexual cases, the youngest being a child of 4 years, to those complainants in historic offences.

His clients have included religious leaders, professionals and the former treasurer of the Paedophile Information Exchange, Charles Napier, who pleaded guilty to the historic abuse of 23 boys between 1967 and 1983. (The Guardian and [BBC News](#)). He is often required to undertake cross examination of the very vulnerable and very young – the youngest being 4 years old – and is accustomed to historic cases with the accompanying legislative changes. Ben is very familiar with Section 41 applications.

Organised Crime

Ben has been instructed as leading counsel since 2004 in cases brought by SOCA, NCA and other similar agencies.

Notable Crime cases

R v Barnett & others [2021] Snaresbrook Crown Court

An attempted murder where members of a north London gang smashed their way into a house in Enfield and discharged a shotgun from 18 inches from someone they believed to be a rival. It was a case of mistaken identity. The case featured substantial and disputed gang material and drill music videos, telephone and ANPR material.

R v Roman Lada [2021] Luton Crown Court

A Polish lorry driver charged with conspiracy to supply guns and class A drugs in industrial quantities. Every other co-defendant pleaded guilty to a variety of charges leaving RL alone to stand trial where he was acquitted of the importation counts and found guilty of the attempted removal of some £500,000 hidden in his cab. The case featured extensive surveillance and disputed police evidence.

R v Wainwright & others [2020] Bradford Crown Court

A 10-week trial involving a group of friends torturing and murdering an associate whilst filming their behaviour. W had a number of mental health and learning difficulties and required a considerable amount of time and patience to go through a very substantial and serious case.

R v Alowooja & others [2020] Luton Crown Court

A stabbing between two drug dealers with the defendant attempting to burn his clothes and dispose of the murder weapon. A number of very substantial disclosure issues arose during the proceedings which entailed some very detailed telephonic scheduling.

R v Buta & others [2020] Warwick Crown Court

Three 15-year-old boys stabbed another 15 year old over 70 times. The case featured extensive CCTV footage and was the subject of a television documentary program "Forensics ;The Real CSI" on BBC2. B was an exceptionally vulnerable defendant because of his age. He had been remanded just at the start of COVID and had been deprived of any family access and as such required a huge amount of assistance in dealing with the case. The Crown had served a number of area of evidence late which were successfully argued as inadmissible.

R v F [2019] Northampton Crown Court

Defended in a multi handed attempted murder by shooting case which after disclosure issues were raised resulted in the Crown dropping all counts against his defendant.

R v Alshalally [2019] Warwick Crown Court

An attempted murder case involving a drug dealer lured a rival to a remote village and shot him at point blank range with a shotgun. The case required careful examination of co-defendant who attempted a cutthroat defence.

R v B [2018]

Murder Trial

Represented the young, male defendant, B, accused of murder and who gave evidence on his 16th birthday. He was acquitted of murder.

R v Clark and others [2009] Central Criminal Court

Murder Trial

Represented the defendant accused of xxxxx. Previously represented the client in 2006 in a previous matter. He was acquitted on both occasions.

R v Coy and others [2008] Liverpool Crown Court

Murder Trial

R v Clark and others [2006] Central Criminal Court

Murder Trial

R v Patterson and others [2005] Central Criminal Court

Murder Trial

R v White and others [2005] Central Criminal Court

Murder Trial

R v Masagazi and others [2001] Central Criminal Court

Murder Trial

Operation Rain [2019] Warwick Crown Court

Represented Alshalnlay, the first defendant in a three handed attempted murder. The defendant shot the victim with a sawn-off shot gun at point blank range.

R v Hanif [2020] Stafford Crown Court

Unlawful sexual intercourse against a vulnerable schoolgirl by defendant with similar previous conviction and substantial educational needs, entailing substantial legal argument to exclude previous convictions.

R v Hartley [2018] Preston Crown Court

An historic rape against multiple complainants. The son of the owner of an orphanage carried out serious sexual assaults and rapes on three children in the 1970's. The complaints were now some 40 years old and there was evidence of collaboration between the complainants that required sensitive cross-examination.

Former teacher jailed for 15 years after historical sex abuse on three boys

Sex abuser jailed for 15 years after wrecking boy's life Sexual Offences.

Soldier jailed for raping young girl

Armed forces veteran jailed for seven years for sexually abusing young girls.

Preston children home's abuser is caged

A former Army sergeant who raped and abused vulnerable youngsters was jailed for 13 years.

Nottinghamshire man jailed for 25 years

Found guilty of 24 sexual offences against three children and five cruelty offences following a 10-day trial.

R v N and others [2017] Wolverhampton Crown Court

Represented first defendant in gang accused of 21 counts of rape alleged by vulnerable 15-year-old who was in foster care with mental health issues. All defendants were acquitted.

R v Watts [2015] Reading Crown Court

A man who was recently acquitted of raping his wife was then accused of rape by his 9-year-old step daughter.

Acquitted.

R v Ufot [2015] Croydon Crown Court

Acquitted of 11 counts of rape against his stepdaughter.

R v Campbell [2015] Northampton Crown Court

Acquitted of multiple counts of rape against two women.

R v Ahmed and others [2018 and 2019] Birmingham Crown Court

Substantial drug importation that went to a second retrial involving family members that attempted cut throat defences and allegations of jury tampering.

R v Langley [2004] Southwark Crown Court

Importation 40 kg cocaine.

R v Kavac [2006] Harrow Crown Court

Importation 35 kg heroin.

R v Rosserro [2007] Southwark Crown Court

Importation 75 kg cocaine.

R v Duzgun [2008] Snaresbrook Crown Court

Importation 30 kg heroin.

R v Burke [2009]

Liverpool CC a £60 million operation described by SOCA as “the most sophisticated they had ever investigated”.

R v Mohammed [2011] Birmingham Crown Court

Importation 75 kg heroin.

R v Babo [2015] Reading Crown Court

470 kg of cocaine Currently instructed in Operation Camper, Toulouse and Grubless in Birmingham and Derby.

R v Dann and others [2015] Bristol Crown Court

Investigation into an alleged notorious criminal who was accused of supplying firearms by the NCA Organised Crime.

R v Clark and others [2015] Guildford Crown Court

Father and son charged with armed robbery.

R v Haslam [2013] Sheffield Crown Court

14 counts of armed robberies at Post Offices.

Business Crime & Fraud

Ben has developed a substantial fraud practice. He has been involved in defending in serious fraud as a leading junior since 2006. He has defended in cases brought by FACT, the Insolvency Service, Post Office, Trading Standards and HMRC. He has extensive experience of banking and accounting devices and the instruction of forensic accountants.

He acted on behalf of a company director charged with conspiracy to defraud the suppliers of subscription television and the Premier League. The case of Rolston and others and the company Dreambox was covered by the BBC, Times and Independent. Current instructions include the representation of a well known insolvency practitioner in the Midlands whose case was dropped after representations made after Not Guilty verdicts were entered at PTPH.

Ben is frequently asked to advise clients pre charge and very keen to be involved with solicitors to work out effective strategies prior to interview.

Ben has been instructed as leading counsel in fraud cases since 2007, when he represented the only defendant to be acquitted in a company directors fraud at Guildford CC, R v Seary. Through his experience he has developed a deep understanding of accountancy and banking practices.

Notable Business Crime & Fraud cases

[R v Rolston & others \[2019\] Warwick Crown Court](#)

SKY fraud case involving three businessmen attempted to exploit a loophole by offering foreign satellite services to pubs. Leading Junior.

[R v Raza \[2016\] Leeds Crown Court](#)

Represented a headmaster who defrauded the DoE whilst eating up a new academy. R was considered a leading light in the educational world but was found to have syphoned off substantial DoE grants for private purposes.

[R v Scott & others \[2018\] Preston Crown Court](#)

Fraud by a MD of horticultural firm who stole approximately £1m over a 6 year period by diverting sales of products away from the business through car boot sales and markets. two co-defendants turned Queens Evidence, previous civil proceedings were introduced as bad character evidence. Ben was able to cross examine the in house IT employee so successfully that the Crown applied to adduce expert evidence in response

[PO v Bajaj & others \[2018\] Isleworth Crown Court](#)

Successfully submission of no case to answer lead to senior PO manager having his case dismissed after being accused of an £11 m fraud. The case required precision cross examination on a small number of witnesses based on thousands of pages of unused material. Leading junior.

[R v Farooq & others \[2018\] Birmingham Crown Court](#)

Successful defence of a young employee at a high end garage accused of assisting in multi million pound car registration fraud by passing on secure information.

[Trading Standards \(Berkshire\) v Flynn and others \[2019\] Guildford Crown Court](#)

The biggest case brought by BTS against a company selling roofing insulation . This case required the very delicate cross examination of a series of elderly complainants who were accusing the company of mis-selling the product for inflated sums but Ben was able to specifically get each witness to commend F and clear him of any wrong doing.

[R v Newbury and others \[2017\] Central Criminal Court](#)

Multi handed phishing/money laundering . Ben represented N who had knowingly involved his two children into

laundering hundreds of thousands through their accounts

R v Lloyd and others [2016/2017]

Norwich CC, £9 million company director fraud brought by Norfolk Trading Standards which went to a retrial before all the defendants were acquitted. L was the lead director who had set up a company selling SKY warranties which was considered fraudulent and accused of mis-selling to elderly customers. Through an exhaustive search through hundreds of hours of recorded material the defence demonstrated that the majority of customers were satisfied and the warranties and services provided were above reproach.

R v Khan [2015] Leeds Crown Court

Multi-million pound mortgage fraud involving a well known local property developer who was funding his empire by a complex pattern of unlawful obtained mortgages

R v Mapara [2014], Swansea Crown Court

Multi handed complex tele-sales fraud spread over a 4 year period involving the loss of several million pounds.

Criminal Regulatory

Ben has a broad experience of defending in a wide range of criminal regulatory prosecutions.

Education

- University College of Wales 1985-88

Memberships

- Criminal Bar Association
- South Eastern Circuit

Publications

- [Plaku in Practice](#) [10.06.21]
- [Consigned to History: Do abuse of process arguments work in historic sex cases?](#) – explores the case law arising from R (Ebrahim) v Feltham MC [2001] 2 Cr.App.R. 23 through to R v Hewitt [2020] EWCA 1247 and considers whether there is any prospect of turning the tide on the diminishing scope for successful abuse arguments in historic sex allegation [01.02.2021]
- [Social media and identification](#) – the effects that postings on sites such as Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp and Snapchat can have on the value of identification evidence. Incidents may be livestreamed or rumours spread on these platforms long before an effective police investigation or any formal identification procedures. [09.12.2020]
- [A fine mess – Section 41 of the Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act 1999](#) [20.04.20]

Recommendations

2024

Chambers & Partners

Crime: “Benjamin is an incredibly calm, super intelligent barrister whose reflective approach to his cases is really reassuring.”

“A very attractive jury advocate, who’s got a real lightness of touch and is both entertaining and charming.”

“Ben is an excellent tactician and has a wealth of experience of defending in the most serious cases. He is whip smart and has a deadly sense of humour.”

Ranked: Band 5

2023

Chambers & Partners

Crime: “*Very approachable and easy to work with, he has a good way of explaining complex issues to clients.*”

Ranked: Band 6

Regulatory

- CBA
- SE Circuit

Awards



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