

Chris Henley QC

Call 1989 | Silk 2015



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Chris is one of the busiest criminal silks in the country, highly regarded in all areas of serious crime, particularly murder, fraud and terrorism. His work ethic, total commitment, empathetic and tenacious approach to all his cases has marked him out from his earliest years in practice.

He has appeared in a wide variety of leading cases over the years including the 21/7 terror attacks, the Damilola Taylor trial, the Daniel Morgan murder trial, the Jemma Beale trial, the 'Babes in the Wood' perjury trial and many cases prosecuted by the SFO.

In 2018/2019 he was chosen by criminal barristers across the country to lead the Criminal Bar Association during one of the most challenging periods in the profession's history. He is considered, by many, the most successful leader the CBA has ever had.

Chris is a highly effective advocate, with a confident, reassuring manner. He is instructed to appear at inquests, professional disciplinary hearings, and to provide advice to individuals facing a very wide range of criminal allegations. The CCRC have recently asked him to review one of their longest running cases.

Expertise

Crime

Murder & Manslaughter

Chris has substantial experience defending in complex murder trials, particularly those involving young or vulnerable defendants, multiple defendants involving 'cut throat' issues, or disputed expert evidence eg cell site, blood spatter, mental health issues, firearms discharge or where the cause of death is in dispute.

Sexual Offences

Chris has also defended in many other serious cases, for example successfully defending a prep school headmaster charged with historic child cruelty, a young woman charged with making serial false allegations of rape, and regularly represents professionals (recently a dentist, solicitor, journalist, and property developer) charged with various offences including harassment, fraud, and coercive control.

Terrorism

Chris has appeared in many terrorism trials involving allegations of both domestic and international terrorism, linked, for example to the conflict in Syria and Afghanistan.

Notable Crime cases

[R v Azad & 7 others \[2021\] Reading Crown Court](#)

Group attack with samurai sword, following car chase through streets of Watford

[R v Medina & 3 others \[2021\] Central Criminal Court](#)

Alleged gang attack on random young man following 'rideout' into rival gang's area in North West London. M only defendant not convicted of murder.

[R v Abdi and another \[2021\] Isleworth Crown Court](#)

Stabbing at a party

[R v Foy & others \[2021\] Liverpool Crown Court](#)

Shooting by two brothers

[R v Mohammed, Murphy & Bailey \[2021\] Birmingham Crown Court](#)

Conspiracy to murder 15 year old

[R v Chapman and Wright \[2020\] Peterborough Crown Court](#)

Wife and lodger killing husband

[R v Carrington and others \[2020\] Preston Crown Court](#)

Stabbings in Blackpool by group from North West London. Acquitted of murder

[R v KN & Another \[2019\] Derby Crown Court](#)

Murder, cut-throat defences, KN acquitted of murder, co-defendant convicted of murder

[R v Assri \[2020\] Isleworth Crown Court](#)

Murder by bogus nephew, who moved in with the deceased

[R v Popoola & others \[2019\] Central Criminal Court](#)

Multiple stabbings on the same night by gang in Kentish Town. Defendant aged 18

[R v Richard Lee \[2019\] Newcastle Crown Court](#)

Stabbing of a friend following drunken argument

[R v Barry Rogers and Penny John \[2018\] Swansea Crown Court](#)

Son and mother accused of suffocating grandmother, who they believed was suffering from incurable cancer. Covert recordings. Extensive medical evidence

[R v RB \[2018\] Blackfriars Crown Court](#)

Man died in a fire at a cannabis factory in a tower block in South London, RB acquitted of manslaughter and reckless arson

[R v EH \[2017\] Central Criminal Court](#)

A paranoid schizophrenic, acquitted of murder and manslaughter relying on self-defence. EH stabbed burglar 58 times. Extensive cross-examination of pathologist and blood spatter expert.

R v DG and another [2017] Leicester Crown Court

Revenge murder following previous gang attack

R v Jordan Matthews [2017] Cardiff Crown Court

Murder of girlfriend. Expert evidence on cause of death

R v Jemma Beale, [2017] Southwark Crown Court

JB, a vulnerable young woman, prosecuted for making serial false complaints of rape and serious sexual assault.

R v SP and others [2015] Ipswich Crown Court

SP, a Prep School Head Master charged with historic child cruelty against multiple children whilst working at a state boarding school, earlier in his career, for boys excluded from mainstream schools. SP acquitted of all charges.

R v Rabar Mala [2018] Manchester Crown Court

'SIM Card Terrorist'. Assisting IS fighters from the UK, sending and activating hundreds of SIM cards to facilitate communications. S16 Terrorism Act 2006.

R v Stephen Gray [2016] Woolwich Crown Court

SG, a former British soldier who had fought in Iraq, converted to Islam and travelled to Syria to fight with rebel groups against the Assad regime.

R v Aftab Suleman [2015] Central Criminal Court

AS was charged with dissemination of terrorist publications and posting to Facebook making reference to the Peshawar school shootings, and membership of a proscribed organisation.

R v Jamshed Javeed [2014] Woolwich Crown Court

JJ, a chemistry teacher in a Bolton secondary school, pleaded guilty to two section 5 Terrorism Act 2006 offences, involving travel to Syria to join his brother to fight against Assad. Extensive news coverage and very detailed basis of plea drafted.

R v Munir Farooqi [2013] Manchester Crown Court

The first attempt by the CPS to obtain forfeiture of a family home under terrorism legislation. In front of Mr Justice Henriques, successfully opposed the application arguing the application breached the human rights of other family members who would be devastated by the consequences but had committed no offences.

R v Sharif Ali [2013] Southwark Crown Court

SA was one of nine defendants arrested under the Terrorism Act as part of a joint US/UK surveillance operation. US Homeland Security investigators believed that SA was a member of a cell raising funds for Al Shabbab, in Kenya, by smuggling Khat to US. No evidence linking SA to terrorism. Six-week trial.

R v OB, Liverpool Crown Court

A high profile Muslim dentist, from a prominent family, charged with conspiracy to defraud. The North-West Counter Terrorism Unit conducted this extensive investigation into alleged financial crime. Charges were stayed as an abuse of process following lengthy legal argument.

R v HF [2011] Manchester Crown Court

Year long covert surveillance operation, undercover officers alleged to have infiltrated a terrorist cell. Following a 3-month trial HF was the only one of four defendants acquitted.

Business Crime & Fraud

Chris Henley QC has appeared in multiple complex and serious fraud trials prosecuted by a variety of agencies including the SFO, HMRC and DBIS, representing company directors, HNW individuals, financial advisers and other professionals

Notable Business Crime & Fraud cases

R v JK and 9 others, Southwark CC, 2019

MTIC fraud, representing the director of a cash and carry business alleged to be involved in sham trading of alcoholic drinks, and smuggling. Loss of £60m to HMRC.

R v GD and 4 others, CCC, 2018

large scale importation of unlicensed anabolic steroids worth £65 million from India and Eastern Europe, using GD's clothing company as cover.

R v SW & 6 others, Liverpool CC 2018

4 month SFO prosecution. SW was the managing director of a company alleged to be involved in mis-selling solar panels, and fraudulent Swiss based insurance products.

R v JK and 3 others, Southwark CC 2017

£45 million VAT fraud, using a pay roll company.

R v JG and 11 others, Southwark CC 2016

£40 million mortgage fraud. Mortgages raised on multiple high value properties in Mayfair and Kensington. JG, professional surveyor and valuer, alleged to have provided dishonestly inflated valuations. JG acquitted of all counts.

R v MA & 10 others, Birmingham CC 2016

Tax fraud, mortgage fraud and money laundering. MA, the principal defendant, was a revered Pir, 'holy man', and spiritual leader with thousands of followers, based in a Darbar centre in Stoke. MA, members of his family and inner circle prosecuted for multiple commercial and residential mortgage frauds, tax fraud and money laundering.

R v NW-D & 10 others, Southwark CC 2015

Tax fraud, NW-D was a financial adviser to city traders, investing in 'tax efficient' film schemes.

HMRC v JB and 19 others, Birmingham CC 2014

JB acquitted, 17 co-defendants convicted of £multi-million construction industry revenue and VAT fraud, using umbrella companies.

Criminal Regulatory

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

Professional Regulation

Chris has appeared before professional disciplinary tribunals and at inquests.

Notable Professional Regulation cases

Successfully represented a police officer accused of using excessive force in the course of an arrest and another accused of homophobic bullying within the workplace. Both were cleared of all alleged wrongdoing.

Successfully represented Laura Ashley in a private prosecution brought by a trade association. Laura Ashley was accused of breaches of the Trade Descriptions Act.

Successfully represented the owner of a pet crematorium in proceedings brought by the Environment Agency. The defendant, RB, was cleared of all alleged breaches of the EPA.

Education

- Bristol University

Memberships

- Trustee of the Schools Consent Project
- Former Chair of the Criminal Bar Association (2018/19)
- Bencher of Grays Inn

Publications

- Numerous articles in the national press, regularly interviewed on TV and radio.
- He has addressed conferences organized by the Howard League for Penal Reform, the Muslim Council of

Great Britain, The Law Society and in Parliament.

Recommendations

2022

Chambers & Partners

Crime: *"He is very sensitive to his clients' needs in highly emotionally charged situations that require a lot of patience. He is also very reassuring."*

Ranked: Band 3

Legal 500

Crime: *"He fights hard for his client and his witness handling skills are extremely impressive. In court, he is calm, tenacious, skilful and highly persuasive, which makes for a very effective combination."*

Ranked: Tier 3

2021

Chambers & Partners

Crime: *"A balanced and fair advocate" who is "meticulous in every aspect of his preparation."*

Ranked: Band 4

Legal 500

Crime: *"Highly rated by his peers, Christopher's relaxed manner belies a razor-sharp intelligence."*

Ranked: Tier 3

2020

Chambers & Partners

Crime: *"Meticulous in every aspect of his preparation."*

Ranked: Band 4

Legal 500

"Highly rated by his peers, Chris's relaxed manner belies a razor-sharp intelligence."

2019

Chambers & Partners

"Able, hardworking and incredibly bright."

Judicial Appointments/Professional Associations/Memberships

- Former Chair of the Criminal Bar Association (2018/19)
- Bencher of Grays Inn

Awards



Christopher Henley QC

