



THE CHAMBERS OF
TIMOTHY RAGGATT QC

Janick Fielding – Barrister

Called 1997

Practice summary – Serious Crime

RECOMMENDATIONS / QUOTATIONS:

“If a case requires a tough approach, Janick will deliver without question.”

“Janick is fearless in dealing with judges and witnesses.”

PROFILE:

Janick is an experienced criminal defence practitioner, with a very well established practice in London and the South East.

As a first choice counsel for a number of discerning solicitors, it is of no surprise that one eminent partner wrote;

“I instruct Janick to rip the heart out of the prosecution case.” – Jeremy Yuille (Albin & Co)

In all circumstances requiring quality defence counsel, Janick is invariably approachable, client-friendly and keen to do his best, often working beyond expectations and through unsociable hours when the case requires it.

His ability to think around problems, provide fresh perspective and realistic advice adds much needed breadth to any committed legal team.

NOTABLE CASES:

R v XU [2019] Attempted murder, GBH

Counsel was instructed little more than a week before trial to represent a defendant who had allegedly tried to kill his ex-lover in his sleep.

The defendant had spent several years in a difficult and often dysfunctional relationship with a much younger man whom he had first met on a dating website. He had then invited the man to live with him in the UK. The destructive nature of the relationship and the various facets of the behaviour each had demonstrated toward the other provided for a very complex and almost impossible to unravel background. The same was reflected in some detail through an abundance of text messaging and social media communications, much of which was not available to counsel until a few days before trial.

When their relationship finally collapsed, the complainant wanting to leave the defendant and begin a liaison with a woman whom he had recently got to know, the defendant found himself unable to cope. Early one morning he took a heavy camera lens and smashed it over the head of the prone and slumbering complainant until it broke, then he did the same with a metal lamp stand to cause further cranial injuries. The assault resulted in multiple and significant skull fractures.

On calling the police himself, the defendant confessed openly to trying to kill his ex-partner.

The case involved very careful scrutiny of voluminous messaging as well as detailed instructions on both the nature and collapse of the relationship. Character evidence, in both directions, was complicated. Due to the late instruction of counsel, more than one team having already been sacked by the defendant, work had to be conducted swiftly.

Due to his vulnerability, emotional distress and the confusion he felt at his perception that previous teams had failed to properly prepare his case, he was an extremely difficult and challenging defendant to represent. He was nonetheless acquitted of attempted murder – Wood Green Crown Court.

R v OX [2019] GBH, wounding

Counsel represented an extremely vulnerable adult with significant mental health problems. Having been involved in a robbery with the complainant almost a decade previously, an incident in which the defendant had been acquitted and the complainant had been sent to prison, they encountered one another on a night the defendant was homeless. The defendant asked the complainant if he might stay at his flat. Alcohol and cannabis were consumed and the long-buried issues of the past came to the fore. Late at night an argument erupted and then, when a concealed knife fell from the defendant's clothing and both men grabbed for it, they fought. The complainant received abdominal stab wounds requiring immediate surgery. The defendant was found by the police, hiding nearby with a number of the complainant's possessions.

Due to the partially unfavourable commentary and conclusions in the expert reports, the defendant declined to allow their disclosure at trial. Counsel had therefore to manage conflicting accounts with no answer or explanation available for the troubling psychiatric references that were already in evidence. Counsel had in addition to manage the effects of the defendant's disinclination to take his medication. The defendant was nonetheless acquitted of GBH – Reading Crown Court.

R v BX & ors [2018-19] Attempted murder, robbery, GBH

The defendant, a vulnerable young man who required the assistance of an intermediary at trial, was one of four men who, after getting drunk, began to cause a nuisance on the streets, eventually leading to members of the group becoming involved in the commission of evermore serious offences against members of the public. The last involved a victim being stabbed numerous times during a brief altercation, observed by a number of independent witnesses.

In interview, the defendant ascribed blame to all the co-defendants, resulting in a cut-throat defence. CCTV footage was open to interpretation and there was detailed consideration of forensic evidence, especially

blood-staining. Counsel was led by Christopher Paxton QC. The defendant was acquitted of attempted murder. – Oxford Crown Court.

R v Hussain & ors [2017-19] Conspiracy to cause GBH, violent disorder, possession of class A drugs with intent to supply

The defendant, a young man already serving a substantial sentence for firearms offences and drug supply was indicted in relation to his involvement in an earlier alleged revenge attack inflicted upon a rival gang in retaliation for the stabbing of a runner. In conducting this revenge, the gang had sought additional assistance and called in a support team, of which the defendant was said to have been a part, to assist in the meting out of their violent response. A short while later, as the gang members chased down a suspected runner from the rival gang, that team arrived in a hired sports car to cut off their victim's escape. The victim was then set upon, beaten with bars and hacked with machetes. It transpired that the revenge had mistakenly targeted an innocent member of the public.

The Crown's case involved a forensic analysis of cell site data, GPS tracking data from the vehicle and numerous individuals' call records, the same showing people's movements that night, their interactions and the details of how the revenge attack unfolded. The social media material also revealed gang activity over a long period of time, including drug dealing. As there were eleven defendants, the evidence counsel had to consider was vast.

Counsel was parachuted late into the case, the services of previous counsel having been dispensed with by the defendant only a few weeks before trial. Aside from mastering the papers, counsel had to manage potential cut-throat defences from the other defendants who had been occupants in the sports car as well as a global cut-throat with the gang members who were at trial looking to assert that the defendants in the car were in fact been the gang and that they were, contrary to the Crown's evidence and assertions, just people who had happened to be on the street.

Aside from managing a thorny array of repeatedly-arising professional issues, counsel analysed closely and comprehensively the electronic data that supported his case, identified key aspects and deployed the same in asserting that the location of the defendant had been coincidental and the identification of the car carrying him mistaken. During the lengthy and convoluted trial process, counsel remained alive not just to his own client's position but those developing amongst the co-defendants.

After two months of trial, counsel made an application, originally unassisted by any co-defendants and opposed by many, that the factual position the Crown sought latterly to agree with the gang members was contrary to *Gough* principles of justice being seen to be done and to the defendant being able to have a fair trial. After full argument, and an indication from the bench that they would lose, the Crown sought to discharge the jury and a retrial, with the occupants of the car and the gang members tried separately, was ordered. (Counsel was unable to conduct the retrial due to pre-existing commitments, however the jury were hung and the defendants then accepted a plea to significantly lesser offences, resulting in no additional time in prison.) – Central Criminal Court.

R v Dodson [2018] Attempted murder, attempted GBH

The defendant had spent the evening drinking with a friend before going to the Halo nightclub, Bournemouth. The Crown's case was that having taken issue with security staff over his ejection for an earlier alleged altercation, he punched a doorman in the face, in full view of the CCTV cameras. During his subsequent restraint, whilst struggling and spitting at staff, he made numerous threats to come back and kill them. Once released, because no police were available to arrest him, he made further threats before being ushered away from the area by a friend. Shortly thereafter he ran to his car and, although significantly over

the drink drive limit, returned to the club, driving at speed, mounting the pavement and crashing through the club's barriers. Two doormen were struck, one going over the bonnet of the car. The defendant then careered into a lamppost whilst attempting to flee the scene. All of this was on CCTV. He fled the collision, grinning, before being brought to the ground and detained pending the arrival of the police. Testing discovered that he was as much as three times over the limit for alcohol and that he had taken cocaine. His mental health assessment, disclosed without proper consent, included a confession that he had consumed numerous drinks and cocaine that evening.

The defence case developed a markedly different position. Though the consumption of alcohol and cocaine was accepted, along with the obvious dangerousness of the driving, it was averred that the defendant had been detained with such force by the doormen that there was no fight left in him, that their assertions as to threats made by him were largely lies and that he had been caused such pain that he had been reduced to tears and begging for help. On release he had simply wanted to go home, rather than to his friend's flat, as had previously been arranged. It was only at the last moment, whilst waiting at traffic lights adjacent to the short, steep road that led to the club, that the defendant decided that it would be a good idea to mount the kerb and perform a drive-by, thereby scaring those who had earlier tormented him. Unfortunately, due to a number of factors, none of which were helped by his consumption of alcohol, the defendant lost control as he struck the kerb and then ran through the barriers, notwithstanding his efforts to break. The subsequent collision with the lamppost had also been due to his lack of control and judgement. He ran only because he was scared. Indeed, he was distraught by the effects of his actions, even though at the time he did not realise he had struck any person.

Counsel argued that although the driving was horrendous, the evidence of intent was lacking and the gaps in the evidence and absence of expert analysis did nothing but compound this position. Disclosure enquiries and cross-examination revealed that scene photographs had not even been looked at by the Crown until after proceedings had begun. Similarly, a set of preliminary scene notes from an accident investigator had been left out of the papers and no report had been prepared, even though the lead officer conceded that the distinction between whether the collision was deliberate or may have been an accident was the central issue. The defendant distanced himself from his confession about taking cocaine, claiming that it had in fact been the previous evening, and counsel challenged any attempts by the Crown to rely upon the potential effects of such consumption in the absence of a toxicology or pharmacology report, neither of which they had. The doormen were cross-examined extensively as to their credibility, use of excessive force and failure to make professional records, as required by their industry, of key matters of fact that the Crown sought to rely upon. How their record in their incident log book had been erroneously copied, leaving out the partial and contradictory note of their restraint, was also a key issue. The only witness who gave evidence of the defendant's grinning while attempting to escape was discredited in cross-examination and shown to be at variance with other evidence.

The defendant gave evidence, a decision having been taken that the jury should hear about his drug abuse, discharge from the army and ongoing difficulties, as although these did not present him as an attractive personality, the same did go some way to negative the intent the Crown required to prove their case. The defendant was acquitted – Winchester Crown Court.

R v XK [2017-18] GBH

Counsel represented a young man with very significant and complex mental impairment who had involved himself in a drug deal that had subsequently gone wrong. During the fight that had then been sparked, it was alleged he had stabbed another man through the neck with a knife.

Police investigations claimed to have excluded all others from any wrongdoing, despite the obvious drugs matters and the fact that more than one individual was left with knife wounds. The trial therefore proceeded only against the defendant with special needs.

Having secured his client the protections afforded by an intermediary, counsel set about demolishing the prosecution case. He had excluded a spurious confession it was claimed the defendant had made to another witness, secured the disclosure and admissibility of the bad character of the complainant and his friends, established the inaccuracy and dishonesty of all the civilian prosecution witnesses, uncovered various lies that ought to have been identified by the police and unmasked the injured party as a racist thug who had not only spent several years targeting Asians with violent and racist abuse but had also victimised this defendant.

Thereafter the presentation of the defendant's own evidence and deployment of well-prepared character material allowed for a speech demonstrating that in all probability the complainant had been stabbed by one of his own violent friends, and that the defendant was most likely their intended victim. The defendant was acquitted. – Guildford Crown Court.

R v Maheswarran [2018] GBH

During a party in a carpark following a day of worship at a local temple the defendant, a young Hindu man, was alleged to have smashed the broken end of a glass bottle into the face of a one-time friend, resulting in deep lacerations that required several surgeries. Easily identified, the defendant was subsequently arrested and lied to police, asserting that he had not had a fight with the complainant or anyone else. The Crown had several eye witnesses to support their case.

The defendant, accepting he had lied, essentially out of fear, asserted latterly that he was the victim of repeated bullying by the complainant and his associates, and that on this night, having seen them inflict savage injuries on another individual, had been set upon by five men, including the complainant. As the assault had begun, three had removed their belts to use as weapons and the defendant had been attacked by all of them simultaneously. In panic he had reached for anything he could find, had picked up the already broken bottle and had waved it in front of him to ward off the attack. The complainant had then run into the bottle with his face. The defendant then managed to escape without any injury.

Solicitors had identified a belt in the boot of the complainant's car and had required analysis of it. The report showed not only that this was the belt worn by the complainant but that the patterning of the blood demonstrated violent movement whilst the viscous fluid was wet, and further that the runs showed movement in multiple directions and repeated abrupt cessation, exactly as would be expected if the belt had been used as a weapon whilst blood on its surface was still wet. In cross-examination the complainant claimed to have removed his belt to prevent blood falling onto his new jeans, although he had never actually taken any other clothing off. Forensics were not required to show that the jeans were not new.

The majority of the damage to the complainant's credibility came, however, through extensive cross-examination of his dislike of the defendant, the same stemming from a feud that had been festering between them over alleged slurs made about a deceased relative. The defence case was that it had been this issue that had led to the attack on the defendant and provided the complainant's motivation to lie about it following an injury for which he had only himself to blame. The defendant was acquitted – Woolwich Crown Court.

R v Taylor [2018] aggravated burglary

The defendant, a mentally vulnerable man, allegedly upset about a new relationship his ex-girlfriend had begun, was said to have armed himself with a metal bar, burst into her flat early one morning and set about brutally attacking her new man as he lay asleep in her bed. It was alleged the attack was carried out in front of her young child. Both the new boyfriend and the ex-girlfriend had injuries consistent with the alleged assault. The matter was complicated by the defendant's prior harassment of his ex-girlfriend, predominantly through the sending of threats and nasty messages, which included several offering serious violence and the death of the new boyfriend. The defendant had largely failed to answer the police questions and was unable to bring to court any alibi witness who might testify as to his whereabouts at the time of the attack. That the defendant had twice previously been convicted for assaults, on both occasions with a metal bar, did not assist either.

In cross-examination counsel put to the new boyfriend that he and the ex-girlfriend had entirely fabricated the allegation because both were, albeit for different reasons, furious with the defendant for having begun a sexual relationship with the new boyfriend's ex-girlfriend. The Crown called the sister of the defendant's ex-girlfriend to provide evidence of a confession she claimed the defendant had made shortly after committing the offence, however, she and the ex-girlfriend were both roundly discredited through a detailed analysis of the timings of their respective claims.

Although the defendant's admitted conduct showed him in a very bad light and he failed quite spectacularly to deal with a number of the circumstantial issues supporting the Crown's case, a speech inviting the jury to put aside their understandable dislike for the defendant's admitted conduct and to focus instead on the inconsistencies identified in the Crown's case secured an acquittal. – Winchester Crown Court.

R v Tilly [2017-18] wounding [privately funded]

The defendant was charged with wounding following an altercation that had begun when he was reprimanded for urinating in a sink at a nightclub. Another patron had taken issue with the defendant's unsavoury behaviour and provided him with his opinion. The defendant, unhappy about this, was alleged to have finished urinating and then subjected the complainant to a flurry of punches that left him with a number of facial fractures, the incident witnessed by two other patrons who had entered the toilet just prior to the physical altercation commencing.

The defendant's case was that he had in fact been the victim of an assault by the other man, that he had no choice but to urinate in the sink on account of his being in the grip of prostatitis (a painful condition that can result in urinary urgency) and that he had acted only in self-defence, punching the complainant and causing him to fall. Further, the defence said that the complainant, notwithstanding his significant injuries, had swiftly concocted a story with the independent witnesses in the minutes before police and medical services arrived.

In seeking to dispute the contention that he had been the aggressor, out of control and drunk, the defendant had asserted that he had escaped the altercation and reported the matter immediately to the doormen and thereafter the police. The defence accordingly made numerous applications for the CCTV from the club. Unfortunately, when the footage was eventually produced, on the second day of the trial, it showed the defendant being dragged from the toilet backwards by five doormen who had in fact been alerted to the assault by one of the independent witnesses.

Notwithstanding this tactical and evidential disaster, counsel cross-examined at length on the inconsistencies between the witnesses and established the lucidity of the complainant in the immediate aftermath, a time when he had told the jury he was unconscious, and thus identified his opportunity to attempt a collective fabrication so as to mask that he was responsible for what had occurred. Counsel's close analysis of other footage afforded the defence further material through which it was possible to identify at

least the opportunity for such collusion and invalidate the asserted independence of the witnesses to the incident. The defendant was acquitted. – Southwark Crown Court.

R v XB & ors [2016-18] kidnap, GBH

Counsel represented one of four juvenile defendants, a young man with a very troubled background. The defendant was alleged to have been the ringleader in a punishment attack upon a drug user who had failed to pay his debts to a local gang. It was alleged that in the course of a well-orchestrated raid, the defendant and another took the complainant from his place of work, a security cabin at an industrial complex, by force, placed him in a car and drove him to a remote track. En route, the complainant was stabbed multiple times. He was then dragged from the car and beaten with iron bars in the roadway before being left for dead in the small hours of the morning. The complainant was found some time later by a passing car and rushed to hospital where he was treated for multiple injuries.

The defence was cutthroat in nature, with various defendants blaming one another for what had occurred and individually denying all responsibility. Aside from the usual disclosure and character issues, the case involved detailed consideration of telecommunications evidence and parallel investigations in relation to similar serious matters.

The first trial was aborted at the close of the Crown's case due to disclosure issues that had arisen from the pursuance of the cutthroat defence. Two subsequent trials were also aborted before the defendant was formally acquitted. – Chelmsford Crown Court.

R v Prudence [2017-18] robbery, firearms, racially aggravated criminal damage

The defendant was alleged to have robbed his drug dealer at gunpoint. When associates of the dealer came to demand compensation, the defendant was alleged to have taken revenge by damaging their cars later that night.

The case involved detailed disclosure applications for third party material and careful cross-examination around thorny areas of character evidence that would, if admitted, have done great damage to the defence case. Counsel also had to deal with numerous arguments in relation to those points, often at short notice as the evidence given at trial shifted quickly. The defendant was acquitted of all matters save the criminal damage – Reading Crown Court.

R v Belton [2017-18] – computer hacking [Privately funded]

Counsel was instructed for an employee alleged to have hacked into the servers of the company he had just been made redundant by. The allegation, that he had sought to take control of all assets and data, thereby attempting to shut down the entire operation, was extremely serious. It was alleged that the senior technician then had to fight a battle for control of the servers, eventually removing the defendant's user profile, his access and shutting him out.

The defence case was that this was utter nonsense, that the defendant had written the operating software, was still required by the CEO to maintain the system for onward sale, and that the allegations now levelled against him were a smoke screen designed fraudulently to deprive him of both his rights to a share of the company assets, to which he was entitled having been a founder of the company, and compensation as the holder of the intellectual property rights to the software.

The case required a detailed knowledge both of the operating systems in use and the particular programming involved. Counsel had to be familiar with the respective IT roles of several prosecution

witnesses and the detailed expert nature of the evidence they would provide. Similarly, expert evidence had to be presented by the defence to confront the Crown's case.

Extensive cross-examination revealed that the Crown were actually unable to establish that any hack had occurred, as opposed to the defendant permissibly accessing the system to perform maintenance. The defence also established a concerted effort to deny the defendant his rights, impugn his character and bring a false allegation against him. When the Head of Operations broke down in cross-examination, apologised to the jury for having lied to them and apologised to the defendant in the dock, the Crown threw in the towel. The defendant was acquitted on all counts – Reading Crown Court.

R v Pullen [2017] – the 3G Network hacking [Privately funded]

Counsel was instructed for sentencing to represent the architect of the program that successfully breached multiple layers of security and hacked the 3G network, gaining access to the personal data of hundreds of thousands of customers and compromising the platform. The case law indicated that a sentence of several years would be warranted. Counsel's brief was to avoid immediate imprisonment.

Although the program had been devised and run for financial gain, counsel argued successfully that the circumstances were sufficiently different and that consideration to a lower level disposal should be considered. Detailed mitigation and skeleton arguments were advanced and imprisonment was suspended. – Croydon Crown Court.

R v Keyes [2016-17] – rape, indecent assault, coercive behaviour

The defendant was alleged to have abused his girlfriend, physically, sexually and emotionally, over the course of several years, requiring her to do as he directed, including dictating when and if she could see friends, family and even determining which university she was to attend. She alleged numerous individual acts of violence, both physical and sexual, including an allegation that he would choke her into unconsciousness before having intercourse with her.

The defendant denied all of this, claiming that the entirety of her allegations, from start to finish, were fabrications and that he had been a caring boyfriend who had been taken for granted, used and then jettisoned by her. Defence preparation involved provision of a very detailed defence statement and consideration and deployment of lengthy social media records.

The complainant's story, supported by detailed assertions that the defendant's control had robbed her of the opportunity to be with her family in times of need, unravelled when counsel demonstrated in cross-examination that numerous claims she had made were utterly false, including a father dying of cancer and a grandmother who had fallen ill and died in tragic circumstances. Dramatically, the deceased grandmother was proven to be alive in the middle of cross-examination, and the police confirmed the same when they spoke to her. The complainant confessed to perjury and the case, unsurprisingly, collapsed. The defendant was formally acquitted – Reading Crown Court.

R v AR [2015-17]- sexual activity in the presence of a child [Privately funded]

Two teenage school girls alleged that the defendant had been masturbating at them from the window of his study consistently on weekdays for a period approaching six months. On the final day of this activity, they told their mothers, one of whom came back from work early, stepped into the rear garden and allegedly saw the defendant masturbating his erect penis from a distance of around 12 meters. The police were called and the defendant was arrested.

The defence case was that this had been an horrific misunderstanding, the defendant being a man of good character with much to lose in the event of conviction, and that what had been seen was him treating his complex type-1 diabetic condition. The defence asserted that the masturbatory motion witnessed by the complainants was either his having shaken vigorously, at waist height, the insulin-solution bottle attached by catheter to his waist to remove air bubbles, an activity required on a frequent basis, or his having manipulated various phallic shaped devices that were medically prescribed for the insertion of probes and sensors into his body, all of which required frequent changing.

The defendant had provided a very detailed interview, both setting out the medical aspects of his account and also asserting unequivocally that there could not have been line of sight to his groin and that therefore masturbation must have been inferred rather than seen.

Significant defence preparation included presentation of medical material; records of treatment, paraphernalia, timings of maintenance, etc. Counsel also required the shooting of footage showing the lengthy process as seen from the study room and simultaneously from the alley between the two houses. The latter demonstrating clearly the misconception that could have arisen. Line of sight work with laser-line calculations supported the defendant's assertions in interview as to impossibility, though the defence went further and obtained evidence from various sources establishing support from issues such as reflection, weather and silhouetting.

Extensive cross-examination of the complainants established both the existence of the presumptions they had made and the assertions of the defence in relation to line of sight. Cross-examination of the officer in charge of the case also highlighted the very defective investigation conducted by the police and the prejudice that this had caused to the defendant's case. The Learned Judge agreed with the defence that the Crown could not establish key elements of their allegation. The defendant was acquitted. – Guildford Crown Court.

R v Lyall [2015-17] – Serious historic penetrative offences against children.

The defendant found himself facing a plethora of allegations, including rapes, made by several step-daughters in respect of incidents that had occurred as long as 50 years earlier. The Crown's case was that he had been a drunken, violent, sadistic man, ruling their home through fear and controlling the life of their mother and all ten siblings. The assertions in summary were that he had systematically, sexually abused all of the female children, from as young as five into their early teens. Three of them were complainants at trial.

The defence case was that the allegations were born generally of a malaise, grown against him to assuage a number of siblings of responsibility for various significant failings in their own lives and to hide a deep-rooted dissatisfaction for what they considered to be an impoverished childhood. More recently, there had been a falling out between one sibling and a daughter of the defendant, when it had become clear that the husband of the former had been engaged in some extra-marital conduct with the latter. It was submitted that this had been the trigger for a demonstratively false, recent rape allegation and the galvanising of the other siblings into action against the defendant.

The weight of evidence against the defendant was enormous, the allegations of the complainants being supported by a host of other family members. They had even asserted that the defendant's wife, now long dead, had known of his abuse and had deliberately and actively buried it until making a host of confessions on her death bed. The defence sought to exclude this evidence but were unable to do so.

The defendant, in contrast had no one and no support for his case. He asserted baldly that he had always worked hard to provide for his family and that he could not now understand the hatred they held for him. His memory was failing and he had recently gone into remission from cancer. His assertion that there was a

conspiracy against him was roundly rejected by the Crown, who asserted that the complainants were making their allegations honestly and independently of one another and that there had been no collusion or fabrication of evidence.

Cross-examination was extremely difficult due to a number of vulnerabilities in respect of complainants and much material being inadmissible. Nonetheless, it was discovered by counsel during questioning that there had in fact been a conspiracy between the siblings to prevent the defendant from knowing of his ex-wife's ill health, demise and burial, that they were therefore able to act as a unit, despite the contrary being a fundamental tenant of the Crown's case, and that they had done so to the detriment of the defendant, and most unpleasantly so. It also became clear that there existed significant inconsistencies in various accounts and several witnesses had been less than frank with the police and the jury. The defendant was acquitted on every count. – Chelmsford Crown Court.

R v Kingham [2016-17] – GBH, wounding [Privately funded]

A difficult and emotive case in which a young woman with significant mental health difficulties arising from an abusive familial background believed herself confronted in a pub by another woman. The defendant, recently discharged from hospital, having been prescribed the wrong medication, was already in a troubled state when she was told by her brother that the complainant had just attacked him and was now coming for her. When the complainant arrived, the defendant approached her and, shortly thereafter, smashed a glass into her face, causing significant injury and, ultimately, permanent scarring. Notwithstanding the differing accounts in relation to both the background and the facts of the assault, the incident had been caught on the pub CCTV cameras, the defendant being seen to approach unheralded, raise the glass above her head and bring it down swiftly on the complainant. The defendant lied in successive interviews, giving different accounts on each occasion, including assertions that she had not seen the complainant that night and that she had had no interaction with her.

The defendant pleaded on the day of trial, advancing as mitigation her fragile mental state as mitigation, supported by the erroneous treatment she had received shortly before the incident. Significant preparation had been undertaken in relation to the presentation of the mitigation. Through the comprehensive medical records, supported by detailed character evidence, counsel submitted that unusually, the defendant should not be sent into prison. The Learned Judge agreed and suspended the sentence. – Chelmsford Crown Court.

R v Foster [2015-17] – Attempted grievous bodily harm, dangerous driving.

The defendant, an obese man with significant health problems, had been in a nightclub with his girlfriend when she became embroiled in an altercation with others. Although the defendant tried to protect her, he found himself punched to the floor by one of her male friends and was then subjected to a prolonged beating and kicking. Although the defendant claimed to have no recollection after that time, the CCTV from the car park showed him and his girlfriend getting into his car. The car was seen to enter a service road in pursuit of the group that had assaulted him, speed up, angle toward them and then drive through the group. It was alleged that two of the group had been run down. The defendant was then pursued by police in a chase that exceeded 100mph before he was cornered several miles away and attempted to escape on foot. He was caught, out of breath and smoking, in a nearby garden, claiming falsely that he lived there and that the police should in fact be looking for a skinny man who had leapt over a hedge. In custody he was alleged to have been obnoxious, drunk and refused to provide samples.

Defence preparation was significantly hampered as the defendant refused to assist his own lawyers and had to be directed by the Court to do so. The net result was that the defence were without any of the supporting witnesses, experts and civilians, who ought to have been present for trial. The defence case was that his amnesia was genuine and that although he had to accept that he was the driver of the car, it could be

inferred that his intent had not been to inflict grievous bodily harm but was more likely to scare or intimidate the group in revenge for their assault upon him. The defence disputed the injuries said to have been caused to those run down, asserting that they had most likely been accrued when the door staff had restrained the group and physically ejected them. Through cross-examination, the defence established that the two males in the group had links to the nightclub, and thus to potential witnesses and evidence, one being the DJ and the other being a former staff member of a neighbouring club who knew the current door staff. The defence also highlighted the loss of crucial footage from the club and the failure of the police to identify and take statements from any independent witness, even though plenty had been around at the time. The trial focused on cross-examination of the inconsistencies between the accounts of the complainant group, which included an off-duty police officer, and the compound failures of the police to properly investigate the incident or to treat the defendant as someone who was suffering from significant head trauma in the aftermath. The defendant had always accepted that the driving must have been dangerous but the Crown insisted nonetheless on proceeding to trial. The defendant was acquitted on both counts of attempting to cause grievous bodily harm. – Basildon Crown Court.

R v Jordan Turner-Hall (& another) [2015-16] – Wounding [Privately funded]

Counsel defended Jordan Turner-Hall, the former England and Harlequins rugby player in relation to his involvement in an altercation at the Prism nightclub in Brighton. Following the untimely death of a friend, the defendant and other old school friends had gathered in Brighton to remember him, the evening ending with a visit to the aforementioned club. The night had passed peacefully until two very drunk local men decided to single out one of the defendant's group. An altercation developed and various people, the defendant included, tried to act as peacemakers. Then, without provocation, one of the men punched the defendant in the face before fleeing into a dark corridor. The defendant followed, as did others. Although the club's bars were covered by CCTV, the corridor was not. All that could be seen of the altercation that then occurred was one of the drunk men flying horizontally back into shot, having just sustained multiple facial fractures.

The Crown's case was that the defendant was an aggressor and responsible for the injuries that must have been sustained by the complainants in the corridor. The defence asserted variously that in fact the defendant had been assaulted by them, he had done no more than push one of them after he had risen from the floor having been knocked down from behind in the dark, that the injuries must have been caused variously by their own drunken misadventures or by others from his group who had come to protect him and that the police had wilfully misinterpreted evidence available to them, ignored evidence that supported him and had targeted him deliberately when they ought to have investigated fairly and impartially.

The case involved very close analysis and interpretation of CCTV footage and thorough review of the police investigation. The defence were not assisted either by an unnecessary cut-throat run by the co-defendant. Extensive cross-examination of the complainants revealed their multiple lies and advanced also the motive for the complaint, namely one of them, realising from social media that an England rugby international had been involved, had targeted him with his complaints in the hope of compensation that would enable him to fund the rebuilding of his nose. The defence also illuminated significant failures by the police to investigate the matter fairly and in accordance with their duties. The defendant was acquitted. – Hove Crown Court.

R v Gurung & ors [2014-16] – violent disorder, wounding.

Counsel represented the first of eight defendants charged following a violent clash between Nepalese and Poles in Reading town centre. The defendant and some friends had begun to wander home in the small hours of the morning after celebrating a holy day with others from their community in a local restaurant. Meandering drunk through the rain, the defendant was unnecessarily and violently assaulted by two large Polish brothers. Others came to his aid and they in turn called for reinforcements. Not perturbed by

numbers, the Poles engaged them, the Nepalese armed themselves with building debris from a nearby skip and fought back. The first engagement ended with the Poles retreating over a bridge to a casino, however, the Nepalese pursued and fought them again, inflicting various injuries to both brothers. The majority of the altercations were captured on the town's CCTV array. Four of the eight defendants chose to plead guilty.

Trial preparation required close attention to the CCTV and the various versions of events relied upon by other defendants. Counsel's case was not assisted by his own defendant having partial amnesia and the one co-defendant who could assist him having fled to a monastery in the Far East. Acute difficulty was also caused by the defendant himself who, from his limited recollections, insisted on running a defence that was clearly disproved by the available CCTV. Extensive cross-examination revealed the significant dishonesty of the complainants and highlighted too their previous convictions for drunken violence, including a previous assault upon a young Nepalese man. The first trial had to be aborted toward the end for complex professional issues relating to the competence of a co-defendant's counsel and its effect upon the fairness of proceedings in relation to his own client and the co-defendants. At the re-trial the defendant (and all co-defendants) were acquitted. – Reading Crown Court.

R v Thomson [2015-16] – Firearms. [Privately funded]

The defendant, a man in his 70's, was charged with possession of a firearm found during a police raid on his premises following an unsubstantiated domestic violence allegation. Although the shotgun was in pieces, and obviously of considerable age, the prosecution found an expert to say that it was not an antique (and thus exempt) and that it was capable of being fired, even though there were no pins and one of the barrels had been filled with lead. The defence case was that the pieces were a family heirloom that the defendant had intended to have cleaned and mounted but had left on a shelf in his workshop for some decades. Through the instruction of a firearms expert, the defence were able to show that, contrary to the findings of the Home Office expert, the gun was indeed an antique. The defendant was acquitted – Chelmsford Crown Court.

R v Freeman [2015-16] – attempted murder.

The defendant found himself in a rather serious altercation with another man in his local pub at closing time. After an initial exchange, during which the complainant struck the defendant several times across the head and back with a stool, both ended up in the car park. During the fight that followed, the defendant stabbed the complainant in the neck with a sharp object that was never recovered. Badly wounded and losing a significant quantity of blood, the complainant managed to retreat to the pub where the staff locked and bolted the doors to prevent the defendant regaining access. The defendant's position was not assisted by his standing at the locked doors and shouting that he wanted to finish the complainant off. Neither was the fact that he had twice previously stabbed people. He was tracked fleeing the scene by a police helicopter and arrested at his father's home nearby. The defendant's case was that he was in fear for his life and had acted in self-defence, the police having twice given him Osman warnings in the recent past. Defence preparation was compounded by the defendant's mental health difficulties and tactical considerations in relation to revelation of the same at trial. The defendant was acquitted of attempted murder but convicted of grievous bodily harm. – Chelmsford Crown Court.

R v HX [2015-16] – rape.

A difficult to defend rape allegation that arose after the defendant, a student, assisted another student to her hall of residence in the small hours of the morning after a festive ball. Both were drunk, the complainant invited the defendant to stay and tried to initiate intercourse, something that failed after a few fumbled attempts because the defendant was too drunk to perform. Both were drifting off to sleep when a group of the complainant's friends arrived outside her door. They did not approve of the defendant and having been

told that he had been seen walking away with their friend, they took it upon themselves to intervene. After repeated phone calls they bashed at the door until they succeeded in rousing the defendant. When he answered the door, they took him to task before ejecting him unceremoniously and gave him a dressing down as he dressed in the corridor and hurriedly left. Though the complainant had almost no recollection of the evening, she was persuaded to report the matter to the university and the police. The defendant was arrested, interviewed, suspended from the college and bailed pending trial. The case required very careful cross-examination of a number of very opinionated witnesses and close attention to a plethora of background matters. The defendant was acquitted – Chelmsford Crown Court.

R v King [2015] – rape.

The defendant was charged two years after the alleged incident with the oral rape of the young son of his ex-girlfriend. The defence case was that the allegation was a complete fiction, concocted at the behest of the mother who had an axe to grind with the defendant. The defence had extensive evidence of the inadequacy of the ex-girlfriend during the course of the relationship and thereafter, including evidence of drugs, violence and abuse, though for legal reasons were able to deploy almost none of it. It was cross-examination that exposed the preparatory sessions during which the mother had trained her son to provide false evidence. The mother claimed to have alerted the police as soon as her son had told her of the incident. It transpired she had waited months, holding various discussion sessions with her child before choosing a time to reveal the alleged crime. The defendant was acquitted – Chelmsford Crown Court.

R v Scammell [2015] – cannabis farming and dealing. [Privately funded]

One of the defendant's properties was found to be a cannabis farm, capable of producing a very substantial amount of the drug under quite sophisticated and well-installed hydroponic conditions. Aside from a friend of the defendant's residing there, a significant amount of the defendant's paperwork was there and he had been seen to attend regularly. In addition, there were recovered an abundance of text messages from his phone between himself and his co-defendant friend concerning the mixing of feed, management of the automated watering system, maintenance of the property, etc. The defendant declined to answer questions in interview.

The defence was that the Crown had got totally the wrong end of the stick, so far as this defendant was concerned. Whilst his friend had obviously been running a cannabis farm, and indeed pleaded guilty to the indictment, the texts involving the defendant had been regrettably misconstrued, as they in fact related to the looking after of his parents' horses at their farm, they being too old and infirm to attend to the animals themselves. Notwithstanding some quite substantial evidence, the defendant was acquitted – Basildon Crown Court.

R v Fraser [2015] – multiple rape.

An exceptionally serious allegation of drug induced rape made against the defendant by a one-time friend of his and his former partner's. The Complainant claimed to have been visiting the defendant only to cheer him up after the loss of his son following family court proceedings, when she claimed he forced her to take drugs that left her in a catatonic state and effectively imprisoned throughout the weekend. She came to on various occasions during the course of repeated rapes and other assaults, including strangulation. She denied taking any drugs voluntarily.

The defence case was that it was all made up because the Complainant, when she had taken and used his phone, had discovered that she was only fourth on his list of chosen intimate company. She was thus seeking revenge as she had hoped he would be her boyfriend and those hopes had been dashed.

Deploying material from a variety of sources, the defence established the Complainant's fondness for cannabis and the fact she had her own tools to prepare the same as she wished, that she had spent part of the weekend socialising with the defendant's flatmates and their children, that she had gone shopping during the weekend before returning to have a bath while the defendant had been at work for the morning and had even texted her mother to deliver to her toiletries and makeup she had forgotten prior to arriving. Understandably, the defendant was acquitted. – Swindon Crown Court.

R v Ashby (& ors) [2014-15] - attempted murder and s.18 GBH. [Privately funded]

The defendant was one of three charged with an attempted murder arising from a week-long dispute between the defendant and the complainant that had turned to violence at the Brixton Splash music festival. The defendant and the complainant had fallen out over insulting comments made about the defendant's ex-girlfriend. At the festival the complainant had harassed the defendant to fight with him. It then transpired that the complainant was armed with a gas spray. The defendant called for back-up. The co-defendants arrived and at first tried to placate the two protagonists. They all went to a nearby side street to talk, however, the complainant pulled out his spray and used it on the defendant and one of the co-defendants. A chase ensued, resulting in the complainant being dragged to the floor in front of a crowd of people, where he was kicked and stamped until unconscious. As a result of brain injuries, he was in a coma for some time. The defence case was that although the defendant had been involved in the chase, it was his co-defendants who had committed the crime. He had not participated, only watched.

The case featured a significant amount of poor quality CCTV and cell site analysis, as well as cut-throat defences. The defendant was the only one acquitted. - Inner London Crown Court.

R v Humphries & ors [2014-15] - s.18 GBH and actual bodily harm. [Privately funded]

Shortly after Christmas 2013, the defendant, his wife and several family and friends had been drinking in the Saracens Head in Great Dunmow, Essex, when the complainant, a drunken lout, known to the defendant's brother, had begun causing trouble. Though the defendant's group had begun to leave, the defendant's brother returned to the bar, where the complainant was standing with a friend, and punched him twice to the head, knocking him to the floor. The defendant, fearing the complainant or his friend might be a danger to his brother, returned to protect him. A melee then ensued, in which a number of witnesses, including bar staff, asserted that the defendant had either punched, kicked or stamped on the head of the complainant.

By the time counsel finished cross-examination, the Crown were left with three wholly inconsistent versions of their allegation, all of which were inconsistent with the limited CCTV evidence.

The case featured extensive defence analysis of CCTV angles, dishonest prosecution witnesses who had conspired to pervert the course of justice, detailed enquiries into the bad character of prosecution witnesses and a lame police investigation that had been exacerbated through the very questionable handling of the case by the CPS.

The defendant, a polite, kind, professional and upstanding man of impeccable character, was resident in Australia, living in Sydney with his wife and three young children. Conferences and case preparation were largely conducted by Skype and phone prior to the defendant attending for trial. He should never have been prosecuted in the first place, the proceedings, in the opinion of counsel, being a huge waste of public funds. He was acquitted. - Chelmsford Crown Court.

R v MX [2013-15] - double rape.

The defendant, a school caretaker and father of four, was accused of historic, anal rapes of his daughter, now in her twenties. The allegations cost the defendant his job and resulted in many friends and family refusing to speak with him. His picture and details of the allegations were printed in the local press. He and his family also became victims of abuse and vandalism arising from the considerable ill-feeling within the local community. The defence case was that the complainant had fabricated her allegations in order to

secure a council flat, something she would never otherwise have been entitled to as she had her own bedroom in the council house occupied by her parents and other siblings.

During cross-examination, counsel established a number of crucial facts; that the complainant had an unhealthy fascination with the series '*CSI Special Victim*' from which it was said that her fabrications arose, she had first made a decision to 'discuss' the allegations after a friend read her tarot cards and told her that something bad had happened to her; that she had tried to discuss the allegations with her deceased grandfather through a spirit medium at a special church after payment of a fee; that she liked reading reality magazines featuring 'real life' stories about rape and familial abuse. Further, although in her police interview she had pretended not to know what sex was, and had asserted that because of her dyslexia she was unable to read books, she had to concede that she had in fact read repeatedly the entire '*Fifty Shades of Grey*' series. An irrational dislike of her parents and jealousy of her siblings was also established.

The first jury were hung, the second jury acquitted. - Basildon Crown Court.

R v Atkins [2014] - s.18 GBH.

A situation that had all the hallmarks of a drug deal gone wrong, the defendant was alleged during a fight to have stabbed the complainant, puncturing his lung. The defence case was that it was the complainant's knife, that the complainant had been showing off in front of his friends and that it was he who had attacked the defendant. Further that during the course of the fight, he had fallen awkwardly and stabbed himself in the back, thereby puncturing his own lung. Though the defendant had no supporting witnesses, counsel did sufficient damage to the prosecution evidence to secure an acquittal. - Isleworth Crown Court.

R v Freeman [2014] - attempted murder and possession of a firearm with intent to endanger life.

A tragic case in which the defendant, the grieving mother of a son killed in action during the Afghanistan War, was alleged to have attempted to kill her exceptionally insensitive husband by shooting at him with a double barrelled shotgun on a stairway to the loft in the marital home. The defendant had suffered mental ill health following the grief occasioned by her loss and the indifferent conduct of her husband who had no sympathy for her. (The husband was not the father of the deceased son.)

The Crown's case was that the complainant had been fortunate to have wrestled the gun from her grip as she tried to fire it in an attempt to shoot him in the head, the shot missing him narrowly and blowing a hole through the roof. The defence case was that the gun was simply a metaphor for the complainant's acute distress, that he had never been in danger and that the defendant had intended to kill only herself. Further, the gun had been discharged when the complainant had himself fired it to clear the barrel, having taken the gun from the defendant.

The biggest problem was that the defendant had loaded both barrels.

The case featured detailed ballistic issues, psychological reports and cross-examination on very personal and sensitive matters. The defendant was acquitted. - Chelmsford Crown Court.

R v Hague & ors [2013-14] - manslaughter, perverting the course of justice, production and supply of drugs.

Instructed as leading counsel (Jerome Silva as junior) to represent one of several defendants accused in relation to the production and supply of illegal drugs for use as gym supplements. During the course of the enterprise, one customer had been sold a significant quantity of DNP, a substance usually sold as an industrial pesticide. He had died as a result of multiple organ failure leading to cardiac arrest. As a result the defendant and others were then said to have destroyed significant quantities of evidence in an attempt to cover their tracks.

The case featured extensive telephone and computer evidence following a detailed analysis of recovered material. There was also detailed pathology and chemistry evidence in relation to expert issues. - Central Criminal Court.

R v Poore [2014] - murder.

The defendant, a seventy-five year old man of impeccable character, was accused of the murder of his neighbour on a retirement caravan park. The Crown's allegation was that late one night, following a dispute over noise, the defendant had taken a hammer to attack the deceased, causing him to fall and accrue a treble skull fracture with fatal consequences. The defence case was that the deceased, a belligerent and mentally unwell man, had tripped and fallen as a result of his own intoxication, having attacked and injured the diminutive, frail defendant for having had the temerity to make a complaint.

Instructed early, counsel was able to identify and address significant failures in both the police investigation and the subsequent CPS handling of the case. Following a searching defence statement and detailed disclosure requests, counsel secured Queen's Counsel to lead. By the time of trial significant damage had already been done to the integrity of the prosecution case. Evidence buried by the police, including expert reports supporting the defendant's case, were uncovered and deployed, resulting in evermore damaging criticism of what rapidly became a floundering prosecution.

The trial featured extensive pathology, disclosure and abuse of process issues. The client, on account of his age and health had to be handled with great care and sensitivity. He was acquitted. - Chelmsford Crown Court.

R v Wells [2013-14] - s.18 GBH and s.20 wounding. [Privately funded]

The defendant, a young family man with a pregnant wife, had pleaded guilty to this matter following poor advice from a previous firm of solicitors and was awaiting an inevitable custodial sentence. He had been accused of causing serious facial injuries to a man who had objected to the parking of his roofing van outside a private estate. The defendant was alleged to have confronted him, in front of the complainant's terrified family, and subjected him to a serious and unprovoked assault.

Counsel secured the revocation of the plea and then prepared the matter for trial. With the assistance of diligent research by Instructing Solicitors, counsel unmasked the lies told by the complainant and his family. The case featured extensive cross-examination of persuasive prosecution witnesses, delicate character issues and suggestions of attempts to pervert the course of justice by the complainant and his family. The defendant was acquitted. - Chelmsford Crown Court.

R v McSweeney & ors [2013-14] - death by food poisoning, perverting the course of justice and obstruction. [Privately funded]

The defendant was the longstanding manageress of a pub, The Railway Tavern in Hornchurch, owned by Mitchells & Butlers, the largest restaurateurs in the country. Following the provision of Christmas Day lunch, over forty diners fell ill and one died of poisoning occasioned by *clostridium perfringens*, a bacteria found in some foods. Having purported to assist the EHO investigation, executives of the company sought to point the finger of blame at management and staff, in particular the defendant, thereby hoping to evade criminal and possibly civil responsibility and resultant damages in respect of the harm that had been done.

Faced with a cut-throat defence from M&B, who had secured specialist Queen's Counsel and junior instructed through Eversheds Solicitors, as well as one from the head chef who was similarly seeking to blame others (also represented by Queen's Counsel and junior), counsel fought relentlessly and alone in the face of overwhelming prosecution and co-defendant evidence. Throughout the complex eight week trial, numerous witnesses attacked the procedures within the defendant's establishment and specifically her conduct and character, as well as providing evidence of alleged confessions said to have been made by her. In reply, counsel called evidence of gross dishonesty by executives of Mitchells & Butlers, identifying both their disgraceful treatment of staff and underhand attempts to distort the evidence against the defendant in an attempt to save themselves.

The defendant was acquitted by the jury in respect of the food poisoning and thereby absolved of all criminal responsibility for the infections and the death that resulted. Mitchells & Butlers lost,

notwithstanding the strength and number of their legal team, resulting in their being sentenced to pay a record £1.5M fine.

The defendant and the kitchen manager were both convicted of perverting the course of justice in relation to the retrospective falsification of checklists. - Snaresbrook Crown Court.

R v AAX [2013-14] - exposure. [Privately funded]

Counsel represented an exceptionally talented consultant gynecologist and obstetrician, charged with indecently exposing himself. The Crown's case, resting upon a single witness, alleged that the defendant exposed himself during the morning rush hour from the study window at his home. Alleged that he masturbated for ten minutes at girls walking down the road to school and also at the pre-school age child of a neighbour, the defence contended that the allegation was complete fiction. Further, that the fabricated allegation was created from a background of racial hatred directed against both the defendant and his family. Indeed, his wife, also a consultant obstetrician, had herself been targeted by hostile neighbours on previous occasions. A pathetic police investigation was exposed during extensive cross-examination. The defendant's character was impeccable and his references outstanding. To his great credit he was a director of surgery at a major London hospital and had been instrumental in saving his department from closure due to NHS cuts. A conviction would have resulted in the destruction not only of his character but his career too. The defence identified and secured evidence the police had turned a blind eye to. The subsequent incompetence of the CPS, who failed not only to provide timely secondary disclosure but also failed to reply to defence correspondence, was met with a significant wasted costs order before trial. The defendant was acquitted. - Kingston Crown Court

R v Capt. Kelly (1&2) [2013-14] - attempted murder, s.18 GBH and attempting to pervert.

The defendant, a former US army officer and now private defence contractor, was alleged during a series of altercations with his girlfriend, a former US army Psyops operative with whom he had been on holiday in Oxfordshire, to have fractured her skull and then, two days later, thrown her from a mezzanine balcony, thereby causing her to suffer further skull fractures as well as broken vertebrae. His position was compounded when, after the fall from the balcony, he left her unconscious on the floor for over an hour while he conversed on the net with one of her friends in the US. Thereafter he put her into the footwell of his car and drove her to hospital where police arrested him. During his carriage to the police station he had to be returned to hospital himself as it was discovered he bore significant injuries, including slash and stab wounds to his torso. His defence was that she was psychotic and any injuries she had accrued were either occasioned by his lawful self defence or self-inflicted by her. She had a significant mental history, including self harm and drug abuse. Unfortunately, during his remand, he made phone calls, recorded by the prison, attempting variously to buy-off or persuade witnesses either not to give evidence against him or change their accounts.

Counsel was initially instructed alone, settling an extensive defence statement that secured significant and detailed disclosures from US sources in relation to the complainant and her troubled history. Latterly, counsel secured the extension of legal aid for Queen's Counsel and was led by Brian Lett QC. Numerous experts, including a pathologist, bio-mechanic, psychologist, neurologist, psychiatrists and a toxicologist were instructed on the advice of counsel. Shortly after trial no.1 was due to start, both the Crown's cases disintegrated and the defendant accepted guilt in respect of a single wounding of his girlfriend inflicted recklessly as he defended himself against her. All other charges were dropped. Several months later the defendant flew home to the US. - Reading Crown Court

R v Ali & ors [2013-14] - Rape

An exceptionally difficult case in which the defendant, charged alongside two of his friends, had declined to comment or give instructions in respect of an alleged drug-assisted stranger rape. The defendant's position was compounded by the presence of his semen inside the complainant and over her clothing. The defendant only put forward a defence on the second day of trial and then went on to accept that significant parts of his

account were in fact lies. Counsel focused therefore on the complainant's self-induced intoxication and inconsistent behaviour, coupled with background matters raised in her interview. The defendant was acquitted. - Snaresbrook Crown Court

R v Tow [2013] – s.18 GBH, s.47 ABH

A serious case of GBH in which the defendant, a man with special needs, accepted losing his temper with a housemate. The housemate had assaulted his own girlfriend and the defendant, who did not like him anyway, took issue with his behaviour. There was said to have been an initial altercation between them in a bedroom, during which the housemate alleged he had sustained some injuries. The defendant denied this had occurred. The housemate subsequently attacked the defendant in the garden, grabbing him around the throat. The defendant, very unhappy about this, accepted punching him once to the face to get him away, then punched him very hard to the head, knocking him to the floor. The defendant, still angry, left him there on the patio unconscious. Though the housemate sustained serious injury to his head, the defence asserted that the defendant had nonetheless acted lawfully in defending himself with both blows, and in the alternative, that the housemate may have fallen over subsequently and caused all the injuries himself. The defence identified significant failures in the police investigation and substantial inconsistencies in cross-examination between various eye-witnesses. Defendant acquitted. - Basildon Crown Court

R v Haxhia [2013] - Organised violence, wounding, possession of an offensive weapon, affray

The defendant was charged in relation to an alleged organised hit carried out on several Asian males who claimed to have been the victims of an Albanian gang following the handling of a motor insurance claim. The Crown's case was that the defendant and several others had decamped from two vehicles and, armed with baseball bats, set about their victims outside a cafe on the Romford Road, leaving two with serious head injuries that required hospital treatment. There had then followed a car chase during which one of the Albanian's vehicles was rammed but got away.

The defence case was that this was all rubbish. The complainants' had fabricated their accounts after one had essentially stolen and sold the defendant's fiancé's car and kept the money. The defendant gave evidence to say that he went to the scene alone and that he was the one set upon. In so far as the injuries were concerned, the defence asserted that one of the males must have fallen over and hurt himself and the other been hit by one of his fellow bungling thugs.

The case concerned significant background disclosure and the assertion that the wife of one complainant had fabricated photographs of her husband's injuries. Counsel also established several lies during the course of extensive cross-examination of the alleged complainants.

The defendant was unanimously acquitted - Inner London Crown Court

R v XL [2012-13] - Double rape

An extremely troubling case in a convicted paedophile was accused of the double rape of a child who lived in the same residential complex as him. While there was no question over the accuracy of the defendant's previous convictions, he asserted here that he had been set-up by a drug dealer who had wanted him out of the way as a result of the defendant videoing the latter's drug deals taking place in the car park below his flat. It was a fact of the case that the defendant had in fact videoed drug deals, had confronted the dealer, had then informed the police and the police had done nothing about it.

Following a detailed defence statement, counsel deployed a bullet-proof alibi from three witnesses, which the police investigation had declined to corroborate, in respect of the second of the two allegations and proved fabrication of evidence against the defendant in respect of the first allegation by a police officer delegated with the impartial investigation of the case. The case involved extensive applications for the disclosure of background information on both the alleged complainant and her father. The former was demonstrated through Social Services records to be a troubled child and an openly aspiring drug dealer, the latter was well known for involvement in drugs over many years. The defence case also featured a substantial attack on the credibility and acceptability of a very shoddy police investigation.

The defendant was acquitted unanimously - Basildon Crown Court.

R v Biggs [2012-13] – Hammer attack, possession of an offensive weapon, affray [Privately funded]

Counsel was instructed to defend an accountant and family man who had become embroiled in a dispute over private parking outside the block of flats in which he lived. It was alleged that the defendant had been rude to the heavily pregnant wife of the main complainant as she waited in her car for her husband to return from the school gates with their daughter. On his return, the defendant was said to have confronted her before assaulting his wife when she joined in. As the couple then sought to leave, the defendant ran to his own car, grabbed a club hammer and ran at the complainant from behind. A fight ensued and injuries were accrued. The defence case was that the complainant had come looking for him, that the defendant had in fact been assaulted by both the complainant and his pregnant wife and that although he accepted arming himself with the hammer and engaging the complainant, he had done so to warn him off as he had threatened the defendant's family. The defence also asserted that all of the independent witnesses were lying or confused, including the postman who most unfortunately had claimed to have seen everything. Legal argument on the first day precluded the Crown from adding the affray charge to the trial indictment. Thereafter, at the close of the Crown's case, the defence took issue with the 'public place' classification of the area and the permissibility of prosecuting an offensive weapon allegation in the circumstances advanced. The latter point was upheld and the defendant acquitted. Had the defendant been convicted, the consequences of losing his job and home would have been devastating. – Guildford Crown Court.

R v Henfrey [2012-13] – Wounding, possession of an offensive weapon [Privately funded]

Counsel was instructed to defend the landlord of a public house after he had challenged three men who had left without paying for their drinks. The men were rude in their shouted replies and as they returned suggested that they might mete out violence. The landlord went back into his pub and asked for 'the bat'. The barmaid obliged. Returning to the street he stood his ground and waited as he was surrounded. Then, in response to the first punch, he swung the bat at his assailant. Regrettably, he struck one of the others by mistake, breaking his jaw in two places and two of his teeth. A bold, no nonsense defence, asserting both the landlord's right to have acted as he had and the fact that the victim had only himself to blame, resulted in a unanimous acquittal. By the time of trial the defendant was himself in poor health and a conviction would have resulted therefore in the loss of his home and employ with little prospect of him being able to recover. His good standing within the community was also important to him. – Chelmsford Crown Court.

R v Skowron & ors [2011-13] - Manslaughter, causing death by dangerous driving and conspiracy to defraud

Led by Timothy Raggatt QC, counsel acted on behalf of the lead driver in the first British 'cash for crash' case to result in a fatality. The case concerned a group of Polish nationals who were alleged to have arranged and caused an accident to profit from subsequent insurance claims. The Crown relied heavily on complex cell site analysis and phone records. The death occurred from a subsequent collision occasioned by an unconnected party. Causational issues therefore featured substantially in the trial. - Reading Crown Court.

R v SB of traveller family B & ors [2010-12] - Kidnap, violent disorder and attempting to pervert the course of justice

When some members of the traveller family B decided to relieve other members of the traveller family B of two traveller family B children, there followed a kidnap, a police chase with helicopters, some arrests, some more members of the traveller family B attending the house of some of the extended family to issue death threats and then some more arrests. SB was the only one during the intimidation stage of events to bring an axe. He later returned with a few others and kicked the door open. He pleaded to an affray, lost a Newton hearing in respect of the axe (after which the Learned Judge described his alibi girlfriend as the most unconvincing witness from whom he had ever heard) and managed after mitigation, very narrowly, to avoid going to prison. - Chelmsford and Cambridge Crown Court.

R v Somers & ors [2011-12] - Conspiracy to supply drugs

Counsel led, with Ed Culver as junior, in a multi-handed drug supply case concerning the trafficking of heroin between Newport (Wales) and Reading. The case featured the use of covert recordings in respect of several defendants as well as a reliance upon forensics and cell site analysis. That the case became a multi-directional cut-throat further complicated proceedings. - Reading Crown Court.

R v T. Singh [2011] – Conspiracy to steal

A multi-handed conspiracy to obtain high value, high performance cars, provide them with new identities and export them to Cyprus. The Crown's case concerned a detailed police operation that had yielded substantial evidence, including forensics, phone material, partial confessions, surveillance and a substantial amount of bad character. – Southwark Crown Court.

R v Embleton [2010 – 11] – Rape

A horrific and tragic case in which the defendant, a seventy year old man with bi-polar disorder, was wrongly accused of his hundred year old mother's rape; a lady suffering from dementia, unable to speak and confined to her bed. The case concerned detailed and critical cross-examination of experts and professional care staff. – Reading Crown Court.

R v P Singh & another [2010 – 11] – Rape and sexual assault

An evidentially overwhelming a professionally very demanding case in which the defendant's account for forensic, confession, eye-witness and CCTV evidence was at odds with reality. Counsel was required during the build-up to the trial to assist Instructing Solicitors in fighting off four separate applications by poaching firms to have transferred the defendant's legal aid. – Reading Crown Court.

R v Bent [2010 – 11] – Rape

The defendant was a man with mental health difficulties, not of his own making, who was alleged to have raped his girlfriend after both had consumed a substantial quantity of alcohol. She too had a variety of mental difficulties and the relationship had long been fraught by emotional and financial troubles. The case involved psychiatric, toxicological and forensic medical evidence, interwoven with a background of the defendant having been taken advantage of and emotionally abused by the alleged complainant. The case required careful and subtle handling due to the nature of both complainant and defendant. – Reading Crown Court.

R v Ripton & ors [2010 - 11] – s.18 GBH

A complex matter, the case concerned a wealth of intermeshed identification, character and forensic issues, all rendered more complicated by the paucity of a police investigation that had allowed key evidence to be left uninvestigated. P.I.I. issues, revealed after the first two defendants had pleaded, led to a trail of cross-examination points that unravelled the Crown's ability to prosecute fairly. Though the Learned Judge managed to refuse the submissions of no case, the resultant abuse of process argument mounted in response was fatal. – Chelmsford Crown Court.

R v Watson [2009 – 10] – s.18 GBH

Defendant alleged to have attacked and seriously injured the disabled husband of his lover. After a course of violent incidents, the defendant attended the complainant's flat after leaving the pub. Having tricked his way into the apartment block, he tricked the complainant into opening his door before setting about him in the dark, leaving him unconscious and covered in blood for the police to find. The defence case was that the complainant was a fantasist, was not disabled, had been an international drug runner and was still a user with an escalating debt problem and had only made this allegation after coming second in his latest fight with the defendant. There was some suspicion that the object of their affections might have been fuelling the feud. The trial and re-trial featured extensive bad character material and allegations on both sides. – Southwark Crown Court.

R v Harrison & another [2009 – 10] - people trafficking, sex slavery [Privately funded]

The defendant and his partner, a Thai lady, were charged over the alleged importation and use of a Thai woman for prostitution. The defence, after engaging overseas agencies, established that, unbeknown to the Crown, she had previously been deported for prostitution from the US and had in fact misled the Crown by pretending to be an innocent victim removed for the first time from her native Thailand. Defence case centred on investigations in three jurisdictions. Ultimately, the lax handling of the matter by the Crown, who managed to make fools out of themselves, led to the loss of exhibits and an inability to properly prosecute. The defence secured three consecutive wasted costs orders. The unanswerable abuse of process argument was avoided by the Crown through their capitulation. – Southwark Crown Court.

R v Mills [2009-10] – causing death by careless driving [Privately funded]

Counsel was junior to Orlando Pownall QC. The defendant was alleged to have been responsible for a very unusual, slow-speed collision, in which a cyclist had ridden into the rear of his car at a junction. The resultant fall caused fatal head injuries. The case featured several abuse of process arguments, stemming from the loss of essential evidence by the police (Beckford) and, far more unusually, by the defendant being left liable to conviction on account of defects in the condition of the vehicle occasioned by the maker and registered dealers (Connelly / Barings). Numerous experts were to have been called, including pathologists and collision investigators. Despite reluctance on the part of the police to disclose key evidence, the Crown were finally faced with no option but to concede on the day before trial. – Isleworth Crown Court.

R v Matthews [2006-9] – conspiracy to cause high value criminal damage (graffiti)

The allegations, of which there were many, concerned the defendant being part of a gang that covered prominent landmarks with decorative art. Specifically, the defendant, a student of photography, was said to have been taking photos of the works, both in progress and completed, thereby aiding, abetting, counselling or procuring their commission. The prosecution purported to have a police-affiliated expert who was initially able to allege the defendant had painted some of the works. The defence, in response, secured the instruction of the authors of the practitioner text, Subway Art, upon which his weak theories were based, thus being able to call none other than the legendary duo Chalfont and Cooper, the team that first captured the efforts of the NYC train painters of the 70's and 80's. Short work was made of the Crown's expert and the first trial collapsed. Though the prosecution had another go, almost three years after the case began. The defence had by this time additionally amassed experts from the Tate in London, Italy and South Africa, and the Crown's case went nowhere. Banksy would have been proud! – Reading Crown Court.

R v Guittierez-Perez [2009] – causing death by dangerous driving [Privately funded]

Counsel was instructed specifically for the appeal of this difficult and tragic matter. The Appellant, for whom leave had been secured, had been sentenced to seven years imprisonment. The brief facts were that, after a failed attempt to commit suicide, she had driven her Range Rover while under the influence of drink and drugs until, after several minor accidents and near-misses, she careered into the barrier outside a primary school and crushed an infant in a pushchair to death in front of its mother and very young siblings. The case was concentrated around a substantial retrospective analysis of her psychiatric and psychological condition, something that had not been sought in the lower court, and whether, notwithstanding the chilling nature of the case, the sentence could be said to be manifestly excessive. The Court of Appeal thought it was not. National media interest was high and concern had to be had for the extreme sensitivity of the case. – Court of Appeal.

R v Cahill & another [2009] – armed robbery, s.18 GBH

The defendant was one of two Zimbabweans trapped by the re-examination of forensic material retrieved from the armed robbery of a Pizza Hut in 2001. The allegation was of an inside job in which the co-defendant had arranged for the defendant to effect the timely seizure of two weeks takings hours before their collection. An employee was seriously assaulted and injured. The case featured use of the national DNA database, various forensic techniques and an unusual professional conduct matter. – Central Criminal Court.

R v Cave & ors [2009] – armed robbery

The defendant was one of four juveniles prevailed upon by a well organized gang to effect a classic, high street robbery of a jewellers. The case featured overwhelming evidence including clear CCTV of the masked robbers smashing the displays with sledgehammers and their subsequent escape, close pursuit by police units, including helicopters, and their capture together with the recovery of around £80,000 of valuables. – Guildford Crown Court / Court of Appeal.

R v Becker & ors [2009] – firearms factory, cannabis factory

The defendant was one of seven charged with involvement in a substantial enterprise that procured, altered and manufactured firearms, several of which had been linked to murders and other violent crimes around the country. The premises also housed a substantial concealed space in which a significant quantity of cannabis was grown under hydroponics. The defendant was linked by virtue of forensics, receipt of firearms and close association with several defendants including the head of the conspiracy, his father-in-law. The case also featured substantial consideration of bad character material other than that arising from previous convictions. – Chelmsford Crown Court.

R v Thomas [2009] – s.20 GBH [Privately funded]

A sensitive matter in which the defendant was said to have assaulted the driver of a car in a road-rage assault before attacking his eighty-two year old uncle and fracturing his hip. The uncle subsequently died. Complex argument ensued relating to the permissibility of reliance on hearsay evidence from a sole and decisive deceased witness, the same requiring an understanding of the currently voluminous and shifting EU and domestic authorities. Numerous disclosure issues relating to records and character of the deceased also arose. – Guildford Crown Court.

R v Razanskas [2009] – s.18 GBH

An utterly overwhelming case in which the defendant, a Lithuanian kick-boxing champion, laid waste to an Afghanistani mini-cab office after employees of the establishment ill-advisedly took his bottle of vodka. Having allegedly taken-on everyone in sight, the defendant left the premises, though not before he had himself accrued significant injuries, including a shattered elbow from which the bones were protruding through skin and shirt. Leaving a lot of blood, other fluids and personal effects behind at the scene, he was said to have made his way home, affording the police a clear and sufficient trail of blood to follow. When the police arrived at his home address they found him naked (clothing already in the washing machine), his girlfriend dressing his wounds and the knife that had punctured one victim's lung lying on the floor beside his bed; the victim's blood on the blade, the defendant's on the handle. The defendant then went on the run for three years. The defence, in short, was that someone else did it. The defendant had professionally embarrassed one team of solicitors and counsel after the first trial and counsel secured a unanimous acquittal at the retrial. – Isleworth Crown Court

R v Shodeke [2008-9] – serial rape, false imprisonment harassment

Junior to Christopher Sallon QC. Serial rape of three victims over several years with significant abuse in the form of harassments, false imprisonments, criminal damage, physical, verbal and sexual degradation and physical violence. The defendant was alleged to have forced one victim to bear his child after impregnation through rape and subsequent intimidation. The six week trial involved complex and numerous character issues relating to both the defendant and all the complainants. A number of security issues also arose during the course of the trial as well as professional difficulties, involving both solicitor and client that junior counsel had to resolve alone with the trial judge. The defendant was exceptionally difficult, dangerous and required exceptionally careful handling. – Inner London Crown Court.

R v Thompson & ors [2008] – armed robbery

Multi-handed gang robbery of a tower block, involving firearms and other weapons. The main victim was subsequently murdered having given evidence. Counsel represented the only juvenile of the thirteen defendants, a client who was difficult to the point of being impossible to represent. – Blackfriars Crown Court / Court of Appeal.

R v Demir & ors [2008] – drug supply, firearms, etc

Multi handed conspiracy to supply class A drugs and possession of firearms and ammunition. Defendant was caught on CCTV with a rucksack on his back containing the half a kilo of cocaine and a loaded firearm inside a locked safe during his arrest by a team of heavily supported police officers. The key to the safe was on a chain around his neck at the time. Counsel fully contested the matter through trial and re-trial notwithstanding the weight of the evidence and the existence of cut-throat defences from several co-defendants. – Reading Crown Court.

R v Turner & another [2008] – double s.18

A difficult trial in which the defendant, charged twice with s.18 GBH, caused fractured skulls with paving slabs to two men during an altercation arising from the support of his favourite football team. – Reading Crown Court.

R v Samuels & ors [2008] – cannabis importation

Long-established conspiracy to import cannabis from Jamaica. Counsel represented the first defendant, the head of the enterprise. The case turned on a domestic surveillance operation, overseas intelligence and a complex array of telephone data. – Croydon Crown Court.

R v Richardson & ors (1 & 2) [2008] – false imprisonment, arson, perverting the course of justice, ABH, etc

Troubling case in which the defendant was alleged to have led a group of others in the false imprisonment and serious abuse of a vulnerable special needs man resident in assisted housing. Having secured bail, the defendant was alleged to have tried to kill the victim through setting fire to his new accommodation (dealt with as a second trial after successful deployment of a severance argument). The defendant was alleged to have confessed to several witnesses about doing so. The defendant himself had significant difficulties and a number of previous convictions, as did the co-defendants and indeed the independent witnesses. The first trial saw various special measures considerations and a minefield for cross-examination. The second trial collapsed after acquittals were secured in the first. – Reading Crown Court.

R v Henry & ors [2008] – s.18 GBH, drug supply, dangerous dog as a weapon

Counsel alone for the first defendant in a gruesome, gang-related enforcement of a drug debt. Charged with conspiracy to deal class A drugs, s.18 GBH and robbery, it was alleged that the defendant had lured the victim, a friend of his since infancy, to a tower-block. Therein the victim had been set upon by a dangerous dog, such that the bite wounds punched-through his forearms and legs. He was then stripped, beaten and stamped, before being left for dead, unconscious with multiple injuries in a pool of his own blood. Counsel was instructed at very short notice when the in-house solicitor advocate was considered too inexperienced to handle a case of such severity. – Isleworth Crown Court.

R v Barton & ors [2007] – murder, etc

Junior to Roderick Johnson QC in a four handed murder. The defendant was alleged to have been the ring leader of a group of youths who, fuelled on drink and drugs, burst into a first-floor flat and stabbed to death one of the occupants in revenge for an altercation he had had with the defendant's mother. The case featured close analysis and forensic enhancement of CCTV. – Central Criminal Court / Court of Appeal.

R v Gudauskis [2007] – s.18 GBH, robbery, handling, ABH, etc

Counsel acted for an Eastern European enforcer. The defendant, aggressive, difficult and with a troubled psychiatric history, was a party to a particularly serious attempt to extract monies from a number of victims

over a two day period. Having secured acquittals in respect of several offences of dishonesty, s.18 GBH and s.47 ABH, counsel obtained leave to appeal on the remainder from the Full Court, arguing that retrospectively obtained psychiatric evidence, admissible pursuant to s.23, demonstrated that the defendant had not been fit to stand trial. – Reading Crown Court / Court of Appeal.

R v Williams & ors [2007] – people trafficking

Junior to Harendra de Silva QC in a conspiracy to traffic illegal immigrants, including convicted criminals and children. Represented the main defendant, a prominent local woman, who had facilitated a multi-national enterprise to secure the entry of undesirables into the United Kingdom. Overwhelming evidence and a professionally very demanding client. – Wolverhampton Crown Court.

R v Pc X. [2006-7] - firearms

Leading counsel for a serving police officer accused of perverting the course of justice and allegedly possessing explosive ammunition. The case featured several weeks of complex argument over the admissibility of evidence - Isleworth Crown Court.

R v Franklyn & ors [2006] – drug supply

A substantial, multi-handed conspiracy to supply millions of pounds worth of drugs. The case involved thousands of hours of covert surveillance and complex negotiations with VHCC contract managers. - Reading Crown Court

R v Peart & ors [2006] – gang rape, kidnap, false imprisonment

The gang rape and kidnap of a drunken 14 year old by three alleged drug dealers - Basildon Crown Court.

R v Matuzyc [2006] - murder

Junior to Greg Bull QC in a murder involving an alcohol fuelled dispute between polish vagrants and complex pathology reports - the Central Criminal Court

R v Marshall & ors [2005] – drugs importation

Junior to Greg Bull QC in a substantial conspiracy to import class A drugs in which the successfully run defence was that Customs and Excise had created the environment and fabricated the offence with which the defendant had been charged. - Leicester Crown Court.

R v Kunjna & ors [2005] – kidnap, s.18 GBH

Defence counsel in a kidnap and sec.18 GBH by a number of Hindu priests upon a worshipper at a temple - Harrow Crown Court.

R v Okropirzide & ors [2005] - riot

Junior defence counsel for one of the Russian ringleaders in the riot in the Harmondsworth Detention Centre - Kingston Crown Court.

R v Zapata [2005] – double death by dangerous driving

Junior defence counsel in a double death by dangerous driving – Inner London Crown Court.

R v Goff [2005] – murder, rape, false imprisonment

Junior defence counsel in a murder and rape. The defendant, an alcoholic, lay in wait for his ex-girlfriend and her new partner. - Central Criminal Court.

R v McPherson & ors [2004] - robbery

Defence counsel for one of the 'Legends of Stratford' train robbers - Middlesex Crown Court.

R v Yoonus & ors [2004] – drug supply, money laundering

Junior counsel Bob Marshall-Andrews QC MP in a multi-handed conspiracy to supply Class A drugs and money laundering - Kingston Crown Court.