

# Christopher Whitehouse

YEAR OF CALL 1997

*'A compelling advocate with a fiery intellect... He is a formidable opponent' - Legal 500.*

As a leading junior Chris is instructed in the most serious and heavyweight criminal cases.



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## Career Overview



Described as 'an exceptional advocate' by The Legal 500, Chris has a solid reputation for winning cases against the odds.

Chris has over 25 years' experience defending clients in the most serious cases, from murder and gangland violence to white collar fraud, drugs conspiracies and sexual offences.

His caseload has received an upsurge in cases involving Encrochat, VPNs and Cryptocurrency.

He is ranked as a leading junior in both Chambers & Partners and the Legal 500 for five successive years:

- 'A seasoned and impressive performer'
- *"Christopher is persuasive, intelligent and at the top of his game."*
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- *'Chris has extraordinary strength and depth. He is also able to grasp massively complex cases swiftly and effectively. Chris is a magnificent advocate who commands the respect of the court and grips jurors attention in a way that irresistibly invites justice for his client.'*
- *"His cross-examination is excellent and he has an exceptional manner with the jury."*
- *'Chris has a devastating command of the details in cases. He holds the respect of the court and is a real class act'*
- *'He has excellent forensic skills with particular talent in cross-examining expert scientific witnesses.'*
- His cross-examination is always meticulously-planned, well-structured and incisive' Chris has an unruffled approach that stands him out from his peers, and his tactical abilities during a trial are first-rate.

Chris's cases often involve expert evidence such as DNA and fingerprinting, telephone cell-site and computer misuse, Encrophones and cryptocurrency.

He is known for his client care and his dedication to defending minority groups, especially members of the LGBT+ community. He has also turned his experience in Mental Health Tribunals to the service of those with complex needs or suffering mental impairment.

## Area of Practice

- Murder and serious gang violence
- Fraud, money laundering and confiscation proceedings
- Large scale drugs conspiracies
- Court of Appeal cases, including historic appeals.

## Notable Cases

### Murder and serious violence

#### **R v K - Luton Crown Court - attempted murder**

Leading counsel for the first defendant in an alleged revenge attack where the victim was targeted, isolated and a stabbed nine times with samuri swords. The issue was identification and Chris successfully argued that cell-site evidence should not go before the jury due to late-service by the prosecution.

#### **R v R - Kingston Crown Court - attempted murder**

Chris secured the only not guilty verdicts in a joint enterprise machete attack between rival gangs. The 16-year-old defendant was the only one of six defendants to be acquitted of all charges, despite being the only one arrested at the scene. He could be seen on CCTV chasing a rival gang member before he was stabbed, and fleeing with the attackers. The defendant's case was that he did not know what his co-defendants had planned.

#### **R v F – Snaresbrook Crown Court – attempted murder**

Chris secured the acquittal of the defendant of attempted murder, where he gave evidence that the victim must have received his injuries at the hands of unknown strangers just moments before the defendant arrived at the scene.

#### **R v S – Central Criminal Court – multi-handed murder**

The trial of a multi-defendant revenge murder, heard at the Old Bailey over three months. The killing was the tragic culmination of tit-for-tat incidents over many months between rival groups.

The case involved complex issues of DNA and telephone cell-site, which placed the defendant at the scene.

A former co-defendant ('M') turned Queen's Evidence before trial and testified against his co-accused. Chris and Queen's Counsel managed to unearth sections of CCTV which had been entirely missed by the murder squad. These were deployed in cross-examination to destroy M's alibi, showing that M had in fact been following the victim prior to the murder.

[Read BBC article](#)

[Read Mirror article](#)

[Read news article](#)

### **R v N – Central Criminal Court – gangland attempted murder**

A multi-defendant revenge attack where the defendants were alleged to have been on a 'ride-out' with a car full of deadly weapons, including a shot gun, axe and zombie knife.

A high speed chase took place in which three SO19 firearms officers alleged they had been fired upon. Attempted murder charges were dropped when it was proved that the shotgun had not been fired.

The trial on conspiracy to commit GBH revolved around expert evidence of gang culture and postcode rivalries, drill-music lyrics and YouTube videos.

[Read BBC article](#)

[Read the Standard article](#)

### **R v A – Central Criminal Court – attempted murder**

Attempted murder trial where the victim was stabbed eight times in a confrontation at a private party. The defendant (who was trans) had previously been the victim of anti-trans violence and had bought the knife for their own protection.

### **R v G and others – Central Criminal Court – multi-handed murder**

Multi-handed 'revenge' murder, raising complex issues of legal privilege and joint enterprise (pre-R-v-Jogee).

## **Financial Crime**

## **Operation Eider 2 - Southwark Crown Court (ongoing)**

Three month fraud trial where HMRC is said to have been defrauded by £30million in unpaid VAT and CIS (construction industry scheme) payments.

## **Operation Dalmas – Kingston Crown Court – £12m tax fraud**

Leading counsel in this four-month, multi-defendant trial alleging tax fraud and money laundering.

## **Operation Mutisia – Central Criminal Court – £6m diversion fraud**

Leading counsel in an international diversion fraud and money laundering conspiracy prosecuted by the National Crime Agency.

The defendant was alleged to have been the leading figure in a criminal conspiracy covering multiple jurisdictions and at least 12 corporations over three years.

The case involved expert computer evidence, use of VPNs (Virtual Private Networks), telephone, Whatsapp, Skype and social media messaging evidence. Read the Standard article

## **R v K – Southwark Crown Court – BBC Panorama immigration sting**

Instructed for the first defendant in a multi-handed fraud which arose from BBC Panorama's investigation of industrial-scale immigration fraud (aired on TV in 2018).

The prosecution alleged that the defendant and his company had manipulated hundreds of immigration tests for money. The case involved undercover footage at examination centres where fake exam-sitters were used in place of the real applicants, and where multiple-choice answers were provided to applicants as they sat the tests.

The jury failed to agree on the defendant at his first trial, leading to a second trial at Southwark Crown Court before a fresh jury.

## **General Crime**

### **Operation Dybek - Encro and international drug-trafficking conspiracy (7 months)**

Leading counsel in this seven-month international drug trafficking case which involved quantities of class-A drugs in

excess of one tonne.

The trial included multiple arguments on the admissibility of Encro evidence and of late-arising telephone evidence.

### **R v D- Modern Slavery trial**

Leading counsel in this 3-month modern slavery / human-trafficking case where five victims were alleged to be held in servitude for up to five years whilst working in plain sight at MacDonalds.

### **R v D - Court of Appeal - conspiracy to supply drugs**

Chris successfully overturned the defendant's conviction for conspiring (with others who were also convicted) to supply cannabis across the north of England. Other counsel had represented the defendant at trial. Chris secured his release on bail and the matter was set down for a re-trial.

When the case was heard before a fresh jury at Middlesbrough Crown Court, Chris secured a unanimous not guilty verdict.

### **R v D and others - Central Criminal Court – people-trafficking**

A high-profile people-trafficking conspiracy heard over two months at the Old Bailey. The group were alleged to have conspired to bring scores of illegal migrants from France to the UK in small boats. On one occasion, a boat carrying 18 Albanian migrants got into trouble and had to be rescued by the coastguard. [Read BBC article](#)

### **R v X - Central Criminal Court – blackmail**

A case that involved the attempted blackmail of a sitting Crown Court Judge, where electronic threats had been concealed behind a wall of VPNs (Virtual Private Networks) and which led to a National Crime Agency investigation in multiple jurisdictions.

The trial was presided over by a High Court Judge at the Central Criminal Court and involved complex arguments on Abuse-of-Process and Fitness-to-Plead. The defendant, who was highly vulnerable and suffering from PTSD, was found unfit to stand trial. At a trial of issue, Chris secured a unanimous verdict from the jury that the defendant had not been responsible for the threats.

### **R v W - Blackfriars Crown Court – robbery/firearms**

A unique and complex robbery case where the defendant and their girlfriend [sic] were alleged to have lured a man to their shared home using an internet dating site. They drugged him into unconsciousness, took his car (and his identity)

and used them in an aborted plan to commit a late-night revenge attack on a third-party. When stopped by police, the car contained home-made balaclavas, plastic wrist-ties and a stun gun disguised as a torch.

The case involved a complex cut-throat defence between defendants but also involved sensitive issues of sex, consent and trans-gender identity.

## Memberships

### Professional Memberships

- Gray's Inn
- Criminal Bar Association
- Justis
- Amnesty International

## Education

- University of East Anglia (1992-1996) LLB Degree (2:1)
- Masters in International Law and Human Rights (LIM) - University of Lund, Sweden 1997

## Other Information

### Lectures and articles

"Fraud, Defence and Disclosure" : lecture delivered to the Cabinet Office in HM Treasury.

"Controlling or Coercive Domestic Abuse" : On-line talk delivered to Top Tier family law firm Rayden Solicitors with Michael Herford of Legal Lifelines.

He has published articles on "Witnesses and Victims of Crime: A Survival Guide" (2020) a short guide to police stop and search powers.