

James Heyworth

Call to Bar: 2006



James practices predominantly in criminal law: acting for defendants in the Crown Court and at Court Martial. He has experience across the full spectrum of criminal offences; from murder and manslaughter, to sexual offences, violence and drugs.

He also defends in regulatory cases: including fire and food safety breaches, health and safety offences and breaches of commercial trading regulations.

James's Crown Court practice predominantly involves defending in cases involving rape and other sexual offending: often where there are vulnerable witnesses to be cross-examined. He is experienced in the section 28 procedure utilised in such cases, and has defended in cases involving child witnesses and child defendants.

In addition, he is regularly instructed to defend in "county lines" drugs operations and has extensive experience in that area. His cases have involved alleged members of organised crime groups from Liverpool, Manchester and London, and have frequently involved issues of modern slavery and firearms.

James also regularly appears in the Coroner's Court, representing interested parties at inquest. In particular, he has experience of cases involving fatal diving accidents in both recreational and commercial settings.

NOTABLE CASES

Murder

R v King – Conspiracy to murder. Instructed to defend the principal defendant in a multi-handed conspiracy involving a planned shooting. Led by Paul Reid QC.

R v Mackie – Led by Peter Wright QC in a case dubbed "The Candlestick Killer" by the national press.

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Practice areas:

Criminal Law
Inquests
Regulatory

Manslaughter & Death by Dangerous Driving.

R v Morton – Instructed to defend a father who caused the death of his 13 year old son by administering him a morphine tablet for a headache.

R v Logan - defended a former soldier accused of causing the death of a father and his two children by dangerous driving.

Sexual Offences

R v M– successfully defended a man facing multiple counts of historic rape of his wife.

R v C- violent attempted rape of a sex worker.

R v S - defended an executive accused of raping an employee. He was acquitted on all counts.

R v E - historic rape and sexual abuse of a child.

R v J - defended a 17 year old accused of rape of a family member. He was found not guilty following a trial in the Youth Court.

Importation and “County Lines” drugs offences.

R v Olaloko - instructed to represent a member of a London drill rap group accused of people trafficking and drug dealing across county lines.

R v Osman - defended one of the principal defendants in an NCA operation involving the importation of firearms, and Class A drugs, into the UK from Holland.

R v H - represented a 17 year old caught up in a county lines organised crime group. The case involved issues of modern slavery and child exploitation.

R v Hodson - county lines drugs conspiracy involving the transportation of drugs from Yorkshire to Blackpool.

R v Baron - county lines drugs conspiracy involving organised crime groups from Liverpool and Preston.

R v Nguyen - cannabis production conspiracy involving Vietnamese nationals and issues of modern slavery.

Football Related Offences

R v Hartley – Defended one of the principal defendants in a multi-handed violent disorder trial involving alleged members of the “Burnley Suicide Squad”.

R v Spencer – Defended in a multi-handed football violent disorder case involving Burnley and Sheffield Wednesday fans.

Serious Violence

R v Houlgrave – Defended in a serious s18 stabbing trial and later represented the defendant in the Court of Appeal.

R v Casey – Defended a former soldier and Iraq veteran, who suffered from PTSD in a serious section 18 wounding case.

Fraud & Money Laundering

R v Ratcliffe - represented an alleged organised crime group member involved in a series of armed robberies across the North West, with money being laundered through fixed-odds betting machines.

R v Wilson- defended one of the principal defendants in a nationwide credit card fraud and money laundering conspiracy, investigated by the City of London police.

R v Wen – defended a Chinese national in a multi-handed money laundering trial, involving the remittance of hundreds of thousands of pounds back to China.

R v Markey – led in a multi-handed fraud which featured as part of the BBC “Rogue Traders” series.

Regulatory Offences

R v McMullen – Instructed to defend a client facing a series of commercial trading breaches arising out of his celebrity vehicle sales company.

R v Britannia Corporation – Defended a company facing a series of fire safety breaches arising out of a serious fire in a house of multiple occupancy.

R v Pound Bakery & Sayers - represented the well known bakers in proceedings arising from a series of food hygiene breaches.

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Inquests & Fatal Diving Accidents

Inquest touching upon the death of Richard Bufton: instructed to represent the family of Richard Bufton, who died following a closed-circuit rebreather “try-dive” at Capernwray Quarry in October 2010.

The inquest was held before a jury at the Coroner’s Court in Preston and involved a number of complex issues of causation: it being in issue whether the diving accident was as the result of a previous medical condition or factors arising from the dive itself, which was conducted on a closed-circuit rebreather.

James was able to use his own experience of diving, and in particular diving closed-circuit rebreathers, to assist the court and my client with identifying a number of significant issues with the use of such breathing apparatus.

Following a significant amount of expert evidence the jury returned a narrative verdict which confirmed that this was a diving accident and not the result of any medical condition.

Santos v Sub C - instructed to represent a Danish diving company in proceedings before the Admiralty Court. The case involved the death of a British commercial diver in German territorial waters, whilst undertaking work on an offshore wind farm.

Inquest touching upon the death of Kevin Miles: instructed to represent the interests of the daughters of Mr Miles, who died at Stoney Cove during a rebreather training dive. See www.divinglawyer.co.uk for more details.

Inquest touching upon the death of Vera Tranter - represented, on behalf of his insurers, a taxi driver who was involved in a fatal road accident.

Inquest touching upon the death of Pamela Pennington - represented Thameside Metropolitan Borough Council at the inquest into a suspected suicide.

Private Client Work

R v Glen Doherty – Secured the acquittal of a commercial saturation diver facing assault charges in the Magistrates’ court.

R v B - represented a former policeman in a successful appeal to have his lifetime notification requirement removed.

R v Philpott- instructed to represent the director of a limited company in respect of various alleged trading standards breaches.

Court Martial & Forces Clients

R v Dyson (Court Martial)- represented a Lance Corporal in the RLC facing an allegation of assault whilst on deployment to Kenya.

R v Piper (Court Martial) - defended a Colour Sergeant in The Rifles in respect of the alleged discharge of a parachute flare out in Germany.

R v Nottingham (Court Martial) - represented a Corporal facing an allegation of negligence, arising out of an AFT in Germany, in which a number of personnel suffered heat related injuries.

R v KM (Court Martial) - represented an JNCO facing an allegation of sexual assault whilst on deployment to Sudan.

James Heyworth

R v Butterworth (Court Martial)– Instructed to defend a former Army recruit facing serious sexual allegations.

R v Whalley – Defended a Royal Engineer diver and Afghanistan veteran facing weapon and public order offences.

R v Braithewaite – Defended a Royal Navy submariner for violent offences.

Personal

Served as an officer in the Royal Navy 1998-2004. Front line operational experience in Northern Ireland and Sierra Leone with deployments at sea in the Far East, South Atlantic, West Africa and Mediterranean. Also completed an exchange with the Brazilian Navy in 1999.

Qualified Officer of the Watch and ship's diver and supervisor.

Selected to attend Mine Clearance Diving Officers' course: trained to dive and supervise mixed gas and surface supplied diving operations. Qualified as a bomb and mine disposal officer with live explosive ordnance disposal experience with Southern Diving Unit 1.

Ran the Royal Navy's boarding operations school 2003-2004.

Outside of court James is a keen swimmer and diver (PADI Divemaster), and is currently fulfilling a life-long ambition: learning to fly.

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