GOLDSMITH CHAMBERS

# Alex Wright

## Call: 1997

Contact Alex Directly: 020 7353 6802 or
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Alex is an experienced criminal practitioner who appears for the defence in cases of the utmost gravity and complexity. He is also a grade 3 prosecutor on the CPS list and a member of the CPS RASSO panel. He is regularly instructed to prosecute substantial drug conspiracy cases.

Alex's careful preparation and availability to provide advice mean that he is particularly valued by solicitors in cases which are complicated or unusual, and where advice on novel points of law is required.

In recent years Alex has been instructed in cases including murder, attempted murder, mortgage fraud, revenue fraud, rape, historic sexual abuse, grooming of children over the internet, importation and distribution of drugs, kidnapping, armed robbery, conspiracy to burgle, firearms and GBH with intent.

Alex is regarded as having particular expertise in representing the defendant in large and complicated confiscation cases under the Proceeds of Crime Act and regularly appears as leading junior counsel in those cases. In a number of very substantial confiscation cases he has been successful in defeating allegations of hidden assets put forward by the prosecution, and in persuading the judge to set the benefit figure much lower than asked for by the prosecution.

# Crime

# Notable Cases

Homicide and Serious Violence

R v MJ – Leicester Crown Court (2004) – Led by Nemone Lethbridge in tragic case involving a radio DJ who was killed while chasing burglars who he had disturbed.

R v YF – Birmingham Crown Court (2007) – Defended in attempted murder case where defendant was acquitted

Location

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despite all three co-defendants running cut-throat defences against him.

R v AM – Central Criminal Court (2014) – Led by Rod Johnson QC in very unusual murder case lasting six weeks, where defendant was a successful actuary who had suffered a mental breakdown and initially had no recollection at all of the incident. At trial both self defence and diminished responsibility became relevant.

R v AS – Croydon Crown Court (2015) – Represented defendant who was accused of attempting to murder his wife.

R v MT – Ipswich Crown Court (2016) – Defendant represented by Alex was found not guilty at trial in a multi-defendant case involving an outbreak of serious violence using weapons in prison.

R v SM – Reading Crown Court (2017) – Represented first defendant in six-handed case involving large scale violence on the streets. Trial lasted for four weeks.

R v KC – Oxford Crown Court (2019) – Alex's client was accused of perverting the course of justice by assisting one of the offenders in a murder to go into hiding. Case involved extensive analysis of telephone records and not guilty verdict.

Drugs and Gang Crime

R v RE – Birmingham Crown Court (2004) – Led junior in case involving conspiracy to supply 190kg of heroin.

R v RS – Kingston Crown Court (2009) – Represented only defendant to be found not guilty of conspiracy to supply class A drugs after a month long trial.

R v CM – Snaresbrook Crown Court (2011) – Represented defendant in a case of gang kidnapping, torture and ransom demands. Conviction quashed in Court of Appeal after an enquiry by the CCRC into jury misconduct and defendant acquitted on retrial.

R v D – Central Criminal Court (2013) – Led by Harendra De Silva QC in confiscation proceedings arising out of the largest cannabis farm case in Europe, where defendants were said to control over 50 farms.

R v SC – Central Criminal Court (2017) – Represented defendant acquitted of importation of a suitcase full of drugs. Key to the case were successful submissions on legal argument as to the admissibility of intelligence relating to others who had been innocent dupes in similar circumstances.

R v NN – Canterbury Crown Court (2017) – Represented only one of five defendants to be found not guilty following trial for conspiracy to traffic illegal immigrants into the United Kingdom.

R v DS and DC – Isleworth Crown Court (2017) – Prosecution counsel in case involving false imprisonment and robbery of a man in his own house, all defendants convicted.

R v D, F, M, M and M – St Albans Crown Court (2018) – Prosecution counsel in respect of substantial conspiracy to burgle commercial premises.

R v JC – Cambridge Crown Court (2018) – Defended in case involving kidnapping and ransom demands. While client was convicted, he was accepted to have a minor role and judge was persuaded through caselaw to pass a sentence of 3 years, when co-defendants received sentenced in double figures.

R v SM – Chelmsford Crown Court (2019) – Represented the only defendant who was not convicted in a case involving various conspiracies to burgle, steal ATM machines and handle stolen cars. Gang were said to be responsible for over 60 different offences across Essex, Hertfordshire, Kent and Surrey.


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R v OL – Basildon Crown Court (2020) – Successful prosecution of the leader of a County Lines drugs conspiracy.

Between 2019-2022, prosecution counsel in series of drugs cases involving extensive undercover police operations – Operation Alden in Luton Crown Court and Operation Anoda in Inner London Crown Court. Prosecuted over 40 defendants across the two operations.

Financial and Regulatory Crime

R v TS – Stafford Crown Court (2015) – Represented lead defendant in confiscation proceedings arising out of £5 million mortgage fraud – judge found no hidden assets when prosecution had asserted hidden assets of over £1 million.

R v CH – Mold Crown Court (2015) – Leading junior in confiscation proceedings arising out of conspiracy to commit mortgage fraud, prosecution conceded Alex's arguments in respect of issues relating to land law which had become so difficult that the judge was considering transferring the case to be heard by a Chancery Division judge.

R v SD – Croydon Crown Court (2017) – Leading junior in trial involving evasion of excise duty through huge scale cigarette smuggling, case involved use of multiple sham companies to disguise the illegal business, trial lasted for over 3 months.

R v MC – St Albans Crown Court (2018) – Defended a man who was alleged by Ofcom to be a manufacturer of broadcasting equipment for pirate radio stations across the United Kingdom. Substantial expert evidence on broadcasting regulations, radio equipment and telephone evidence.

R v OV – Southwark Crown Court (2018-2019) – Defended in confiscation proceedings over 10 days which arose out of convictions for tax fraud and money laundering. Prosecution asserted hidden assets of over £1.5 million, judge found only available assets were identified assets of £2,500.

Serious Sexual Offences

R v H – Reading Crown Court (2010) – Prosecuted allegations of historic abuse by an uncle on three nephews from 1960s to 1980s. Convicted on majority of counts.

R v S – Kingston Crown Court (2013) – Successfully prosecuted a former chief fire officer who had committed serious sexual offences on a young girl.

R v A – Snaresbrook Crown Court (2015) – Defended a young man who was one of four defendants accused of a gang rape of a 16 year old girl, who had also made numerous different allegations against the co-defendants. Trial lasted for a month and not guilty verdict. Careful cross-examination based on telephone records had shown that the allegations made by the complainant could not be truthful.

R v R – Aylesbury Crown Court (2019) – Successfully defended in case where there was extensive cross-examination of expert witness who claimed complainant was mentally incapable of consenting to sexual activity. Defendant found not guilty on all counts.

R v D – Leicester Crown Court (2019) – Represented defendant who was accused of a campaign of rape and other sexual offences against his two step-daughters. Very difficult and sensitive case as one had significant learning difficulties and case was that she had been influenced by her older sister who held a grudge against defendant. Hung jury on retrial and prosecution offered no further evidence.

R v T – St Albans Crown Court (2020) – Allegations of online grooming, Court accepted legal arguments advanced by Alex that offences in the USA could not be a qualifying schedule 15B offence when deciding whether a defendant was liable to an extended sentence.

Significant Court of Appeal Cases

*R v Liam James [2008] 1 Cr App R (S) 44* – Cited in Archbold, limits to sentencing powers when convicted of summary offences in the Crown Court as alternatives to offences on the indictment.

*R v Christopher Mpelenda [2011] EWCA Crim 1235* – Conviction quashed as a result of juror conducting online research into the law and then using that research to influence other jurors verdicts. Reported on Bailii website.

*R v Kiril Mintchev [2011] 2 Cr App R (S) 81* – Cited in Archbold, whether Court can consider the fact that a sentence will trigger provisions leading to automatic deportation when deciding the length of sentence.

*R v John Bruce [2022] Env LR 22* – Correct approach to calculation of benefit in a confiscation case involving the evasion of tax and avoidance of expenses of operating properly in respect of unlawful waste disposal operation.

*R v A [2022] 2 Cr App R 19* – Proper construction of when section 28 special measures are available and consequences of court directing a special measure which is not available under statutory regime.

# Appointments

- Grade 3 on CPS Advocate Panel.
- CPS RASSO list.
- Pupil Supervisor.
- Member of VHCC Panel of Advocates.
- Crown Court Recorder.

# Memberships

- Criminal Bar Association


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