



GARDEN COURT CHAMBERS

Keir Monteith KC

YEAR OF CALL: 1994 | YEAR OF SILK: 2019



Keir Monteith KC is a highly sought-after leading silk who represents clients facing heavyweight criminal allegations.

He has defended in numerous murders, industrial-scale Class A drug importations, high profile National Crime Agency cases, £100M frauds, multi-million-pound confiscations, escape from custody cases and heavily armed Organised Crime Group conspiracies.

Keir is ranked for criminal law in Chambers UK and the Legal 500. He is also ranked in Tier 1 for Fraud in the Legal 500. Keir also sits as a Recorder [part-time Crown Court judge], is a training tutor for the Judicial College and is a Simon Fellow at the University of Manchester. He is currently briefed in two murder cases; has obtained leave to appeal in a murder; is instructed in a high profile triple murder CCRC application and is briefed in a multi-handed Class A drugs conspiracy allegedly involving a machine gun, other firearms and a turnover of almost 1 metric tonne - 35M worth of cocaine.

"Keir has a unique combination of forensic ability, dynamic commitment to the client and real genuine compassion for the people he represents."

CHAMBERS UK, 2024 (CRIME)

"Keir is very good on the detail and is fearless in court. He leaves no stone unturned and leads a case with great strategic acumen."

LEGAL 500, 2024 (FRAUD, TIER 1)

"Keir is absolutely fearless. He is all over the detail and relentless in court. He is intellectually gifted and has an incredible way with juries; he can take the most tricky and complicated matters and address the jury in a way that is engaging and entirely accessible."

LEGAL 500, 2024 (CRIME)

"A deft and diligent barrister who exhibits both vision and determination. Keir succeeds by coming up with well-considered and structured plans."

CHAMBERS UK, 2023

"A fantastic brief who takes difficult work in his stride."

CHAMBERS UK, 2022 (CRIME)

"Keir is a first-rate jury advocate with a charming manner. He has a forensic approach to analysing cases and can put his clients at ease."

LEGAL 500, 2022 (FRAUD, TIER 1)

If you would like to get in touch with Keir please contact the clerking team:

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CRIMINAL DEFENCE

Keir represents clients facing heavyweight criminal charges throughout the UK. His skill as an advocate is second to none, and he achieves seemingly impossible acquittals. Keir's commitment comes from a firm belief

in the absolute principle that everyone, no matter what the evidence may appear to be, is innocent until proven guilty. He is meticulous in his preparation and provides a first-class service for all his clients.

He has successfully defended in numerous murders, industrial-scale Class A drug importations and heavily armed Organised Crime Group conspiracies involving the use of submachine guns, high profile National Crime Agency cases, 100M frauds, multi-million-pound confiscations, and escape from custody cases.

In July 2021, Keir became a Simon Fellow at the University of Manchester. The Fellowship will bring Keir, who is a training tutor for the Judicial College, together with other Criminology, Legal and Humanities researchers to inject expertise and ambition into the judiciary's recently-announced plans to tackle racial bias. This work will be founded on a deep understanding of racism as both structural and interpersonal and will seed research projects premised on installing fairer treatment in the justice system.

In 2022, Keir was mentioned in the ['BBC Documentary A Teenage Killing: Episode 4'](#) as a 'high-profile barrister' representing Nathaniel Williams, Durell Goodall and Reano Walters, who were convicted of murder in 2017 under the law of joint enterprise. Later this year, Keir plans to make an application to the Criminal Cases Review Commission to challenge the three convictions.' (Timestamps: 17:48 and 32:10). [See BBC Three's article here.](#)

NOTABLE CASES

Past notable cases can be viewed below. [Click here to see a list of recent notable cases.](#)

2022: Keir was briefed for the lead defendant in two multi-handed allegations involving heavily armed Organised Crime Groups. Both trials allegedly concerned industrial amounts of Class A drugs, firearms including a submachine gun and numerous defendants. Keir is also instructed in [twomurders: a high profile miscarriage of justice case](#) involving 3 applications against convictions for murder; a high profile allegation of a fraud/false accounting [\[reported overstating almost £100m\]](#) being investigated by the Serious Fraud Office and has just been granted leave to appeal the sentence in a [high profile murder](#).

In 2021, Keir acted for the anti-money laundering officer, NK, in a multi-handed global money laundering case. His client was alleged to be a significant member of an international criminal network who provided specialist services to Organised Crime Groups [OCG] using Money Service Bureaus in London and Dubai. It was alleged that the OCG collected and dispersed £32M throughout the world. NK was the anti-money laundering officer and was said to be in charge of 5 MSBs in London.

Later in 2021, Keir obtained four not guilty conspiracy verdicts after a four-month multi-handed trial involving numerous firearms and large scale supply of Class A drugs. The prosecution alleged that LM was at the head of an organised crime group that possessed loaded sawn-off shotguns, handguns and other firearms and ammunition with intent to endanger life. It was further alleged he organised the large scale supply of Class A and B drugs. The case was described as overwhelming involving LM making an alleged confession that his group supplied Class A and B drugs. LM was found not guilty of the 2 firearm conspiracies, conspiracy to supply Class A drugs and conspiracy to supply Amphetamine.

In 2020, Keir secured not guilty verdicts for Murder and Attempted Murder in a case where the prosecution alleged that the defendant, "an angry driver used his car 'as a weapon' to mow down two men". The prosecution stated that the car mounted the pavement and was driven deliberately into the first male knocking him in the arm and onto the pavement, dislocating his shoulder. His friend ran off and crossed the road to the pavement opposite. The defendant reversed the car. He followed the second male along the east-side pavement, onto the road, and then onto the west-side pavement of Bexley Road. The second male stumbled and fell. The prosecution stated that seconds later the car was deliberately driven straight over him and was dragged along the pavement for several metres before the car cleared his body and was driven off. The defendant was found guilty of the alternative allegations of manslaughter and ABH. This case has been widely reported in the media including the [Independent](#) and the [BBC](#).

In 2019, Keir represented AH who was said to be the prime mover in a £60M multi-handed international VAT conspiracy. This was a complicated allegation that involved a series of supposed MTIC frauds operating under one criminal umbrella. The defendant was alleged to have set up at least three dummy companies that bought and sold £60M worth of products with hijacked traders.

In 2019, Keir represented CH in *R v CH* at Shrewsbury Crown Court, where the client was found not guilty of 10 allegations of multiple rape and assault by penetration. CH had faced allegations of multiple rapes from 3 separate complainants over a 5 year period. If convicted he would have faced a sentence in double figures. Keir advised that a defence computer expert should be instructed and downloads obtained from social media accounts. After careful analysis of this information, Keir further advised that representations should be made to the prosecution. As a result the case was dropped and 10 not guilty verdicts were recorded.

In 2018, Keir has represented the lead defendant in the Heathrow baggage handlers case [[RvJ](#)]. An importation allegedly involving 100 kilos of Class A drugs. He was also instructed in a high profile 3 month immigration corruption case [[R v H](#)] which attracted national publicity; secured acquittals for a chemist who was alleged to have shipped out boxes of drugs from the company's pharmacy and represented the lead

defendant in a large scale conspiracy to import 30 kilos of cocaine [[The Birmingham Barber case](#)] and the first defendant in a 200 to 500 kilo cannabis [conspiracy](#).

In December 2017, Keir and Dexter Dias QC, also of Garden Court, represented SB who was on trial for murder and possession of a firearm following the fatal shooting of CM at a friend's birthday party. It was alleged that SB shot the deceased with a semi-automatic pistol as he and his friends entered the party. The prosecution stated that within a minute the deceased and his group were chased down by SB and his associates and there was a further firefight outside the block of flats where bullets hit the car the deceased was in. The prosecution ballistic expert stated that at least three and up to five firearms were discharged. It was alleged that the shooting was gang-related but SB denied this and that he was a member of a gang. SB argued that another man opened fire and killed the deceased. SB was found not guilty of murder but guilty of possession of a firearm and violent disorder.

In January 2017, Keir obtained five acquittals in a long-running multi-handed conspiracy to rob trial at the Central Criminal Court [*RvK*]; represented N in a high profile gross negligence manslaughter [*RvN*] and in April obtained a not guilty verdict in a perverting the course of justice allegation [*RvG*]. In July 2017 he represented M in a high profile Misconduct in Public Office case [[The Sheffield helicopter case](#)] and secured an acquittal. He was also instructed in *RvFB* an allegation of a gang land murder. The client was found not guilty.

In 2016, Keir represented a 15-year-old who faced allegations of a conspiracy to commit GBH, which was said to be the catalyst for a mob of 17 to murder a 16-year-old. The defendant was first on the indictment. Keir was a leading junior and the rest of the defendants and the prosecution were represented by silks and juniors. The defendant was acquitted.

Keir represented [Adam Deacon](#) in an important case. The jury agreed with Keir's submission that as Mr Deacon was mentally unwell at the time of the alleged offences he should not be held criminally responsible for his actions. They found Mr Deacon not guilty.

In 2015, Keir was leading junior in an Operation Elvedon Misconduct in Public Office case in which a Belmarsh prison officer was accused of selling so called sensitive information to a journalist. The appeal was heard by the Lord Chief Justice and an application has now been lodged before the European Court of Human Rights. The case received national press coverage, including [the BBC](#), [the Guardian](#), [Press Gazette](#) and [Chartered Institute of Journalists](#).

R v Jabir

A multi-handed allegation of possession of a firearm with intent to endanger life and two counts of assisting an

offender. The defendant was linked to a broad daylight shooting in London. Jabir pleaded guilty to two counts of assisting an offender. Following a 'half time' submission by Keir, the Judge dismissed the possession of firearm allegations against Jabir and also the two other co-defendants. (Reported by the Independent).

R v Baptiste

Acted as leading junior in a four-handed allegation of murder with a linked allegation of conspiracy to commit grievous bodily harm with firearms. The firearms included a MAC-10 Submachine gun capable of firing over 1,000 rounds per minute that had been used in a murder. The trial involved controversial disclosure issues involving an anonymous witness.

R v H

Keir was trial counsel (without a leader or junior) where both the prosecution and two defendants were represented by a QC and a junior each. This was a multi-handed case involving allegations of kidnapping and an armed robbery of a bank in Birmingham. Despite the presence of DNA evidence in a vehicle central to the crime, and cell site evidence placing the defendant near the scene, his client was acquitted of all counts. (Reported by the BBC).

R v Dubb

A multi-handed allegation of murder. Two vehicles containing up to 10 people descended on a bar in Bilston. One of the men produced a gun and fired a shot into the crowd outside the bar, which resulted in a death at the scene. The defendant was acquitted at 'half time'. (Reported by the Birmingham Post).

R v Sammuels

Keir led in a double-handed armed robbery allegation relating to a number of off licences, where the suspects used handcuffs and guns to commit the robberies. The defendants faced a further allegation of conspiracy to rob. The prosecution evidence ranged from identification and facial mapping to surveillance, DNA (from gun and balaclava) and analysis of alleged residue from exploding bank notes.

R v Harriot

Keir led in a drive-by shooting involving allegations of gangland violence where a pump action shotgun was repeatedly fired at a car containing passengers, on a separate occasion fired at an occupied house and a further allegation of threats to kill. The defence used a combination of duress and identification for their arguments. The client was acquitted of both shootings, and the threats to kill.

Some of Keir's other cases include:

representing a solicitor in a trial that consisted of over one million documents and a post-trial investigation into whether the main prosecution witnesses had committed perjury;
a law student on allegations of perjury;
the largest radio game show deception (reported by the *Daily Mail*);
allegations of a multi-handed fraud conspiracy relating to eBay, where the client was acquitted (reported by the *Manchester Evening News*);
one of the first sexual allegations based almost entirely on email evidence, involving an undercover officer in America and the UK. This case also concerned PII applications relating to Strap security.

FINANCIAL CRIME AND CONFISCATION

Keir is a highly sought after leading silk who represents clients facing serious financial criminal cases throughout the UK. He has been briefed in over £500 million worth of fraud cases. Keir is currently instructed in a very high profile allegation of a fraud/false accounting [[reported overstating almost £100m](#)] being investigated by the Serious Fraud Office.

NOTABLE CASES

Past notable cases can be viewed below. [Click here to see a list of recent notable cases.](#)

R v Kasim

Keir acted as leading counsel for the first defendant in a significant acquittal in a multi-handed £40 million money laundering and complex mandate fraud conspiracy prosecuted by the National Crime Agency (NCA). The case had international dimensions, the majority of the money being transferred to Hong Kong. After legal argument, despite the Crown assertion that there was a realistic prospect of conviction, the defendant was acquitted. This was reported in the National Press and Keir was interviewed on the Today Programme.

R v Kasim (2)

Following this success, Keir was then briefed in the ‘follow on’ trial for another defendant in a similar multi-handed allegation of money laundering. Again as a result of carefully crafted legal submissions, this second trial collapsed with the NCA offering no evidence and not guilty verdicts being returned.

Keir acted for the anti-money laundering officer, NK, in a multi-handed global money laundering case. His client was alleged to be a significant member of an international criminal network who provided specialist services to Organised Crime Groups [OCG] using Money Service Bureaus in London and Dubai. It was alleged that the OCG collected and dispersed £32M throughout the world. NK was the anti-money laundering officer and was said to be in charge of 5 MSBs in London.

Keir represented AH who was said to be the prime mover in a £60M multi-handed international VAT conspiracy. This was a complicated allegation that involved a series of supposed MTIC frauds operating under one criminal umbrella. The defendant was alleged to have set up at least three dummy companies that bought and sold £60M worth of products with hijacked traders.

Keir led in a multi-million-pound, multi-handed tobacco importation where the abuse of process submission Keir submitted succeeded and allowed others who had pleaded guilty to make an application to vacate their pleas.

R v CK

A £100,000 multi-handed money laundering trial in which three co-defendants pleaded guilty. Following representations by Keir, the Crown dropped the case against his client.

R v Anandan

A £137 million international money laundering fraud using a number of Bureau de Changes over a period of years. The Crown's case was that it was a sophisticated and well-organised operation and that the defendants were able to offend undetected, even when dealing with professional money-lending institutions that had their own money-laundering officers. It was stated that the defendant was the de facto manager of one of the branches and was responsible for ordering currency and arranging money transfers.

R v Butt

Keir led in a £20 million NatWest fraud case where the prosecution and two of the defendants were all represented by a QC and junior each. This trial took place at Southwark Crown Court. The case was split into three parts and involved an allegation that the defendant and others defrauded the National Westminster Bank in the amount of £20,220,629. The client was acquitted of the most serious allegation. Throughout the case, Live Note was used. (Reported by the BBC).

Keir led in a Microsoft counterfeiting case where, as a result of presenting around 10,000 pages of documents from a linked case, the trial was stopped and then abandoned.

CRIMINAL APPEALS

Keir is regularly instructed in the Court of Appeal and is able to compile compelling written advocacy. One example is the case of Trim, where Keir obtained leave five and a half years out of time, and the sentence was reduced from an indefinite sentence of imprisonment for public protection to a community order.

In the case of Robson, after being advised by trial counsel and two other lawyers that there was no appeal against his murder conviction, Keir, acting pro bono, drafted the Grounds of Appeal and, seven years out of time, took the case to the full court. He obtained leave to appeal and the conviction was quashed.

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R v Kinse Aidid [\[2021\] 2 Cr. App. R. 15](#)

Appeal against a murder conviction involving the issue of drunkenness. The Court agreed with many of the submissions made and the court of appeal 'expressed concern that the authorities did not provide certainty for judges as to when it is necessary to give a direction on the relevance of self-induced intoxication.' The case has been reported in detail in Archbold at 17-90 and is also referred to in the Criminal Cases Compendium at 9-4, which judges use to help them to accurately sum up cases to juries. The matter is now being appealed to the ECHR. Keir's junior Chandra Sekar had this case referred to him by [WISH](#), a women's charity working in prison with vulnerable women. Leave to appeal was refused on the papers by the Single Judge, and Chandra conducted a renewal application pro bono. Leave was granted on the single ground - whether the trial judge had directed correctly on intoxication and intent in specific intent cases.

R v PK [2017] EWCA Crim 486

Exceptionally, conviction quashed despite plea of guilty, appeal 9 years out of time and recent adverse case law [*R v Ordu*]. Keir persuaded the Court of Appeal that a defence would "quite probably" have succeeded at trial. Reported in *Criminal Law Review*.

R v RN [2016] EWCA Crim 1564 (ongoing)

Leading junior in Operation Elvedon misconduct in public office case in which a Belmarsh prison officer is accused of selling sensitive information to a journalist. The appeal is predicated on Article 10 arguments. An application is now before the ECtHR.

R v Samuels [2014] EWCA Crim 1852

Keir's oldest and most loyal client, on a life licence at the time of the offence, had a trial and was convicted. Initially sentenced to nine years but after Keir's submissions, this was reduced to six years. See also *R v Samuels* [2005] EWCA Crim 3051 for details of his previous application to the Court of Appeal.

R v Cope [2014] EWCA Crim 2187

Despite Mr Cope's trial counsel writing an advice that said he did not have grounds for an appeal, Keir made

an application almost a year out of time. This was granted and the sentence was reduced by one year.

R v Miah [2013] EWCA Crim 1891

Despite the reduction in sentence to just three months, Keir was able to persuade the Court of Appeal that an important point of principle was at stake and it was necessary for the court to intervene.

R v Uyiakpen [2008] EWCA Crim 1457

Appeal against conviction for possession of Class A drugs with intent to supply. Conviction quashed.

R v Robson [2006] EWCA Crim 2749

A conviction for murder was quashed and a verdict of manslaughter by reason of diminished responsibility was substituted where the trial judge had delivered a jury direction on diminished responsibility along the same lines as that which was held to be a misdirection in *R v Dietschmann* (2003) UKHL 10, (2003) Crim LR 550.

R v Crosse [2005] EWCA Crim 53: The Lewes prison tennis ball case

The appellant tried to throw a tennis ball containing class A and C drugs over the prison wall. After a successful abuse of process submission in the Crown Court regarding the Class A drugs the eventual sentence was successfully appealed as well.

R v Pepper and others [2005] EWCA Crim 1181

Guidance on extended sentences under the Powers of Criminal Courts (Sentencing) Act 2000 s.85. This case also involved Strap security.

DPP v Jones [2002] EWHC 110 (admin)

Right to protest and public order notices.

R v Hatami [2001] EWCA Crim 1653

Appeal against conviction for unlawful wounding where the alleged victim was stabbed in the back and leg and was initially on life support. Part of the incident was captured on CCTV and was witnessed by a number of people in broad daylight. Conviction quashed.

R v Heggart Archbold [2002], p. 1,257,

The issue of disclosure and the old 'custom' of blacking out telephone numbers on CAD reports should stop.

PROTEST RIGHTS

Keir also specialises in civil liberties law and defending protesters, including allegations of large-scale conspiracies to commit criminal damage or violent disorder, allegations of harassment and other violence. He has also been instructed in many successful anti-EDO cases including the infamous 'super-glue four' case, the 'die-in' at Churchill Square in Brighton and allegations of criminal damage and actual bodily harm at one of the many EDO protests. In each case, all the defendants were acquitted.

YOUTH JUSTICE & CHILD RIGHTS

A significant part of Keir's practice has concentrated on representing children accused of serious offences. In the multi-handed case of *R v S*, heard at the Old Bailey, Keir represented a defendant who was just 15 at the time of the alleged offences but was first on the indictment. The prosecution alleged that the defendant was the catalyst for a gang of 17 to murder a 16-year-old and that the defendant had also conspired to commit GBH. He was acquitted. Keir has also had success in the Court of Appeal. He obtained leave five and a half years out of time for a defendant who was just 18 at the time he committed a very serious offence. Keir persuaded the Court of Appeal to reduce the sentence from an indefinite period of imprisonment for public protection to a community order *R v D* [2014] EWCA Crim 241. Keir has also organised and chaired webinars on the topic of so called gang evidence, combatting the use of rap lyrics to prosecute defendants and he continues to campaign on these topics and many more.

BACKGROUND

After three years of practice, Keir became one of the founding members of Acre Lane Chambers and joined Garden Court in 2002.

Keir is an elected executive member of the Criminal Bar Association, has worked for Oxfam and the NSC.

PUBLICATIONS

['Ban rap and drill lyrics in the courtroom', *Popular Music* \(41/4\), Cambridge University Press, January 2023](#)

['Rap and the State's double whammy: Lack of expert challenge to racist stereotyping'](#) - Garden Court Blog Post, May 2021

['Debunking prosecution myths: "Gang" stereotypes, joint enterprise & racist driven stop & searches'](#) - Garden Court Blog Post, September 2020

TRAINING AND SEMINARS

During September and October 2020, the Garden Court Chambers Criminal Defence Team, initiated by Keir Monteith KC, held a series of webinars entitled ['Drill Music, Gangs and Prosecutions – Challenging Racist Stereotypes in the Criminal Justice System'](#). The panels featured community activists and non-legal academics, contributing real insight and lived experience, inspiring us to bring about real change. The [recordings](#) have been watched by over 3,500 people.

During January and May 2021, Keir initiated a further series of webinars entitled ['Black Lives Matter - Challenging Racist Stereotypes in the Criminal Justice System'](#). This series explored issues that ranged from the American experience of how the State uses Rap lyrics and videos to prosecute serious crime, UK policing of so-called "gang activity" resulting in deportation, in-depth analysis of racism in the justice system and the Black Lives Matter protests. [Click here to view the recordings.](#)

Keir contributed to the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Race and Community event: 'Racial disproportionalities in the criminal justice system', on 17 April 2023, co-chaired by Labour MPs Clive Lewis and Bell Ribeiro-Addy. [Read the full write-up here.](#)

MEDIA

[Featured in NME's 'Campaigners speak out against the criminalisation of rap lyrics: "If you're Black, and you rap, then you're in a gang"', Jan 2024](#)

[Featured in Counsel Magazine's February 2023 Issue: 'RBB's 10 next steps for an anti-racist justice system'.](#)

Quoted in ['YouTube is Working With Met Police to Take Down Rap and Drill Videos'](#), *VICE*, Feb 2022

Quoted in ['Coming to the Defence of Drill Music'](#), *The Times*, March 2021

Quoted in ['For British Drill Stars, the Police Are Listening Closely'](#), *The New York Times*, Jan 2021

EDUCATION

Law Degree

Bar Finals

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIP

Howard Legal for Penal Reform

Criminal Bar Association

Fraud Lawyers Association

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