



GARDEN COURT CHAMBERS

Alex Taylor-Camara

YEAR OF CALL: 1989



Alex Taylor-Camara practices exclusively within the field of criminal defence, frequently acting as leading counsel. He covers a vast area within the field of criminal law ranging from serious sexual offences to VAT fraud, people trafficking and arson.

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CRIMINAL DEFENCE

Alex practises exclusively within the field of criminal defence. Having practised for over 30 years he now frequently acts as leading counsel as well as being led on many high profile cases.

He covers a vast area within the field of criminal law ranging from serious sexual offences to VAT fraud, people trafficking and arson. The development of the SOCA has meant that many of the cases in which Alex is instructed involve well organised groups of alleged offenders charged with conspiracy to kidnap, robbery, deception and fraud.

Although based in London Alex practices throughout the country and has dealt with many trials in the Midlands, Liverpool, Manchester, Bristol, Leeds, Cardiff, and the southern counties.

Having represented many people living in Toxteth, Moss Side, Handsworth, Brixton, Harlesden, Tottenham, Hackney, the docks in Cardiff, as well as inner city areas in Leeds, Coventry and Nottingham, Alex has gained a wealth of experience in criminal cases arising from disputes occurring in inner city areas. He has represented members of well-known rival groups in Birmingham securing acquittals for members of both sides of the disputes.

NOTABLE CASES

Sexual Offences cases

Mr. Taylor-Camara has over 28 years' experience as both leading and junior counsel in a number of serious sexual offences cases. He has dealt with cases involving rape, indecent assault, sexual assault and historical sexual abuse cases.

The experience he has gained over the last 28 years has provided him with the necessary skills and ability to deal with a variety of complex and difficult cases.

By way of example below are details of some of the cases he has been involved with.

St Albans Crown Court

The defendant and his co-defendant were both unanimously acquitted of five counts of rape following a seven-day contested trial. All parties in this case were teenagers at the time of the events and strangers. The investigation involved a painstaking review of many hours of CCTV evidence gathered during the investigation from multiple locations and multiple cameras displaying different and incorrect recording times. All parties have had to wait almost five years for this matter to be resolved, despite an immediate and thorough investigation being carried out by the police and investigating team.

Brighton and Hove Crown Court

A defendant charged with multiple counts of rape, assault and drug dealing. This defendant was alleged to be a drug dealer who had groomed a young and vulnerable drug user to become a prostitute and then controlled her over many years forcing her to have sex with numerous people and repeatedly raping her over many years.

Inner London Crown Court

A rape trial involving issues of consent and the use of drugs and alcohol used to spike drinks and select vulnerable victims out in nightclubs. There were complex issues of the voluntary use of drugs and alcohol and the issue of consent.

Central Criminal Court

A rape trial in which it was alleged that the defendant had stalked a female over a number of months and pursued her until eventually raping her. The case concluded with a hung jury and had to proceed to a second trial which also ended with a hung jury. The prosecution had to consider whether a third trial was in the interests of justice.

Wood Green crown Court

A case of rape of a child by a relative over a substantial period and within a historical context.

Inner London crown Court

A case involving historical allegations of assault and rape against a male family member alleged to have abused a number of children in the family.

R V Bigby

A case involving the use of steroids used by an individual who was charged with sexual assaults. The defence advanced was a medical one based upon the side effects of drugs upon testosterone. The victim was a female at a local swimming baths and in a mixed sauna.

R v Aldridge, Inner London Crown Court

This was a case concerning indecent images and sexual assaults. The defendant was alleged to have been part of a pedophile ring sharing images and engaging in the sexual abuse of young girls.

R v Andrews, Worcester Crown Court

An historical sexual abuse case involving a man alleged to have befriended a young child and sexually abusing her over a number of years.

Portsmouth Crown Court

A rape case concerning the alleged rape of a stranger approached and befriended at a nightclub. Consent was the issue.

Wood Green Crown Court

A rape case alleged against a former professional footballer, who was alleged to have used his status to entice unsuspecting females to his apartment where they would be drugged and raped.

Chelmsford Crown Court

A trial in which a father was accused of sexually abusing both his children over a sustained period. Due to disclosure issues, it was discovered that there were issues concerning the mother of the children and that her following messy divorce may have instigated the allegations and marriage break-up.

***R v Wilding*, Chelmsford Crown Court**

Allegations against a former Scott master alleged to have abused children under his care and being part of a file sharing pedophile ring.

***R v Johnson*, Leeds Crown Court**

Allegation of 21 separate offences of rape and sexual assault taking place over a number of years. The victim was a relative and the allegations were historical.

Offences of murder and serious crime

Alex has continued to work within the inner cities and has represented many young men alleged to have been involved in so-called post-code gang offences. Of particular note Alex is currently instructed in a murder case said to have been the pre-cursor to the August disturbances and shooting of Mark Duggan.

He was recently lead on the Amy Leigh Barnes Murder trial in Manchester during which various premiership footballers were called as witnesses and which attracted national press coverage.

He was also junior counsel in another high-profile murder case in Manchester concerning a dental nurse who was alleged to have murdered her boyfriend's wife. In Birmingham, he was junior counsel in numerous

murder and attempted murder trials in which members of the Burger Boys and Johnson crew were accused of murder.

Recently he has represented younger defendants accused of being members of the Slash Money Crew or Slash. In London, Alex has represented many individuals alleged to gang affiliations.

R v Osman Ali Hassan, Southwark Crown Court

Defendant charged with kidnap, false imprisonment blackmail and section 18. Defendant alleged to have been the lead defendant in a team who kidnapped a known drug dealer to try and extract thousands of pounds from him. Case involved a significant cutthroat between the defendants. A substantial amount of phone evidence relied upon during the trial and multiple bad character applications

R v Osman, Central Criminal Court

Defendant charged with blackmail, false imprisonment, kidnap and section 18 wounding. The defendant was one of a number of men alleged to have been involved in the kidnap of a known drug dealer who unfortunately died before the case came to trial. Complex issues of dying testimony and multiple hearsay applications. There was a substantial amount of phone evidence including recordings of the alleged blackmail.

R v Ali Osman, Central Criminal Court

The defendant was alleged to have been involved in a serious incident of violence during which a meat cleaver, a samurai sword, two guns and another item looking like a gun in a sock were involved. CCTV evidence showed that at least one of the firearms was discharged during the incident and witnesses described hearing multiple shots. The incident took place in a local corner shop in Wood Green and at least two people were seriously injured. The defendant I represented ran a defence of alibi and the crown sought to rely upon CCTV evidence, cell site evidence, ANPR evidence and phone attribution. The case was fully contested and expert evidence called and examined in detail regarding the firearms and the absence of supporting scientific evidence of discharge. Experts were also called regarding cell site evidence.

R v Aragundade, Central Criminal Court

Defendant charged with possession of multiple firearms and ammunition and being involved in serious allegations of violence in support of alleged drug dealing. This was a cutthroat defence trial where he blamed the co accused of being involved with others in possession of the firearms. The prosecution also alleged commercial supply of drugs and the defendant running a small factory producing and distributing drugs.

R v Sangera, Manchester Crown Court

Charged with murder of the wife of her lover. The defendant was a dental student with no previous convictions. The allegation involved complex scientific evidence surrounding the gathering and examination of exhibits and the crime scene. Cause of death was not straightforward and a substantial amount of CCTV and phone evidence was examined during the trial.

Manchester Crown Court

Defendant was a footballer who was accused of murdering a young lady who he was in a relationship with. The case involved calling a number of footballers who were all in some way or another associated with the victim. The defence was alibi and a substantial amount of CCTV, phone and forensic evidence was called during the trial to seek to establish both where the defendant was and how the murder must have taken place. The matter was complicated by a co-accused who was his mother who was accused of perverting the course of justice and was a serving police officer.

R v Smith, Birmingham Crown Court

The defendant was part of a well-known gang who were accused of the murder of a doorman and the attempted murder of two other doormen who were shot outside a local night club. Issues of identification, gang membership and admissibility of hearsay evidence. This was a multi-handed case with members of opposing gangs involved.

Central Criminal Court

The defendant was alleged to have been part of a group responsible for the murder of a rival group. The defendant was a member of a well-known music group and the lyrics of his bands records became a feature of the case in support of bad character application. Similarly footage of their music videos was also relied upon. Complex phone evidence and analysis including cell site evidence was adduced at trial to try and establish his presence and participation in the murder.

R v Gomez, Central Criminal Court

The defendant was charged with murder following the death of a man who he had an argument with earlier in the evening. Complex medical evidence was called concerning causation, as the victim died a number of days later following an admission to hospital and subsequent release from hospital. The victim had a glandular problem, which required significant amounts of medication to keep his condition under control. The initial incident involving the defendant did not lead to his death but the injury was a trigger to his other conditions,

which eventually lead to him losing his life. There was also examination of CCTV evidence, which showed that there were not kicks to the head as, had initially been suspected. There were co-defendants involved who were all involved in the earlier incident but who withdrew from the initial altercation after the initial incident.

Central Criminal Court

The defendant was a teenager accused of killing his girlfriend. He was initially charged with murder but later pleaded guilty to manslaughter. He had been holding on to a firearm for others when his girlfriend took possession of the weapon and during an argument the weapon was discharged killing her. Complex issues arose about how the weapon was discharged and following a careful examination of the evidence it was eventually agreed that it could not be conclusively said that the weapon was not discharged as suggested by the defendant. In the circumstances a plea to manslaughter was eventually accepted.

R v Alayne, Central Criminal Court

Instructed as junior counsel in a murder where it was alleged the defendant was a contract killer paid to assassinate a gang rival of a man. The events took place inside a full barbershop during the day and despite numerous witnesses being around at the time very few people were prepared to give evidence. Substantial argument arose about anonymity and hearsay witness testimony. A substantial amount of CCTV had to be considered and also Cell Site and phone attribution was involved.

R v Anderson, Snaresbrook Crown Court

The defendant initially charged with attempted murder but later charges amended to possession of firearms with intent to endanger life and Affray. The defendant was in a cutthroat case with a co-defendant alleged to have fired a weapon in a public park and endangered the life of an elderly man at home and various members of the public. Substantial issues arose about the scientific gunshot residue evidence and the gathering of exhibits. There was significant CCTV evidence, which indicated alternative versions of the facts advanced by the prosecution. As is common a significant amount of Phone evidence and cell site evidence was relied upon.

R v Grey, Winchester Crown Court

Charged with murder. Defendant was unfit to stand trial and a fully contested unfitness and did he do the act trial proceeded. Complex issues of adducing evidence of self-defence during the course of the trial and expert evidence on cause of death.

R v Phillips Croydon Crown Court

The defendant charged with murder. The allegation surrounded a defendant with significant mental health issues seeking to run multiple defences of self-defence, loss of control and raising mental health issues for the purposes of diminished responsibility.

R v Brooks, Wood Green Crown Court

The defendant was accused of possessing firearms and ammunition with intent to endanger life. This was in relation to a shooting in broad daylight in Hackney in which a bystander was shot in the alleged exchange between rival gangs. A loaded sworn-off shot gun and a loaded hand gun were recovered and were scientifically linked to the shooting. Alex's client was acquitted of all charges.

R v Sellick, Guildford Crown Court

Alex represented a fireman, who was also an ambulance first responder, who was acquitted of actual bodily harm at trial. The defendant had been acting as a doorman part-time and was charged with assaulting a man he was lawfully helping the police detain on the ground. The prosecution eventually offered no evidence against him following a fully contested trial where the jury was unable to reach a verdict.

R v Boden & Vaughn-James

Alex represented two soldiers accused of perverting the course of justice. After being caught speeding, one defendant pretended their friend (the co-defendant, who was also in the armed forces) was driving and got him to do the speeding course. The pair eventually pleaded guilty and avoided immediate custody. This is highly unusual in such cases, which usually attract immediate custody on policy grounds. The pair received suspended sentences.

Drugs

In stark contrast to a predominance of violent offences Alex has also led many cases where people have been charged with the importation and distribution of large quantities of drugs.

Alex represented an air stewardess accused of importing kilograms of Class A drugs and was instructed to represent an alleged participant in a multi-million pound conspiracy to import and distribute drugs through clothing retail and food retail outlets.

Although involved in some high level and high profile drug cases Alex does not shy away from representing those who have been found in possession of drugs whilst attending visits to prison or being accused of involvement in smaller scale drug conspiracies.

Alex has also dealt with cases concerning the distribution of drugs via the internet and conspiracies to distribute fake prescription and non-prescription drugs. Sometimes these cases also involve allegations of fraud and trade description issues and may involve multiple agencies in their prosecution. Having acquired experience in a variety of different criminal law areas whilst maintaining specialist knowledge provides Alex with the best credentials for defending such cases.

Violent Disorder

Alex is currently instructed on a number of cases arising from the August 2011 disturbances throughout London. These cases concern the more serious aspects of the disturbance where not only substantial damage was caused and property stolen and damaged but where serious levels of violence were used. Some of his current cases concern serious injuries being inflicted.

Alex continues to be instructed in cases out of London and was instructed in football violent disorder involving rival football supporters. This case concerned rival Burnley and Blackburn fans following their first meeting in the Premiership. Alex is also currently instructed in an alleged fraud case concerning the previous Mayor of Stockport.

Expert Medical Evidence

A recent murder case in which Alex has been involved concerned significant medical expert evidence. This initially started life as a one punch manslaughter but developed into a fully contested murder case. It was complicated because the victim did not die at the scene or indeed at the hospital where he was observed overnight. In this case the victim returned home and died 24 hours later.

Issues of causation and medical negligence were raised and experts in the field of Radiology, Radiography, Pathology, Neurology, Neuropathology, Microbiology and Toxicology were called, as well as expert brain surgeons and numerous other doctors. The victim appeared to be suffering from a condition called Addison's disease, which created a complex causation issue in the case as the evidence appeared to support the fact that he had attempted to commit suicide on the night he was struck.

Serious Crime

Unfortunately the level of gun crime in the country has continued to rise and as such specialist knowledge and experience in this area is invaluable. Alex has represented individuals accused of possessing and using a variety of firearms and shot guns. Some cases have involved issues of complex identification of the weapons as antiques and or memorabilia whilst other cases have concerned their origin and conversion.

A recent case he was involved in concerned the police opening up a dummy shop in a local inner city to try and infiltrate local gangs said to have access to a variety of firearms. This operation resulted in the arrest of dozens of individuals all recorded during covert mobile phone conversations and also covert CCTV recording those who visited the dummy shop. The defendant represented by Alex was said to be a supplier of weapons and near the source which was said to have involved military persons and foreign nationals.

Other

Recently Alex represented a client described in the press as the most prolific fly tipper in the country who had previously been accused of emptying hundreds of old tyres outside a magistrates court preventing the district judges and JPs from getting access to the court.

Alex has represented members of well-known and aspiring music groups such as So Solid, K2 Family and Big Brothers.

FINANCIAL CRIME AND CONFISCATION

Alex has been instructed in a wide variety of unusual cases such as frauds to obtain breast implants, share option frauds, insurance company frauds and frauds involving Christian preachers.

Practitioner in serious and organised Fraud

Alex was called to the bar in 1989 and has been practicing exclusively within the field of criminal law for over 28 years. Alex has developed his practice within the criminal law field to encompass a wide range of fraud and fraud related cases. Whether it be a housing and or income support benefit fraud, mortgage fraud, insurance company fraud, VAT and customs evasion fraud, or money laundering and proceeds of crime fraud, or banking fraud, Alex has had experience representing defendants in all aspects of fraud.

NOTABLE CASES

Alex recently represented the son of a well-known haulage company accused of causing death by dangerous driving which involved complex European tachograph regulations and detailed expert evidence concerning HGV vehicles and breaking and stopping speeds and distances.

He has also represented a solicitor alleged to have continued to work without a licence, as well as having been instructed in numerous mortgage frauds.

R v Ilori, Peterborough Crown Court

Alex was leading counsel on a multi-handed fraud estimated to have netted millions for those involved. It involved an international aspect of both Nigerian and South American participants. Dummy companies being set up to distribute stolen cheques obtained from numerous companies. Money was then used to purchase properties from which false housing and income fictitious tenants then claimed support. These were created after their identities were either stolen from unsuspecting individuals or, in some cases, stolen from birth following their deaths.

R v Fellerman, Wood Green Crown Court

An unusual alleged insurance fraud against a multinational insurance company. Those accused were living together and were alleged to have flooded their own home and attempted to obtain hundreds of thousands of pounds. Expert evidence played a significant part in determining whether the flood was in fact deliberate or accidental as well as the paper trail and documentation which usually accompany fraud cases.

R v Lockwood

This was a money laundering case involving a husband and wife who were alleged to have bought various properties by fraud and then sold them at reduced and undervalued prices whilst retaining an interest in them. Monies obtained being transferred to off shore accounts and other unidentified accounts.

R v Miah

This was a money laundering case involving hundreds of thousands of pounds alleged to have been laundered through a car dealership. Various properties were alleged to have been the subject of the enterprise.

R v McKnight, Luton Crown Court

An unusual fraud concerning a preacher associated with a professional and organised fraudster. Millions of pounds were suspected to have been obtained following the purchase of properties either left vacant or rented to fictitious tenants. Loans were obtained as another aspect of the case to purchase high valued cars such as Range Rovers Bentley Continentals, BMW's, Audi's etc. Many of these vehicles were suspected to have been shipped to Africa and or the Middle East. False documentation was used to create identities and supporting financial accounts.

R v Khan, Central Criminal Court

Alex was lead on a multi-million pound VAT fraud concerning the importing and alleged exporting of alcohol. Those alleged to have been involved created numerous companies and used bonded warehouses during the fraud.

R v Brown, Kingston Crown Court

This case concerned a lady alleged to have laundered money alleged to have been illegally obtained by her former partner through various criminal activities. The majority of the case concerned the movement of monies through accounts and the purchase of various properties.

R v Dixit, Snaresbrook Crown Court

This case involved three university friends who started a number of companies that later became involved in a complex motor insurance fraud. The companies sold ghost insurance policies to PCO drivers, which were worthless. The fraud operated over a 12 month period and netted those involved substantial sums of money and placed the public at serious risk.

R v Rankin, Blackfriars Crown Court

This case involved a unique fraud upon TFL by producing thousands of oyster cards reproduced by technology created by the defendant I was representing. He was alleged to be the brains behind the fraud and it was suggested he with others ran a number of foot soldiers that would obtain cash refunds from the fake oyster cards. It was alleged that the defendant ran the whole enterprise via remote access and his personal computer.

R v Shearer, Shrewsbury Crown Court

This defendant was alleged to be a party to a conspiracy to fleece unsuspecting investors into purchasing shares in companies that did not exist. It was in short a boiler room fraud but operated out of a Spanish based company, which she was alleged to have worked for. The fraud targeted wealthy investors who were led to believe professional and reliable stockbrokers were advising them but in reality the whole operation was a scam. The fraud resulted in hundreds of thousands of pounds being lost by investors.

R v Solomon, Jacobson Central Criminal and Court Reading Crown Court

This case involved a defendant who was involved in multiple frauds, which at its simplest could be described as diversion frauds. Unsuspecting companies were targeted through their emails and told to transfer substantial sums of money to new bank accounts. The defendant together with a number of individuals based in Nigeria and the USA controlled a network of companies set up with very similar names to established multinational

companies. Email addresses were created and over a substantial period of time emails were sent to try and establish a legitimate trail of communication. Hundreds of thousands of pounds was obtained during the fraud and it was suspected amounts in excess of £1 million.

R v Shah Abdal, Leeds Crown Court

The defendant was one of a number accused of being involved in a complex fraud during which it was alleged the offenders conspired to defraud people of money from their accounts. A diversion fraud but complicated in that offenders were alleged to have pretended to be police officers and called unsuspecting predominantly elderly people informing them that their personal accounts had been compromised. The fraud involved convincing people to transfer their savings into accounts provided by the fictitious police officers. It was suspected that this was merely one of a number of similar frauds operating throughout the country.

BACKGROUND

Having come to the Bar in 1988 and been called in 1989, Alex initially practised in a wide range of areas such as civil actions against the police, family law, immigration and housing. Over the many years of practice Alex has begun to specialise his areas of practice and now works exclusively within the field of criminal law.

Before coming to the Bar Alex practiced as a solicitor. Whilst working in a firm actively involved in the community, Alex represented a number of young men arrested during the Broadwater Farm disturbances. His experiences during that time galvanised his commitment and determination to ensure that those most disadvantaged in the community received the best quality representation available.

Alex has attended local inner city schools and community centres to talk to children about how the law affects them on the street and has assisted in numerous mentor schemes targeting disadvantaged young black youths. Alex has also contributed to focus groups organised by the Mayor to address the increase in youth violence and gang violence.

Alex's interests include football, cricket and athletics.

EDUCATION

LLB (Hons)

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIP

Society of Black Lawyers

Fraud Lawyers Association

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