GARDEN COURT CHAMBERS

Christian Wasunna

YEAR OF CALL: 2000

Chambers RANKED IN UK 2024

The LEGAL 500 UNITED KINGDOM LEADING JUNIOR 2024

The LEGAL 500 UNITED KINGDOM LEADING JUNIOR 2023

The LEGAL 500 UNITED KINGDOM AWARDS 2015 WINNER

Christian is a defence barrister with significant experience in representing people who have been accused of committing serious criminal offences.

"Chris is one of those rare barristers with all the right attributes. He is smart and hard-working. His written work is always thoroughly prepared and clear. In terms of his advocacy, Chris has a compelling courtroom presence and is a very persuasive advocate."

LEGAL 500, 2024

"He is very good at building up a rapport with everyone he deals with and he's very in tune with what's going on in the background."

CHAMBERS UK, 2024

"A highly effective advocate known for his forensic preparation and friendly approach."

MR AHMED - SOLICITOR

"Hard-working, self-motivated and extremely efficient."

LEGAL 500, 2022

"He quickly identifies the key issues in a case, his preparation is meticulous, he is an exceptional advocate calm, clear, persuasive and approachable. He has excellent client care skills and is great to work with."

LEGAL 500, 2021

"Very intelligent and a perfect fit for complex and heavy trials."

LEGAL 500, 2020

If you would like to get in touch with Christian please contact the clerking team:
crimeclerksmailbox@gclaw.co.uk | **+44 (0)20 7993 7600**

CRIMINAL DEFENCE

Christian Wasunna has established a highly successful, exclusive criminal defence practice and has been instructed in a number of serious cases which have attracted local and national media attention. These include offences of murder, rape, fraud, kidnap, arson, blackmail, importation of drugs, armed robbery and firearms offences.

Christian has also acted in many cases involving gang-related violence, very young defendants and defendants suffering from mental difficulties, and is qualified to accept instructions directly from clients under the Bar Council's Public Access Scheme.

NOTABLE CASES

Serious Violence

R v W

Murder - (on-going).

R v A

Murder - (on-going).

R v T

Manslaughter - (on going).

R v T

Murder - Led Junior: the defendant was alleged to have had an argument with the deceased outside a parade of shops. Following the argument, the deceased got into his car and drove off at speed chased by the defendant. The deceased arrived at his home address and got out of his car. It was alleged that having driven past the deceased the defendant then returned in his car and deliberately drove at him causing him to die at the scene. The defendant accepted being the driver of the car. There was delicate unpicking of the pathology. He was acquitted at trial of Murder, Manslaughter and causing death by dangerous driving.

R v K and others

Murder - Led Junior: the defendant was alleged to have been involved in a joint enterprise Murder. He was said to have deliberately driven at the deceased rendering him unconscious in order that a co-accused (who was on foot) could then assault him with an axe like object. This case involved eleven expert witnesses who gave evidence at trial. The witnesses included pathologists, nephrologists, radiologists, neurosurgeons, collision experts, CCTV experts and cell site experts.

R v T and another

Murder - Led Junior: the defendant, a Romanian squatter, was alleged to have stabbed the deceased 18 times and beaten him around the face with a crowbar after the deceased listened to music from Hungary rather than his native Romania.

R v T & others

Murder - Led Junior: this case involved the trial and re-trial of a defendant (said to be a high- ranking member of a notorious north London gang). He was charged with murdering a rival gang member. It was alleged that this was in revenge for the murder of a 15-year-old by the rival gang. The case involved extensive expert testimony (medical and firearm) and CCTV footage which showed the defendant who was armed with a sawn-off shotgun shooting the deceased.

R v D

Attempted murder, s.18 and s.20 assaults: Stabbing - the young defendant was acquitted at trial of attempted murder and the s.18 assault.

R v H & others

VHCC - Armed Robbery (Operation Arnulf - dubbed "the men in white"): represented one of 30 defendants charged with robberies of jewellers throughout England in one of the largest prosecutions ever brought by the Metropolitan Police Flying Squad.

R v N & others

Perverting the course of justice - Led Junior: the defendant's sons were accused of the murder of a 19-month-old girl in a revenge arson attack in Camberwell. The defendant was alleged to have assisted them by providing them with a false alibi.

R v S

s.18 assault: The defendant was alleged to have stabbed a male following an argument outside a tower block. The tip of the knife broke off and was found embedded in his hip.

R v R

Aggravated burglary: The defendant was alleged to have viciously attacked and tied up an elderly male having broken into his home. The defendant was acquitted following trial.

R v A

s.18 assault: The defendant went to a house to see a female; when her partner returned he stabbed him. The defendant said this was in self-defence - he was found not guilty at trial.

R v A

s.18 assault: The defendant was acquitted of causing multiple stab injuries to a male over an argument about his ex-girlfriend.

R v A

s.18 assault x 2: The defendant was alleged to have stabbed the same male on two separate days - he was acquitted following trial.

R v C & another

s.18 assault: The defendant and his brother were alleged to have stabbed a male in the back and stomach on numerous occasions ripping through his abdomen and rupturing his stomach in a revenge attack after the

male gave evidence against them in a previous case. The defendant avoided an indeterminate sentence despite being described by the psychiatrist as posing a 'grave and immediate danger to the public'.

R v M

s.18 stabbing: The defendant was charged with s.18 - he was convicted of the lesser offence (s.20). In his police interview he accepted stabbing the male. The medical evidence was that the stabbing caused a three inch cut that narrowly missed his heart.

R v Z & others

14 armed robberies of travel agents in the London area. The young defendant was convicted of two of the robberies and was sentenced to a 12-month DTO.

R v Y

False imprisonment: The defendant was alleged to have held a female hostage in her own home for several hours, sexually assaulted her and strangled her until she passed out.

R v F

The defendant was charged with 25 counts of cash-in-transit robberies. He was convicted of four counts. The case involved complex cell site evidence.

R v A

s.18 assault: The defendant (a founding member of Flawless - semi-finalists in Britain's Got Talent 2009) was alleged to have punched a male to the floor whereupon he was said to have kicked him in the face in a sustained and unprovoked attack which caused multiple facial fractures. The defendant said he acted in self-defence and was acquitted following trial.

R v P

Kidnap and false imprisonment: Charges dismissed following a successful two-day dismissal application.

Sexual Offences

R v S

Rape x 4: The defendant was acquitted at trial of all four rapes.

R v G & others

Gang rape: Led Junior. The defendant was acquitted at trial.

R v C

The defendant was acquitted of all four counts of historic child sexual abuse. It was alleged that he had indecently assaulted two of his former neighbours.

R v T

The defendant was acquitted of historic child sexual abuse following legal argument. It was alleged that he had indecently assaulted a young relative.

R v H

Rape, attempted rape and sexual assault.

R v D

The defendant met a female in a nightclub and offered her a lift home. The prosecution alleged that he attacked and sexually assaulted her on the journey home. The defendant was acquitted.

Drugs

R v G

The defendant was being watched by police who suspected him of dealing in drugs. He was arrested while travelling in a taxi, and found with a bag containing £250,000 of cocaine. He accepted the bag was his. He was found not guilty at trial.

R v L & others

Operation Peyzac: Represented one of 37 defendants arrested following an undercover police operation where the police set up a music shop in Enfield called the 'Boombox' to gain information and to purchase illegal items from the local gang members.

R v S & others

Conspiracy to supply cocaine: It was alleged that large amounts of cocaine were being brought to a secluded farmhouse and thereafter adulterated before their onward sale.

R v B & others

Large scale cannabis cultivation.

R v W & others

Conspiracy to supply 78kg of cannabis: The drugs were found in boxes at the defendant's home address. Defendant acquitted.

R v H-A & others

Conspiracy to import large amounts of opium on lorries from Germany. Complex cell site and confiscation issues.

R v H

Supply of drugs in HMP Elmley by a serving prisoner - the defendant was acquitted.

R v O

Supply of drugs: Police found large quantities of Class A drugs in a house along with the personal property and paperwork relating to the defendant. The defendant, who was alleged to be a high ranking gang member, was acquitted.

Mental Health

R v S

Arson being reckless as to whether life is endangered: It was alleged that having lost money on a game of pool in a pub the defendant threatened to burn down the pub. A few hours later the pub landlord, his partner and their three-year-old child were in their flat above the pub when the phone rang - the caller reported a fire to the pub - the landlord raced downstairs whereupon he smelt petrol and noted that the front door of the pub had been set alight. Shortly thereafter the emergency services were called. The defendant who has a history of paranoid schizophrenia with symptoms of psychosis was acquitted at trial.

R v F

Exposure: The Jury found the mentally disordered defendant did not expose himself to two young females, as had been alleged.

R v L

Robbery: The Jury found the mentally disordered defendant did not do the act alleged.

R v K

The defendant who was suffering from a mix between schizophrenia and schizoaffective disorder was alleged to have stabbed a female co-worker in the head six times with a screwdriver.

Violent Disorder

R v A and others

The defendant went to HMP Wandsworth with two friends to visit an inmate. The visitors centre was busy. Whilst on the social visit 'looks' were exchanged with another inmate who was similarly being visited by three

people. Towards the end of the visit it was alleged that the defendant and his two friends rushed over to the 'other table' and large scale violence ensued. The incident appeared to be gang related. CCTV showed most of the incident. Tables and chairs were upturned; women and babies were innocently caught up in the disorder and ran for cover. The defendant was acquitted at trial.

R v P

The defendant and four others were alleged to have gone to a park in South East London. In the park was the complainant (an old school friend). The complainant said the defendant engaged him in conversation before punching and chasing him into an estate. The complainant said he saw a knife in the defendant's hand. He was stabbed as he tried to get into his cousins house. The defendant denied being responsible. A number of local residents (including the sister of his former girlfriend) said they saw him there with a knife in his hand. He was acquitted at trial.

R v B & others

Violent Disorder on New Year's Eve at a public house in which there were over 250 customers. The case concerned a large fight in which members of the public were attacked with bottles, fists and feet. Eventually order was restored when the Police arrived and tasered the apparent ring leaders. The case involved very detailed cross examination of a number of firearms officers who had tasered the defendant (with specific reference to the ACPO Guidelines as to the correct use of tasers). The defendant was acquitted at trial.

R v N & 19 others

Organised football violence captured on CCTV. Leyton Orient had been playing an away game in Colchester and Brentford had been playing Hartlepool at their home ground. The prosecution alleged that members of Brentford and Leyton Orient met by prior agreement outside Liverpool Street station whereupon the violence occurred. A non-custodial sentence was imposed on the defendant who was said by the prosecution to have been the ring leader.

R v D-B & others

Football related violence at Sydenham station - Crystal Palace v Charlton Athletic. It was alleged that the defendant was one of the principle aggressors.

R v M & others

The defendant was acquitted of football related violent disorder following legal argument.

R v S & others

Multi-handed violent disorder: The defendants were seen on CCTV attacking others with weapons. Only S was

acquitted at trial.

R v K & others

Conspiracy to rob - Led Junior: multi-handed gang related honey trap case.

R v S

Operation Withern: One of the cases concerning the 2011 summer riots.

General Dishonesty

R v H & others

It was alleged that the defendant (a UK Boxing Champion) equipped his co-defendants with a fake search warrant and Police identification badges. His co-defendants posed as police officers and using the fake documents gained access to the affluent home of a dentist and his wife. The occupants were tied up and subjected to violence. Substantial cash and jewellery was stolen. In interview the defendant accepted taking photographs of his co-accused, making the false Police identification cards and creating the fake search warrant. He was found not guilty of conspiracy to rob.

R v W & others

The defendant was one of three charged with a sophisticated and large scale conspiracy to steal high value cars. The offence took place over a wide geographical area (including internationally), over 70 homes were burgled and the total value of the cars stolen was estimated to be in excess of half a million pounds.

R v M & others

Theft of a £1.2 million Stradivarius violin and two bows valued at over £67,000 in November 2010 from a branch of Pret A Manger in Euston station. The theft was captured on CCTV. The young defendant was identified from the CCTV footage following a Crimewatch appeal - M was the only defendant to avoid a custodial sentence - the violin was recovered in July 2013 in a property in the midlands.

R v B

Theft: 12-month suspended sentence for B who admitted theft and asked for 62 offences of burglary to be taken into consideration.

R v M & 8 others

Multi-handed conspiracy to handle scrap metal. The Crown offered no evidence after a five-day disclosure application having accepted that there were serious failings in the disclosure regime.

R v N & 9 others

Conspiracy to steal: A case involving the theft of a large number of high-value motor vehicles.

R v R

Burglary x eight: Successful dismissal application in relation to all eight charges.

R v C

15 counts of burglary: The defendant was acquitted of eleven counts at trial.

R v A

Three counts of domestic burglary and three counts of theft on different days: The defendant was acquitted at trial.

Other Offences

R v U

Blackmail: The defendant and his co-defendant were alleged to have demanded £200,000 from Tamara Ecclestone, the Formula 1 heiress. I represented the defendant at his re-trial. The Jury acquitted the defendant.

R v R & 2 others

Arson with intent to endanger life: The defendant was charged with burning down a shisha café. Following a successful submission of no case to answer the defendant was formally acquitted.

R v W

Arson: The defendant was alleged to have torched a car. The prosecution said he was linked to the offence by virtue of DNA evidence. The defendant was acquitted following legal argument.

R v P

Arson with intent to endanger life: A non-custodial sentence was imposed on the defendant who admitted setting a fire in a communal area of the 16th floor of an occupied high-rise tower block.

R v C

Possession of a firearm: The firearm was found in the defendant's bedroom under his bed. The defendant was acquitted at trial.

R v W

The defendant was acquitted of causing death by careless driving.

R v A

Death by dangerous driving x three: The defendant was acquitted at trial of causing the death of his three passengers by dangerous driving.

R v H

Blackmail: The defendant admitted to threatening to post sexually explicit material relating to his former partner on social networking sites unless money was paid. A suspended sentence was imposed.

FINANCIAL CRIME AND CONFISCATION

Christian is experienced in dealing with high value confiscation, asset recovery and restraint proceedings.

NOTABLE CASES

R v S & 10 others

Conspiracy to commit fraud: Multi-handed case, in which the defendant was alleged to have been a member of a gang which mainly targeted the elderly in order to obtain bank details.

R v R & others

Money laundering - Led Junior: Acting for the first defendant where a mother, father and sisters were alleged to have conspired to launder the proceeds of their son's/brothers drug dealing business.

R v N & others

Conspiracy to sell goods bearing false trademarks: The defendant was alleged to be involved in producing and selling thousands of counterfeit DVDs.

R v D

Converting criminal property: Selling numerous stolen goods on eBay. A non-custodial sentence was imposed on the defendant.

R v T & others

VHCC - Led Junior: The defendant was alleged to have been involved in smuggling huge quantities of goods into the UK.

R v F & others

VHCC - Led Junior: large scale conspiracy to defraud where some of the co-defendants were police officers.

R v K

DWP Benefit Fraud: The defendant was acquitted on a re-trial following legal argument.

R v L

DWP - living together case: The defendant was acquitted following a submission of no case.

CRIMINAL APPEALS

Annually Christian accepts a number of approaches to advise on and if appropriate conduct pro-bono appeals - this is in cases where applicants have been advised by their trial lawyers that they have no appeal against their conviction and or sentence.

NOTABLE CASES

***R v Hama-Amin (Jaleel)* [2011] EWCA Crim 2836**

Successful appeal against sentence: 11 years' imprisonment reduced to nine years for drug trafficking.

***R v C* [2010] EWCA Crim 2066**

Successful appeal against sentence: 18 month DTO was replaced with a non-custodial sentence for robbery and kidnap.

***R v McDonald (Michael Francis)* [2008] 1 Cr. App. R. (S.) 20**

Successful appeal against sentence: Imprisonment for public protection overturned, and a determinate sentence imposed.

***R v W* [2006] 2 Cr. App. R. (S.) 110**

Successful appeal against sentence: Representing W and F, the decision by the trial judge to impose an ASBO was not upheld.

BACKGROUND

Christian was a Lay Observer from 1996 to 1998 at courts and police stations. He was appointed by the Secretary of State to monitor the treatment, custody conditions and transportation of inmates. Christian is a trustee of The Desert Rose Trust - a charity in Kenya. The aim of the charity is to improve the lives of marginalised communities in Southern Turkana.

EDUCATION

BA Criminal Justice

CPE

BVC

Certificate in International Human Rights Law and Practice - London School of Economics

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIP

Criminal Bar Association (CBA)

LANGUAGES

Swahili

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