



Tom Copeland

YEAR OF CALL: 2013



Tom is a specialist criminal defence barrister. He has experience as a led junior and junior alone in serious and complex cases. He is hard-working and has established a reputation for thorough case preparation, effective trial advocacy and excellent client care.

"Mr Copeland (provided) very cogent and clear submissions which were very helpful." - Lord Justice Haddon-Cave, 2021

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

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CRIMINAL DEFENCE

Tom is a committed criminal defence barrister who is dedicated to the best interests of his client. His meticulous case preparation, ability to provide clients with clear, focused advice and persuasive trial advocacy means he is regularly instructed in serious cases.

He acts in cases of varying size and complexity across all areas of crime including:

- murder/attempted murder;**
- serious violence;**
- modern slavery;**
- rape and serious sexual offences;**
- drug supply;**
- firearms;**
- fraud including associated confiscation proceedings;**
- public disorder/protest.**

He has a reputation for gaining the trust and respect of clients from all backgrounds. Tom has appeared in court at all levels from the youth court to the Court of Appeal (Criminal Division).

NOTABLE CASES

Murder / Attempted murder

R v DX, Central Criminal Court (2021)

Murder: Led by Henry Blaxland QC representing a husband accused of stabbing his partner multiple times.

R v CC, Central Criminal Court (2021)

Murder / Firearms / Drug supply: Led by James Scobie QC representing a man accused of being part of an organised criminal group using “Encrochat” to plan a murder and supply drugs.

R v AB, Derby Crown Court (2021)

Attempted murder / Firearms: Led junior representing a defendant charged as a hitman contracted by a drugs gang to kill a rival gang member. This was one of the first prosecutions in the UK relying on “Encrochat” evidence.

R v DH, Central Criminal Court (2021)

Attempted murder / Firearms: Represents a male accused of attempting to kill two individuals during a shooting in South London.

Serious violence

R v MF, Wood Green Crown Court (2020)

Armed robbery: Defendant committed a spree of knife-point robberies. Case involved psychiatric evidence and the issue of dangerousness.

R v TN, Southampton Crown Court (2018)

Kidnap/false imprisonment: Defendant was accused of being involved in serious organised crime and using violence to take over a nightclub. He was acquitted after a one-week trial.

R v FA, Harrow Crown Court (2018)

s.18 assault: First defendant in a multi-handed "joint enterprise" case lasting two weeks involving a client accused of stabbing someone at a house party.

R v MM, Reading Crown Court (2016)

Armed robbery: The 21-year-old defendant was acquitted of an armed robbery at a mobile phone shop. The case involved cell-site evidence, call data, ANPR and DNA evidence.

Firearms

R v DH, Inner London Crown Court (2019)

Firearms/Drug supply: The co-defendant ran a cut-throat defence suggesting the defendant forced him at gun-point to store loaded firearms. The defendant was acquitted after a two-week trial.

R v MC, Wood Green Crown Court (2018)

Conspiracy to transfer firearms: Led junior during a six-week trial representing a 17-year-old accused of conspiring to provide firearms to gang members during a feud.

Modern slavery

R v IB, Birmingham Crown Court (2019)

People trafficking: Led by Marguerite Russell representing the first defendant during a ten-week trial involving the "biggest modern-day slave ring". The case involved a vast amount of evidence, complex legal arguments and was widely reported in the national and international media.

R v MM, Stafford Crown Court (2018)

People trafficking: Led junior for the first defendant in a large prosecution accusing several family members of modern slavery offences.

Drugs

R v BH, Kingston Crown Court (2021)

Conspiracy to supply class A: Defendant involved in the importation and sale of over a hundred kilos of cocaine.

R v VO, Snaresbrook Crown Court (2021)

Conspiracy to supply class A (cocaine): Multi-handed case involving “Encrochat” evidence and the importation and distribution of in excess of 20 kilos of cocaine.

R v NA, St Albans Crown Court (2021)

Conspiracy to supply class A: Multi-handed case involving a “county line” distributing crack cocaine and heroin. The defendant advanced a defence under the Modern Slavery Act.

R v FA, Swindon Crown Court (2017)

Supply of Class A drugs and s.18 assault: Young defendant from London accused of stabbing a rival drug dealer.

R v HM, Central Criminal Court (2016)

Supply of Class A drugs: The defendant was acquitted of supplying a kilo of cocaine on the basis that she had no knowledge of the enterprise. The case involved sensitive intelligence.

Sexual offences**R v TB, St Albans Crown Court (2021)**

Rape: Multi-handed case involving two young defendants accused of gang-raping a 15-year-old girl.

R v BB, Harrow Crown Court (2018)

Rape: A judge found there was no case to answer in a case against an 18-year-old accused of participating in the gang rape of a drug user.

R v GH, Lewes Crown Court (2018)

Rape: A "Tinder rape" allegation involving a disabled complainant. The defendant was acquitted after arguing that the sex was consensual.

R v A, Maidstone Crown Court (2017)

Historic sex offences: Defendant was accused of several historic sexual offences including rape dating back to the 1970's.

R v MS, Harrow Crown Court (2017)

Rape: Represented the first defendant in an alleged gang rape of a sex worker. This case involved cross-examination of the complainant's sexual history.

R v SZ, Birmingham Crown Court (2017)

Rape: A trial lasting seven days where the defendant taxi driver was accused of using drugs to facilitate the rape of a customer.

Dishonesty / Fraud

R v MM, Southwark Crown Court (2021)

Cyber-enabled fraud: Defendant was the leading figure in a conspiracy involving money laundering and a HMRC phishing scam worth over £1 million.

R v RA, Manchester Crown Court (2021)

Money laundering: Led by Lucie Wibberley in a case involving money laundering in excess of £2million connected to a drugs conspiracy (class A). This was one of the first prosecutions relying on “Encrochat” evidence in the UK.

R v LK, Croydon Crown Court (2017)

Immigration fraud: Led junior my Marguerite Russell during a six-week trial. The defendant was accused of leading a criminal gang arranging sham marriages between Lithuanian women and Non-EEA nationals.

Protest

R v AS, Canterbury Crown Court (2017)

Violent disorder: The defendant was involved in an anti-fascist protest in Dover that was the subject of significant media attention.

R v CH, Snaresbrook Crown Court (2016)

Protest/Affray: A trial lasting several weeks involving the eviction of squatters by riot police triggering violence. The defendant was acquitted following a successful submission of no case to answer.

Other

R v PW, Blackfriars Crown Court (2016)

Preventing the lawful burial of a body: The defendant received a lenient sentence in an emotive case involving the disposal of a body in a canal. The sentence hearing attracted significant media attention.

Court of Appeal

R v Johnson (Wayne) [2017] EWCA Crim 189; [2017] 2 Cr. App. R. 6

Conveyance of List B or C articles into a prison: Authority cited in Archbold and Blackstones on the court's approach to knowledge in order to establish this offence.

FINANCIAL CRIME AND CONFISCATION

Tom is instructed in fraud cases of varying sizes including serious and complex fraud, money laundering and benefit fraud. He also accepts instructions in confiscation cases.

NOTABLE CASES

Fraud

R v MM, Southwark Crown Court (2021)

Cyber-enabled fraud: Defendant was the leading figure in a conspiracy involving money laundering and a HMRC phishing scam worth over £1 million.

R v RA, Manchester Crown Court (2021)

Money laundering: Led junior in a case involving money laundering in excess of £2million connected to a drugs conspiracy (class A).

R v JE, Southwark Crown Court (2018)

Fraud: Led by Sam Robinson QC in a case involving a large-scale boiler room fraud involving several companies and the sale of land.

Confiscation

R v FY, Reading Crown Court (2016)

A contested POCA trial resulting in a confiscation order of around £7,000 despite the prosecution seeking an order for around £800,000.

YOUTH JUSTICE & CHILD RIGHTS

Tom has experience representing children and young people in both the Youth Court and Crown Court. He has dealt with a range of cases both alone and as a led junior in the Crown Court involving serious violence, weapons (including firearms), sexual offences and drugs including where the defendant has relied upon the defence that he or she was a victim of modern slavery and/or trafficking. He is regularly instructed to represent young people in “county lines” cases involving conspiracies to supply class A drugs.

He works hard to gain the confidence and trust of his clients through additional conferences where necessary and ensures that they understand the proceedings and fully participate.

PRO BONO WORK

Before joining the Bar, Tom worked for several years in the legal and voluntary sector with a particular focus on the protection of human rights. He worked for the Asylum Support Appeals Project, Bar Pro Bono Unit (now known as Advocate) and provided free advice at Croydon Law Centre.

BACKGROUND

Tom completed his pupillage at Garden Court Chambers in 2013 and quickly developed a criminal practice beyond his year of call.

Before joining the Bar, he worked for several years in the legal and voluntary sector with a particular focus on the protection of human rights. He worked for the Asylum Support Appeals Project, Bar Pro Bono Unit and provided free advice at Croydon Law Centre.

Tom volunteered as a refugee mentor with the Terrence Higgins Trust. He also spent a year living in rural Uganda working for an international NGO called Restless Development coordinating a sexual health programme for youths.

Tom studied law at Reading University, which included a year of study in France, and was awarded First Class Honours. He then obtained a LLM in Human Rights Law at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS).

AWARDS

In 2016, Tom was awarded a Criminal Bar Association Scholarship for excellence in advocacy.

In 2012, he was awarded a Queen Mother Scholarship from Middle Temple.

EDUCATION

BPTC, BPP London (2013)

LLM Human Rights Law, School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) (2009)

LLB Law with French Law, 1st Class Hons, University of Reading (2007)

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIP

Advocate

Criminal Bar Association

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