



# Susan Wright

YEAR OF CALL: 2013



Susan Wright is a crime and human rights barrister and an American lawyer whose career has included representing one of the first accused at the war crimes tribunal in Sierra Leone as well as the first accused in the United States facing the death penalty after a cold hit DNA match.

“Susan is a fearless fighter, defending the underdog and insisting their rights are protected. A sharp and clever advocate.”

LIZ SARGEANT, NEEDHAM POULIER

“Susan deals with the most difficult of clients with respect and care. I really couldn't recommend her enough.”

LYDIA DAGOSTINO, KELLYS SOLICITORS

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## CRIMINAL DEFENCE

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In addition to serious crime, Susan is experienced at working with clients who require additional support, including youths and those with mental health difficulties. Skilled in all aspects of mental health and criminal law, she has established working relationships with a range of medical experts. She contributed to the [Sentencing offenders with mental disorders, developmental disorders, or neurological impairments](#), as well as the CPS guidance [Suspects and Defendants with Mental Health Conditions or Disorders](#).

She can provide expert advice on sentencing, hospital orders, diversion, fitness to plead, diminished responsibility, insanity, drug-induced psychosis and automatism. She represents youth charged with serious offences and is particularly skilled at taking judges through the complex sentencing guidelines and authorities, highlighting alternative sentences wherever possible.

### NOTABLE CASES

#### Serious Crime

**R v AM**, Central Criminal Court (2021): Representing vulnerable young defendant with learning difficulties and mental health disorder charged with attempted murder.

**R v SE**, Snaresbrook Crown Court (2021): Represented defendant who received a suspended sentence without conditions, despite being convicted after trial of two counts of Child Cruelty, covering a period of 5 years.

**R v RD**, Central Criminal Court (2020): Led by Hossein Zahir QC, represented defendant charged with rape and murder.

**R v KB**, Kingston Crown Court (2020): Represented defendant charged with multiple counts of

dissemination of terrorist publication with intent.

**R v SA**, Croydon Crown Court (2018): Represented defendant charged with sexual assault, relying upon defence of non-insane automatism in the form of “sexsomnia”.

**R v EK**, Oxford Crown Court (2018): Led by Clare Wade QC, represented the first defendant charged with violating 44(1)(b) of Mental Capacity Act, following the death of her mother. There were complex issues of capacity which were the subject of repeated submissions during trial. The Court of Appeal ultimately reversed the conviction, accepting those submissions. The case received national news coverage including the [BBC](#), [Metro](#) and [Gazette](#). *R v Emma Jane Kurtz* [2019] 1 Cr.App.R 19

**R v LS**, Luton Crown Court (2018): Represented defendant charged with Attempted GBH and Affray who was 17 at the time of the offence and 18 at the time of sentencing. The case received national news coverage, including the [BBC](#), [Daily Telegraph](#), and [Daily Mail](#).

**R v IK**, Northampton Crown Court (2017): Defendant acquitted of 12 counts of making indecent images of children despite images being found on defendant’s laptop and desktop computer found at his address.

**R v RL**, Southwark Crown Court (2016): Defendant in position of trust received suspended sentence for Burglary offences where loss was in excess of £100,000.

**R v ZS**, Luton Crown Court (2016): Defendant acquitted of s18 GBH despite evidence from complainant, eyewitness, contemporaneous 999 call and extensive medical evidence.

**R v NW**, Westminster Magistrates’ Court (2015): Represented first defendant prosecuted for flying drones in violation of Air Navigation Order. Interviewed by Joshua Rozenberg on the subject of drones and was featured in the BBC's [Law in Action](#) programme. The case was covered by the [Guardian](#).

## **Mental Health**

**R v EE**, Basildon Crown Court (2021): Defendant acquitted of ABH and 14 counts of Assault upon emergency worker following submissions highlighting evidence of psychosis.

**R v TO**, Inner London Crown Court (2021): Defendant acquitted of PWITS x4 following submissions highlighting history of complex mental health needs.

**R v NS**, Stafford Crown Court (2019): Defendant acquitted of ABH x3 following submissions highlighting evidence of psychosis.

**R v AH**, Southwark Crown Court (2019): Led by Keir Monteith QC, represented high- functioning defendant

with complex mental health needs in £2.1 million MTIC fraud.

**R v MM**, Oxford Crown Court (2017) Led by Di Middleton QC, represented defendant acquitted of Child abuse on the basis that she was suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and 'Battered Person Syndrome'. The case received national news coverage, including the [BBC](#), [ITV](#) and [Metro](#).

**R v AA**, Inner London Crown Court (2016): Defendant charged with GBH with intent, whose mental health needs were unnoticed by prison staff, previous legal team and close family, given Hospital Order.

**R v FW**, Croydon Magistrates' Court (2015): Assault conviction of vulnerable and mentally unwell defendant reopened and defendant given absolute discharge.

## YOUTH JUSTICE & CHILD RIGHTS

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Susan has a particular expertise representing young people charged with sex offences. These cases can be very sensitive, particularly where family members are involved. It is important to hold the CPS to account by demanding case reviews, as they often fail to discharge their obligations by ignoring internal guidance and protocols.

### NOTABLE CASES

**R v ZO**, Isleworth Crown Court (2021): Youth acquitted of attempted rape of a child under 13 and 10 counts of sexual assault of a child under 13.

**R v MP**, Harrow Crown Court (2019): Youth charged with rape, following complainant's withdrawal persuaded the Court to refused to admit ABE.

**R v JM**, Lewes Crown Court (2017): Youth convicted of multiple counts of rape of 4-year-old complainant, sentenced to Youth Rehabilitation Order.

**R v TA**, Harrow Crown Court (2017): Youth charged with kidnapping and rape of 12-year-old stranger. The case received national news coverage, including the [BBC](#).

**R v KA**, Maidenhead Youth Court (2015): Defendant acquitted of multiple sexual assault charges involving vulnerable complainant.

**R v JC**, Stevenage Youth Court (2015): Defendant acquitted of multiple sexual assault charges involving

vulnerable complainant, following submission of no case to answer.

## **PROTEST RIGHTS**

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Susan is experienced in all aspects of public order law and has acted for protesters at weapons fairs, fox hunts and climate change direct actions. She represented one of the Stansted 15, who was ultimately acquitted and an Extinction Rebellion protester whose actions shut down the Underground and was likewise acquitted.

She is instructed in several high profile ongoing matters, including animal rights matters investigated by the Met Terrorism Unit and several Palestine Action matters where joint enterprise is alleged.

### **NOTABLE CASES**

*R v SM*, Reading Crown Court (2021): Representing defendant in conspiracy involving animal rights activists.

*R v EB*, Chester Crown Court (2021): Representing defendant charged with Criminal damage under joint enterprise where it is alleged that direct action caused damage of £4 million.

*R v EA*, Snaresbrook Crown Court (2021): Representing defendant charged with Conspiracy to commit burglary and Conspiracy to commit criminal damage, following participation in direct action.

*R v RS*, Wood Green Crown Court (2021): Representing defendant charged with Burglary and Conspiracy to commit criminal damage, following participation in direct action.

*R v DP*, Margate Magistrates' Court (2021): Hunt saboteur acquitted of Aggravated trespass after submission of no case to answer.

*R v AG*, Inner London Crown Court (2021) – XR protester acquitted of Obstructing an Engine or Carriage Using a Railway, after shutdown of Stratford Underground.

*R v NS*, Chelmsford Crown Court (2018): Represented one of the Stansted 15, charged with violating the Aviation and Maritime

Security Act. Conviction was quashed by the Court of Appeal, in a ruling that found there was no case to answer.

*R v MG*, Reading Magistrates' Court (2017): Successfully challenged the lawfulness of a Section 60AA Order, defendant acquitted of Refusing to remove face covering.

*R v BW*, Cardiff Crown Court (2017): Appeal allowed where protester at Weapons Fair was intervening to protect another protester from a PC using excessive force.

## EDUCATION LAW

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Susan welcomes instructions in education cases and the bulk of her work is done on a Pro Bono basis. As a direct access barrister she can be instructed directly, without the need for a solicitor. She is particularly interested in challenging decisions to permanently exclude students, challenging transfers to Pupil Referral Units and handling appeals to the Special Educational Needs Tribunal. She is a member of the [School Inclusion Project](#).

## PUBLICATIONS

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- Chapter author on Health and Human Rights textbook *The Right to Health, Theory and Practice* (Studentlitteratur) 2012
- Chapter author, *Law and Mental Health Professionals* (APA Publishing) 2000
- Gaza: a legal analysis and response (The School of Law at Queen Mary University, London 2014)
- International Obligations to Investigate Human Rights Violations (Doughty Street, London 2014)
- Fulbright Professor - International Criminal Law (University of Sarajevo Law School) (2002-2005)

## TRAINING AND SEMINARS

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- [The Covert Human Intelligence Sources \(Criminal Conduct\) Act 2021 - A dangerous affront to our civil liberties?](#)
- [Gangs: Pre-trial issues and Criminal Behaviour Orders](#)
- [Trial Issues in Protest Cases](#)
- Rights and Obligations Under Schedule 7, training delivered to frontline charity workers
- Preparing to Travel Abroad as Part of a Humanitarian Convoy, training delivered to frontline charity workers

## AWARDS

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- Marquand Endowed Prize
- Harvard University Merit Scholar
- Howard University Merit Scholar

## UNITED STATES

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Susan is admitted to practice in New York and Massachusetts. She worked for five years as a court-appointed lawyer in the US where she represented a juvenile charged with capital murder in a trial that raised novel DNA issues. She represented defendants in over 500 trials, on charges ranging from sexual offences to complex financial conspiracy. She was often required to research, brief, and argue issues of first impression.

## EDUCATION

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- Harvard University (Master's)
- Howard University (Juris Doctor)
- Muhlenberg College (First degree)

## LANGUAGES

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- French
- Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian

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