

Regina v Danny Walker and Gavin Allen (Central Criminal Court)

The incident centred on a shooting in the early hours of the morning on Boxing Day 2013 at the Avalon nightclub on Shaftesbury Avenue. Both Walker and Allen were acquitted of the murder of Hassan Isman at the Old Bailey. Co-defendants Gavin Allen and Danny Walker were represented by [James Scobie QC](#) and [Kieran Vaughan QC](#) of the [Garden Court Chambers Crime Team](#).

Danny Walker was the central figure in the case due to his long-standing history of acrimony with associates of [Nana Oppong](#), who had by chance attended the same club. This history went back over a decade and had resulted in the separate kidnappings of both Walker and his mother over a £20,000 drug debt. The debt was never repaid, but Walker served lengthy prison sentences for drug dealing and two separate terms for the possession of loaded handguns. He was on licence for one of those firearms matters at the time of the murder allegation.

It was apparent from the CCTV, which formed a major part of the evidence in this four-week trial, that Walker had been targeted by the Oppong gang, of which the deceased was an associate. The Crown's case was that the two accused were already armed with the handguns they were seen carrying from the premises in the moments after the shooting. The Crown contended that the Oppong gang had infringed on the defendants' territory in the club and were attacked. Both defendants denied being armed prior to the group's arrival to the area where they were standing. In Walker's case, the Crown could point to a bulge in the area of his waistband as being clear evidence he was already armed. In addition, they could point to the dancing of one of Walker's associates, who seemed to be indicating the presence of a gun in the area of his waistband. Walker stated that the bulge was from drugs he was dealing that night, whilst the dancer could be seen to dance in a similar way from footage retrieved from YouTube at previous raves. Walker contended he was shot by the deceased in his leg before grappling with the gunman, whereupon a further shot was fired. The gun was wrestled from the hand of the deceased and he fled the club followed by Allen, who had assisted him by seemingly shooting the attacker in defence of Walker.

Allen, who barely knew Walker, can be seen holding a gun whilst fleeing the scene of the shooting. Both men leave the area in the same vehicle. Allen confirmed that Walker had been shot but claimed that a gun had fallen from the two grappling men, which he picked up and discharged five times in the body of the deceased in defence of Walker. Allen fled the country the following day and went to Jamaica until his extradition in December 2014. Walker was on the run for two weeks before his arrest. He gave a no comment interview and showed no signs of having been shot, either by verbally mentioning the injury or it being noticed by the investigating authorities. Whether Walker was shot or not became one of the features of the trial. The Crown could point to the absence of a seventh bullet found in the premises. Six bullets (a single 44 and five of a 36 calibre) could be accounted for. The deceased had been shot six times by two separate guns. There was no seventh bullet. Walker later revealed to the prosecuting authorities that he had been shot that night at the club. There was considerable evidence from experts on this issue which centred on pathology radiology and ballistics. The defendant opted for an MRI scan which revealed a through-and-through gunshot wound to his right leg. However, the radiologist suggested the wound was older than the night of the shooting though could not exclude the night of the shooting. Equally, the pathologist could not rule out the defendant suffering such an injury, being able to run from the scene and self-treat without proper medical intervention.

Both defendants gave evidence. Walker was able to contact a student nurse, who had been telephoned by one of his associates in the aftermath of the shooting to seek assistance for the wound to his leg. Walker and this woman did not know each other and did not meet. Her advice had been given over the telephone. She was traced by looking at the raw data in one of the unused phone schedules and proved to be a key witness.

Both Walker and Allen were acquitted of the murder of Hassan Isman at the Old Bailey. The jury were out for just over seven hours.

This case was reported by the [BBC](#).