

Richard Vardon

Year of Call: 1985



Richard Vardon has practised in criminal law for over 30 years. He has amassed considerable experience and expertise defending cases of a significant nature in the Crown Court and Court of Appeal and occasionally appearing before professional disciplinary tribunals.

Richard is regularly instructed in cases of terrorism, homicide, fatal road traffic accidents, fraud (including VAT carousel fraud), serious sexual offences (including historic allegations) and large scale drug importation/supply cases linked to organised crime.

The focus of Richard's practice is defence. 2018 saw him lead for the defence in a 6 week terrorist trial at the Old Bailey, in three murder cases and being led in two further high profile murder cases in Manchester.

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Education

University: Birmingham University
School of Law: Council of Legal Education
Qualifications: LL.B

Notable Cases

Richard Vardon led by Siobhan Grey KC were successful in the Privy Council in overturning a murder conviction from 2004.

The prosecution will not be seeking a retrial, and the appellant has been released from prison after serving 20 years of a life sentence. They worked together with Talibah Byron, Attorney of Byron Law in St Kitts, The Death Penalty Project and Saul Lehrfreund MBE & Killian Moran Simons Muirhead Burton LLP. Details of the case can be found on The Privy Council.

DEFENCE

R v FLOYD (GIBSON, KASRATI, DESILVA, OWEN, CLARKE) [January 2020 - Birmingham Crown Court]

- One of the largest Class A drugs importation cases prosecuted in the UK involving drugs concealed in ambulances. Counsel acted in the contested POCA proceedings in which the prosecution originally contended for a benefit figure of £2.6 million which they varied to £1.9 million. They sought to recover such amount in part from the sale of a house. The case raised difficult legal issues relating to "assumptions", tainted gifts, equitable interests in property but most importantly how the benefit figure should be assessed in a case of this nature. The

judge ruled that the benefit figure was £4,500 and confiscation was ordered in such amount.
R v ANTHONY MERCHANT [December 2019] Preston Crown Court

- Defence counsel in an attempted murder trial at Preston Crown Court in which the Prosecution alleged that the Defendant was one of two masked men who had broken into the victim`s flat and stabbed him repeatedly causing very serious life threatening injuries. The Defendant claimed the victim had deliberately mis-identified him as a result of past hostility and that the real culprits were involved with the victim in drug dealing. The case raised difficult disclosure issues relating to material held by the Prosecution which proved to be of huge evidential significance when correlated with key events in the evidence.

R v LEE TIERNEY (& 15 OTHERS) : OPERATION BLUSH [December 2019] Liverpool Crown Court

- Defence counsel for an alleged principal offender involved in multi - handed conspiracies to possess firearms with intent to endanger life and supply drugs .Those conspiracies took place against the backdrop of a number of serious incidents of violence in which firearms including an Uzi sub-machine gun and a Beretta were used to devastating effect as part of an ongoing gang dispute.The extensive high profile investigation generated a voluminous amount of material which included disputed forensic and cell site evidence - {Liverpool Echo}

R v ZAMAN ALI (& OTHERS) [June 2019] Manchester Crown Court

- Representing one of four defendants in a case involved two arson attacks at night in which the front windows of each property was broken and petrol used to set the fire alight. The first attack, at the home of a lady and her two young children caused substantial damage. The second was at the home of an elderly couple in which the female occupant sustained life threatening burn injuries and was left with extensive scarring following numerous operations. An extensive police investigation using CCTV, ANPR and mobile phone evidence including cell-siting identified those involved in the attacks.

R v V [March 2019] Court of Appeal

- Defendant was a 16 year old who pleaded guilty to two offences of robbery as part of a joint enterprise to rob involving three others. One of the victims sustained life threatening injuries from a co - accused who used a knife, about which the others were ignorant. Leave to Appeal was initially refused. The Lord Chief Justice gave leave to appeal and reserved the case to himself, eventually reducing the sentences imposed by 30%.

R v JENNIFER STOTT [February 2019] Manchester Crown Court

- Representing a middle aged prison officer and mother of two, pleading guilty to smuggling contraband (drugs, alcohol, mobile phones, USB chargers and SIM cards) into HMP Forest Bank over a 6 month period in return for payment, having been manipulated by criminals inside the jail.

R v FLOYD (GIBSON, KASRATI, DESILVA, OWEN, CLARKE) [November 2018] Court of Appeal

- One of the largest Class A drugs importation cases prosecuted in the UK involving drugs concealed in ambulances. Leave to appeal the sentence was refused by the single judge. Counsel, acting pro bono renewed his application before the full Court of Appeal [November 2018] who reduced the sentenced originally imposed.

R v DAVID PAWLUK [October 2018] Minshull Street Crown Court

- Leading counsel for the defence in the murder by a husband of his wife. Difficult legal issues relating to a loss of control defence, in circumstances where the defendant had limited recollection of the event. - {Daily Mail}

R v JACK COSTELLO [August 2018] Preston Crown Court

- Defence counsel in high profile well publicised murder trial involving a violent incident in a Darwen

nightclub in which a 23 year old man died from a neck wound caused by the impact from a glass.

R v PARMINDER BAGRI [August 2018] Birmingham Crown Court

- Death by Dangerous Driving and Perverting the Course of Justice. Defending a driver who hit and killed an elderly man in Coventry, fled the scene and falsely claimed to the police that his car was damaged by an object being thrown at his car. - {Coventry Telegraph}

R v BENJAMIN HEAVYSIDE [August 2018] Court of Appeal

- Defence appeal involving the interpretation and application of the Powers of Criminal Courts (Sentencing) Act 2000 provisions as to the "three strikes" mandatory minimum sentencing provisions.

R v MATTHEW HANKINSON & OTHERS [July 2018] Central Criminal Court, London

- Lead counsel for the defence in a terrorist trial in which it was alleged the Defendant was a leading member of a proscribed organisation which was behind a plot to kill a serving MP & police officer.

R v BARBARA COOMBES [July 2018] Liverpool Crown Court

- Defending a 63 year old woman who killed her father and buried his body in her garden. She went on to dishonestly claim £190,000 in carers allowance together with her late father's pension. The Prosecution were eventually persuaded to accept a guilty plea to manslaughter on the grounds of diminished responsibility based on post-traumatic stress disorder & severe depressive illness developed as a consequence of significant abuse over a long period of time. She was sentenced to 9 years imprisonment. Mr Justice King indicated that had she been convicted of murder he would have imposed life with a 20 years determinate element.

R v SCOTT ATKINSON [June 2018] Court of Appeal

- Defence appeal involving the interpretation and application of the "dangerousness" sentencing provisions.

R v PHILIP BULL [November 2017] Manchester Crown Court

- Defending a 90 year old man who pleaded guilty to Causing Death by Dangerous Driving. Mr Bull 'unintentionally' killed a couple with his car in the car park at Withington Hospital when he pressed the accelerator when he meant to apply the brake. Sentencing Mr Bull to a two year suspended sentence, Judge Martin Walsh described it as a "genuine, but catastrophic mistake."

R v CORDELL AUSTIN & OTHERS [August 2017] Manchester Crown Court

- Representing one of 13 Defendants tried for the murder of Abdulwahab Hafidah in Moss Side, Manchester. The Prosecution alleged the Defendant was a ringleader in the joint enterprise to kill or do really serious injury to the deceased who they claimed was a member of the "Rusholme Crips" gang and had strayed onto another gang's ("Active Only") territory before being chased through the streets and attacked with knives and hammers. Legal issues relating to joint enterprise in the light of R v Jogee and admissibility of evidence relating to gang membership.

R v FLOYD (GIBSON, KASRATI, DESILVA, OWEN, CLARKE) [July 2016] Birmingham Crown Court - {BBC News} {Sky News} {Daily Telegraph}

- One of the largest Class A drugs importation cases prosecuted in the UK involving drugs concealed in ambulances. Sentencing to a total of 94 years at Birmingham Crown Court, Judge Francis Laird said: "This was a highly sophisticated, meticulously planned and well-executed conspiracy involving the importation of Class A drugs on a truly colossal scale."

R v AHMED (& BOKANGA, MIAH, ALOM, UDDIN, AZIZ) [April 2016] Leeds Crown Court - {Yorkshire Evening Post}

- Representing one of six fraudsters who conned 97 elderly victims out of £200,000 by posing as police officers. The six men were jailed for a total of 41 years. The court heard how they targeted victims aged in their seventies, eighties and nineties. Judge Rodney Jameson, QC, said: "These were merciless offences and on occasion gratuitously cruel. I am entirely satisfied that the lives of some of the victims have been

permanent affected, in some cases severely. I have no doubt that some of these have hastened death.”

R v SEAN STOCKTON [2014] Bolton Crown Court – {The Bolton News}

R v ARMER [2012] Carlisle Crown Court – {The Mail Online}

– Led by Raymond Wigglesworth QC. Representing spurned admirer who killed woman by setting her alight with white spirit.

R v McBLAIN [2012] EWCA Crim 1416 – CA (Crim Div) (Davis LJ, Treacy J, Judge Peter Collier QC (Recorder of Leeds) – {The Telegraph Online}

– Successful reduction in the sentence of a heroin addict awarded compensation for being denied methadone in prison, who had used the award to purchase drugs upon his release.

R v URSULA NEVIN [2011] Manchester Crown Court – {BBC News}

– The first successful appeal against a sentence imposed following the Manchester Riots in 2011.

R v MARIO SIMPSON [2011] Manchester Crown Court – {Manchester Evening News Online}

R v ADEBAYO OYEBANJI [2011] Manchester Crown Court – {Manchester Evening News Online}

– Defendant cleared of killing reveller in club brawl with broken bottle.

R v IAN GLOVER [2011] Carlisle Crown Court – {Whitehaven News}

R v CHRISTOPHER NEWTON [2010] Preston Crown Court – {North-West Evening Mail}

R v MATTHEW SWIFT & ANOTHER [2009] Manchester Crown Court – {BBC News} {Daily Mirror Online}

– Successful acquittal of one of the two defendants accused of planning to bomb Manchester mall and school in tribute to the ‘Columbine massacre’.

R v C [2009] EWCA Crim 2231 – CA (Crim Div) (Hooper LJ, Keith J, Underhill J)

R v MARK HEENEY – AG’S REF (NO.26 OF 2009) sub nom – [2009] EWCA Crim 1393 – CA (Crim Div) (Hallett LJ, Maddison J, Hickinbottom J)

DPP v HOWARD [2008] EWHC 608 (Admin) – DC (Moses LJ, Sullivan J)

R v PARKIN : R v IRWIN [2004] EWCA Crim 2975 – CA (Crim Div) (Maurice Kay LJ, McCombe J, David Clarke J)

R v L [2000] – CA (Crim Div) (Swinton Thomas LJ, Sachs J, Sir Ronald Waterhouse)

R v MICHAEL PAUL FRYER – AG’S REFERENCE (NO.2 OF 1999) sub nom – [1999] CA (Beldam LJ, Butterfield J, Gray J)

R v V Defendant was a 16 year old who pleaded guilty to two offences of robbery as part of a joint enterprise to rob involving three others. One of the victims sustained life threatening injuries from a co – accused who used a knife ,about which the others were ignorant with “devastating effect”. Leave to Appeal was initially refused. Counsel appeared on a pro bono basis. The Lord Chief Justice gave leave to appeal and reserved the case to himself eventually reducing the sentences imposed by 30% having heard legal submissions in relation to Jogee and the application of the relevant Sentencing Guidelines.

PROSECUTION

R v (1) MOHAMMED SHABAZ SARWAR (2) LEANNE BRYAN [2013] EWCA Crim 83 – CA (Crim Div) (Hughes LJ, Wyn Williams J, Hickinbottom J) 08/02/2013

R v AZAD & AZAD [2011] Manchester Crown Court – {Daily Mail Online}

– Prosecution of father and brother for threatening to kill Harry Potter actress daughter for relationship with Hindu man.

R v JOSEPH BARTON [2008] Minshull Street Crown Court – {Daily Mail Online}

– Prosecution of Premier League Footballer for training ground assault on team mate.

R v MW [2008] EWCA Crim 3091 – CA (Crim Div) (Sir Anthony May (President QB), Simon J, Blake J)

R v RAUL NISSAR [2008] EWCA Crim 3016 – CA (Crim Div) (Sir Anthony May (President QB), Simon J, Dame Heather Steel DBE)

R v ROBERT RIMMER [2007] Manchester Crown Court – {Manchester Evening News}

R v ANTONY ALBERT WEIR & 5 OTHERS [2005] EWCA Crim 2866 – CA (Crim Div) (Kennedy LJ, Bell J, Dobbs J)

R v JAMES LEE COLEMAN [2001] – CA (Crim Div) (Henry LJ, Steel J, Judge Rivlin QC)

OTHER NOTABLE CASES

ARIJIT BOSE v GENERAL MEDICAL COUNCIL [2003] UKPC 52 – Privy Council (Lord Hutton, Sir Anthony Evans, Sir Philip Otton)

