



Nick Robinson

Year of Call: 2006

Email Address: nick.robinson@3pb.co.uk

Secure Email: nick.robinson@3pb.co.uk.cjsm.net

Telephone: 01202 292 102

Drugs Offences

Nick is regularly instructed in the most serious drug cases, from county lines conspiracies to multi-tonne international importations prosecuted by the NCA and SEROCU. His practice encompasses covert surveillance operations, EncroChat prosecutions, cross-border investigations, modern slavery defences, and multi-defendant conspiracies requiring meticulous analysis of voluminous material. He has a proven record of exposing disclosure failings and prosecutorial misconduct – and of drafting defence statements so effective that prosecutions have collapsed before trial.

Selected Cases

R v RH – (2025) Multi-defendant drug conspiracy (Class A and B). The defendant was extradited from South Africa after 12 years abroad, with co-defendants already convicted and serving up to 10 years. Nick identified that the police had misrepresented the charges to the South African courts. Following service of defence statement the prosecution offered no evidence on the Class A cocaine conspiracy. Bail obtained against strong prosecution objection. Agreed basis of plea limited the defendant's role on the Class B count to a single day; following a Goodyear indication, a suspended sentence was imposed.

R v AD and Others – (2024) Conspiracy to supply Class A drugs – the defendant was alleged to be the head of an OCG operating between London and the south coast. He denied involvement and contended he had been set up by informants; the alleged "kingpin phone" had been planted in his car. Eighteen-month covert surveillance operation; cell site and radio frequency evidence; expert DNA evidence on drugs and a cocaine press; telephone schedules; police intelligence. DNA evidence excluded pre-trial. Cross-examination of over a dozen covert surveillance officers exposed disclosure failings; section 8 disclosure applications and a PII application mid-trial. Jury discharged on day 11. Abuse of process argument followed. Prosecution offered no evidence after a case review; formal not guilty verdicts by judicial direction. Nick led [David Jenkins](#) of 3PB Barristers.

R v CL – Oxford Crown Court (2023) Possession with intent to supply 1kg of high-purity cocaine (estimated street value exceeding £100,000) and acquiring criminal property. Scottish and Oxfordshire officers stopped the defendant's Mercedes travelling from Hamilton, Scotland to Bournemouth; the cocaine was concealed in a stage light stored among his equipment as a singer and magician. The defendant maintained he had agreed to transport something he suspected was contraband cigarettes for an acquaintance and knew nothing about the drugs. Good character evidence called from a church minister and former Scottish Football Association referee; full good character direction secured; adverse inference from partial no-comment interview successfully resisted. Unanimous not guilty verdict after approximately seven hours' deliberation; costs awarded. *Reported:* [Oxford Mail](#), [Telegraph](#) and [Scottish Sun](#).

R v EA – (2023) Possession with intent to supply cannabis and four counts of possessing offensive weapons (baseball bats). Drugs and weapons found in the boot of a vehicle. Modern slavery defence on the drugs count. Successful application to adduce bad character evidence of the defendant's handler – a drug dealer and member of an organised crime group – including evidence of threats and violence against the defendant and his parents. Unanimous not guilty on two weapons

counts; non-custodial sentence on the remaining two. Hung jury on the drugs charge; the judge observed no realistic prospect of conviction. Prosecution offered no evidence on retrial. Acquitted.

R v RG and Others – Harrow Crown Court (2023) Conspiracy to supply Class A drugs (56kg cocaine). Defendants were Albanian nationals. Nick acted for the principal defendant. Following consideration of extensive disclosure, the defendant pleaded guilty on a basis, and was sentenced to nine years' imprisonment – significantly below the prescribed starting point in excess of twenty years for quantities far exceeding the Category 1 threshold of 5kg. The Solicitor General referred the sentence as unduly lenient. Nick's submissions in the Court of Appeal limited the increase to just four-and-a-half years (total thirteen-and-a-half years). *Reported: [2023] EWCA Crim 1634.*

R v ED and Others (Operation Whale) –Southampton Crown Court (2023) Conspiracy to import 2.1 tonnes of cocaine (estimated street value £180 million) into Southampton docks – Operation Whale, a joint investigation by SEROCU and the NCA. Police intercepted the motor vessel KAHU in international waters after it had travelled from the Caribbean. The defendant was captain of a motor yacht, Bubble E, intercepted and found to contain hides; the prosecution case was that the defendant and two co-accused were to collect the cocaine offshore. Extensive disclosure spanning Ecuador, St Petersburg, Dubai, and the Caribbean. The prosecution sought a sentence in excess of 20 years; 15 years' imprisonment secured. *Reported: Portsmouth News, Hertfordshire Mercury, Southern Daily Echo, Yahoo, Surrey Live.*

R v WT – (2022) Five counts of concerned in supply of heroin, crack cocaine, cannabis, and cocaine. Drug-dealing messages attributable to another person; no forensic link to a weapon. Crown offered no evidence on four counts; suspended sentence on the lesser remaining count.

R v WG – (2018–19) Seven counts including Supply of Class A (0.5kg cocaine) and Class B (1kg cannabis) drugs, and Possessing Criminal Property (£8,500 cash). Over 127,000 pages of prosecution evidence including raw phone data across four discs. Meticulous preparatory work with the client and a comprehensive defence case statement identified eighteen grounds for suspecting that the co-defendant and an uncharged third party – at whose address and vehicle the cocaine and cannabis were seized – had conspired with police to implicate the defendant, including that the officer in the case had been observed in private conversation with the co-defendant outside court. Disclosure requests forced the Crown to serve the raw telephone data as evidence. Following service of the defence statement, the prosecution offered no evidence on all counts. Not guilty by judicial direction.

R v MHS and Others – (2018) Conspiracy to blackmail arising from an eleven-defendant organized crime group (Operation Firebug). Co-defendant pleaded guilty. Defendant allegedly committed offence immediately following his release from prison following an unrelated Blackmail conviction. Cross-examination of the protected complainant – himself a large-scale drug dealer never prosecuted – established fundamental contradictions in his account. Unanimous not guilty verdict after seven days.

R v DL – (2017) Conspiracy to supply 10kg of heroin and money laundering. Following legal argument the Crown accepted pleas to lesser offences and the defendant received a community order.

R v LT – (2016) Possession of cannabis. Novel defence of lawful possession (s.7(1) MDA 1971) – bar manager conveying a patron's cannabis to police. Unanimous not guilty; costs awarded.

R v KS – (2015) Importation of a controlled drug – 2kg of pure opium concealed in a hollowed-out compartment within a chessboard, intercepted by Border Force at Heathrow en route from Istanbul to the defendant's business premises. NCA investigation. The prosecution relied upon a similar chessboard found at the defendant's home and postal and flight records demonstrating strong links to Istanbul. The issue was whether the defendant was responsible for the package and its contents. Acquitted after trial.

R v NN – (2014) Possession with intent to supply. Prosecution alleged that the defendant threw away 71 wraps of heroin and cocaine when he was approached by two police officers for a stop and search. Defendant denied this and said that the drugs were nothing to do with him and he had been "set up" by the police. Unanimous not guilty.

R v TA – (2013) Possession with Intent to Supply a Class A drug. Defendant was searched as he entered a nightclub to celebrate New Year's Eve. A small bag containing 40 Ecstasy tablets was found tied to the drawstring of his trousers seemingly concealed between his legs. His defence at trial was that they were nothing to do with him and in a rush he had put on

trousers belonging to someone else and he was unaware that the drugs were concealed within the clothing. Acquitted.

R v AT – (2013) Six-handed conspiracy to import cocaine – Operation Fabula. A three-year covert joint investigation by Devon and Cornwall Police, Dorset Police, and HMRC. Customs officers at Portsmouth seized 10kg of cocaine from a car arriving from Bilbao, Spain, concealed in fuel tanks. The 14-week trial at Bournemouth Crown Court was reportedly the first to feature an extradition of a co-defendant from Brazil. *Reported:* [BBC News](#).

Recommendations

Court of Appeal

In an appeal against sentence R v Sherriff [2012] EWCA Crim 2381 Lord Justice Aikens said:

"Mr Robinson presented the arguments very concisely, clearly and persuasively".

In an appeal against sentence R v Kluver [2010] EWCA Crim 3237 Lord Justice Moses said:

"There is ample authority for the proposition that counsel for the defence has so skilfully identified both in his written grounds and in his oral submissions and we are indebted to Mr Robinson for them".

In an appeal against sentence R v Bennett [2010] EWCA Crim 1032 Mr Justice Davis said:

"Mr Robinson, on behalf of the Appellant, has put the case very well".

In an appeal against sentence R v Woodcock [2011] EWCA Crim 1347 Mr Justice Blair said:

"Mr Robinson has argued the case well for the applicant."

Chambers and Partners Legal Directory

Nicholas Robinson exclusively defends in heavyweight and high-profile criminal cases. He acts in a variety of cases including murder, sexual offences and crimes against children as well as mortgage fraud and armed robbery. He also handles appeals against conviction from the Court of Appeal in Jamaica to the Privy Council.

Strengths: "He has a great practice. "He is a smooth advocate who has a great way of speaking to the jury."

Chambers UK 2025/Crime/Western Bar

Strengths: "He has a very client-centred approach." "His advocacy skills are impressive." "Nick is an industrious individual."

Chambers UK 2024/Crime/Western Bar

Strengths: "He is highly effective and highly skilled in all aspects of criminal defence work."

"Clients love Nicholas. He's a very good lawyer and a persuasive advocate."

"Nicholas handled the cross-examination deftly but devastatingly. His ability to juggle disclosure requests, client management and legal arguments is remarkable."

Chambers UK 2023/Crime/Western Bar

Recent work: Successfully represented a young defendant who was charged with an offence of wounding with intent.

Chambers UK 2022/Crime/Western Bar

Exclusively defends in heavyweight and high-profile criminal cases. Acts in a variety of cases including murder, sexual offences and crimes against children as well as mortgage fraud and armed robbery. He also handles appeals against conviction from the Court of Appeal in Jamaica to the Privy Council.

Strengths: "Has a very positive attitude and his written work is excellent." "He has an approach and flair which juries like."

Recent work: Represented a defendant charged with serious assaults with weapons and false imprisonment, in relation to two complainants.

Chambers UK 2021/Crime/Western Bar

Strengths: "He has a very good reputation and his written work is of the highest quality."

Recent work: Represented a defendant who was accused of being involved in a serious conspiracy to supply Class A drugs.

Chambers UK 2020/Crime/Western Bar

Successfully represented one of two Polish defendants charged with the gang rape of a prostitute.

Chambers UK 2019/Crime/Western Bar

Strengths: "He is both responsive and proactive, and his advocacy skills are fantastic."

Chambers UK 2019/Crime/Western Bar

Legal 500

'Nick is a committed, highly competent and effective criminal barrister. He is an effective trial advocate who gets good results, and his pleas in mitigation are always carefully constructed with great preparation.'

Legal 500 2025/ Crime (General and Fraud) - Western Circuit

'Nick is diligent and always enthusiastic about his work. His written work is of the highest quality. He is also a very persuasive and effective advocate.'

Legal 500 2024/ Crime (General and Fraud) - Western Circuit

'Nick is a top level operator. A first-class and fearless advocate with a very robust and incisive approach to criminal litigation. An exceptional strategist.'

Legal 500 2023 / Crime - Western Circuit

'Nick's strengths are his intelligence, his ability to fully engage with a jury and his thorough preparation.'

Legal 500 2022 / Crime - Western Circuit

'A criminal defence specialist'

Legal 500 2021 / Crime - Western Circuit

'A criminal defence specialist'

Legal 500 2020 / Crime - Western Circuit - Tier 1

'An expert in defending in serious crime cases.'

Legal 500 2018/19 / Crime - Western Circuit - Tier 1

'Self-assured and dedicated.'

Legal 500 2017 / Crime - Western Circuit

"Extremely diligent in his approach to cases."

Legal 500 2016 / Crime - Western Circuit

'Known for his defence work in the Crown Court, and his practice has an emphasis on serious crime.'

Legal 500 2015 / Crime - Western Circuit

'He specialises in sexual offence cases, particularly those involving children and historical allegations of misconduct.'

Legal 500 2014 / Crime - Western Circuit

'3PB's Nick Robinson is "a very confident and knowledgeable advocate".'

Legal 500 2013 / Crime - Western Circuit

Nick was also recommended by the Legal 500 directory for 2012 and 2011.

Judiciary, Instructing Solicitors, Lay Clients & Social Media Recommendations

Mr Recorder Don Tait said in open court following the acquittal of Nick's client Mr Reece Creighton:

"Mr Robinson you did an excellent job defending this man. You very skilfully revealed all of the inadequacies in this investigation ... I am sure Mr Creighton is very grateful."

Instructing Solicitor

"Truly grateful for your proactive case management, first class professionalism and dedication".

Instructing Solicitor

"This was a difficult case in one sense and your efforts and assistance went beyond the call of duty. I very much appreciate it".

Instructing Solicitor

"Please accept my heartfelt thanks and appreciation for all your incredible and excellent hard work on this firm's cases and for always doing over and above what is required in every matter that you deal with. Not only that, well done on all of your outstanding results and faultless client care!"

Instructing Solicitor

"Thank you Nick, I am very grateful for your assistance. Your professionalism and support is unbelievable".

Lay Client

In September and October 2017 at Bournemouth Crown Court Nick represented one of two defendants who faced an Indictment containing six counts. The trial lasted over two weeks and the defendants were found not guilty on all counts. Nick's client sent an email to the CEO Simon Astill where he provided, inter alia, the following appraisal:

"I write to you to express my sincere gratitude about a member of your Chambers Mr Robinson who defended me at trial ... The case required complete concentration and an eye for detail. This worried me as being on legal aid I thought I might not receive the same service as a client paying privately. This wasn't the case at all and in fact the complete opposite. Mr Robinson genuinely cared about his client and even spent time to reassure my co-defendant ... During the trial Mr Robinson's charisma was a breath of fresh air; he kept the Jury on their toes and concentrated throughout and also he was very calming during the breaks when tensions were high. Finally Mr Robinson's closing speech was mesmerising and got across every possible point I could think of and more. I knew after his speech there was no way I would be convicted. I feel in debt to this man and feel that the literature in my email doesn't allow me to explain my true gratitude."

Lay Client (defendant's mother)

"Thank you so much for all the hard work you put into F's case; I can't thank you enough Mr Robinson".

Lay Client

"Just wanted to express my thanks, for the confident, reassuring and supportive way that Mr Robinson has handled my case. At short notice he has been able to defend me to his confident best. His caring and clear way in which he dealt with me and my family and friends was top notch".

Lay Client (Direct Access)

"Nick - I'm eternally indebted to you and will never be able to thank you enough for today's outcome ... thank you from the bottom of my heart for all you have done for me. You've given me my life back".

Lay client's relatives (letters to instructing solicitor and Nick respectively)

"I would also like to say a specific thank you for bringing Nicholas Robinson in as L's barrister. L felt very comfortable talking to Nick, and Nick, in turn, put L at ease. The relationship barristers have with their client, the trust and confidence in the barrister's ability is paramount, and we certainly had that with Nick. I think it also proved that a barristers relationship with his counterparts on the other side is also important and in our case this definitely proved to be significant".

"I just wanted to repeat our thanks for your sterling work in L's defence".

Social Media

"You can't beat Nick Robinson when it comes to mitigating circumstances".

Social Media

“You can always rely on Nick Robinson to come up with something original when it comes to mitigating circumstances”.

Academic qualifications

- BA Criminology & Sociology, The University of Liverpool (First Class Honours)
- Postgraduate Diploma in Law, Manchester Metropolitan University
- Bar Vocational Course, BPP London

Professional qualifications & appointments

- Called to the Bar: 2006.
- Chambers & Partners – Leading Junior: 2019–2026 (Crime – Western Bar).
- Legal 500 – Leading Junior: 2011–2026 (Crime – Western Circuit).
- BSB Direct Access Accreditation – Authorised to accept instructions directly from members of the public.
- BSB Accredited Litigator – Authorised to conduct litigation and to instruct counsel, expert witnesses, and investigators.
- Independent Jamaica Council for Human Rights.

Professional bodies

- Bar Pro Bono Unit
- Criminal Bar Association
- Western Circuit