Nicholas Cotter

Year of Call: 1999
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Crime and Regulatory Crime

Nicholas has extensive experience of criminal law, including:

- Serious crime consisting of murder, manslaughter, drugs importation, organised crime and sexual offences
- White-collar crime consisting of fraud, MTIC matters, Bribery, compliance advice, and asset recovery matters
- Regulatory / Quasi-Criminal matters involving particularly sports law, disciplinary hearings, maritime and food standards matters.

Recent cases:

Serious crime

- **R v X** - Instructed Prosecuting Counsel in an ongoing matter involving a significant drug syndicate operating along the South Coast.
- **R v X** - Instructed Prosecuting Counsel in an ongoing matter involving kidnap and the infliction of serious violence.
- **R v X** - Instructed Defence Counsel in an ongoing matter involving a campaign of stranger rape.
- **R v X** - Instructed Defence Counsel in an ongoing matter involving a campaign of arsons across the County of Hampshire.
- **R v X** - Instructed Defence Counsel in ongoing large multi-handed drugs nationwide importation conspiracy.
- **R v X** - Instructed Defence Counsel in a multiple victim rape allegation at a music festival.
- **R v X** - Instructed Defence Junior Counsel in a multiple death dangerous driving case on the M3. www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-beds-bucks-herts-38001454
- **R v F** - Defence Junior in a 6 handed murder case at the Old Bailey resulting in an acquittal on the murder charge. http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-29849274
- **R v Parker et al** - Prosecution Junior in "Operation Elevdon" on behalf of the CPS Organised Crime Unit arising from press corruption discovered during the Leveson Inquiry. http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2014/nov/18/sun-labour-mpphone-siobhain-mcdonagh-nick-parker
- **R v B** - Defending at the Old Bailey in a historic rape case dated from the 1960s involving a teacher accused by seven former pupils of repeated and systematic sexual abuse.
- **R v X** - Defended in a case involving fraud and linked arson values in excess of £2million.
- **R v L** - Successfully overturned a conviction before Lord Chief Justice Fulford for alleged historic sexual matters in the 1970s. The appeal was in relation to the unsafe admission of a Defendants previous sexual conviction in the 1980s.
- **R v B** - Successful prosecution of a stranger rape case in which the Defendant received a 16 year sentence with an 8 year extension period.

- **R v X** - Successful defence at the Old Bailey of a young man implicated in a significant cocaine importation conspiracy. Involving legal argument over evidence procured from Columbia.

Financial crime / Asset Forfeiture & recovery / MTIC matters

- **R v H** - Instructed Junior Counsel for the in £140 million VAT 'Missing trader' fraud (MTIC), Croydon (VHCC PANEL).
- **R v P** - Instructed Defence Counsel in relation to an alleged £65,000 false accounting matter, Portsmouth. http://www.portsmouth.co.uk/news/local/benefit-cheats-stole-66-000-from-hampshire-councils-in-eight-year-scam-1-4130546
- **R v P** - Instructed Defence Counsel in an internet Conspiracy to defraud, Isleworth. This matter involved an alleged Nigerian internet cash scam targeted at very elderly people.
- **R v X** - Instructed Defence Counsel in significant hidden assets POCA matter involving six figure sums.
- **R v X** - Instructed Counsel in multimillion pound POCA matter, Portsmouth. This fully contested matter concerned a convicted loan shark.

Violence/Organised crime

- **R v B** - Instructed Defence Counsel for a 13 year old boy charged with manslaughter and robbery, Old Bailey. http://www.guardian-se-ries.co.uk/news/9871168.WALTHAMSTOW__Two_teenagers_guilty_of_killing_student/
- **R v M** - Instructed counsel in the large 'gang' gun seizure in South London.
- **R v K** - Instructed Defence Counsel in drug importation case, Canterbury. This case involved a group of Latvian males who were charged with smuggling drugs hidden within the engine of a vehicle.
- **R v X** - Instructed Defence Counsel in a large conspiracy to kidnap matter. This matter involved a Lithuanian gang who were alleged to be involved in the extortion, violence and kidnap of low-skilled immigrant workers.
- **R v S** - Instructed Counsel in an arson with intent to endanger life. http://www.peterboroughtoday.co.uk/news/local/court-arson-attack-toget-friend-a-new-house-1-3621216
- **R v B** - Instructed Defence Counsel in murder trial, Winchester. http://www.portsmouth.co.uk/news/local/the-men-who-killed-brettcarpenter-lee-bevan-1-1232623
- **R v B** - Instructed Defence Counsel in attempt murder s18, Woolwich. This matter concerned a male from Romania who was observed on CCTV planting a carving knife into the neck of a male and concerned issues of mental health and intention.
- **R v E** - Instructed Defence Counsel in large scale violent disorder, Woolwich. This matter involved a large pre-arranged gang fight the case demanded detailed disclosure matters and sensitive part eight applications.
- **R v S** - Instructed Defence Counsel in organised high value jewellery robbery, Chichester. This matter concerned a highly organised gang from Liverpool who as a team committed a daylight robbery on the shop before undertaking a high-speed getaway from the police.
- **R v S** - Instructed Defence Counsel in an attempt murder in Cambridge.
- **R v Y** - Currently instructed Defence Counsel in a gang kidnap, extortion and torture case in South London.
- **R v Aylett** - Instructed Defence Counsel in road rage violence, Court of Appeal, reported. This matter concerned an appeal of sentence passed in relation to the actions of a male involved in road rage.
- **R v C** - Instructed to represent the defence in a highly reported case involving the defence of a lorry driver accused of causing the death of an elderly lady at a crossing within the grounds of Luton airport. http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-beds-bucks-herts-11390936

Fraud, Business and Financial crime

(including VAT and MTIC), Compliance advice, and Proceeds of crime)

Recent cases include :

- **R x X –** Currently instructed Defence Counsel in significant company VAT fraud and linked POCA.
- **R x X** - Instructed Defence Counsel in six figure POCA matter linked to illegal use of farm land for unlicensed activity.
- **R v X** - Instructed Defence Counsel representing Dutch nationals being pursed in a six figure POCA matter (life style).
- **R v X** - Instructed Junior Counsel for the in £140 million VAT `Missing trader' fraud (MTIC), Croydon (VHCC PANEL).
- **R v X** - Instructed Defence Counsel in relation to an alleged £65,000 false accounting matter, Portsmouth. http://www.portsmouth.co.uk/news/local/benefit-cheats-stole-66-000-from-hampshire-councils-in-eight-year-scam-1-4130546
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- **R v X** - Instructed Counsel in multimillion pound POCA matter, Portsmouth. This fully contested matter concerned a convicted loan shark.

Recommendations

Nicholas Cotter of 3PB Barristers regularly defends professionals, particularly in the healthcare and sports regulatory sectors.
Strengths: "Aside from being one of the most pleasant barristers to work with, he is also an incredibly experienced and highly thought of regulatory specialist. Clients always take to his kind but clear advice."
"Nick is a calm and skilful advocate in court and commercially minded with clients. He is first choice for regulatory cases, having built an excellent practice over many years."
"I do not have a bad word to say about Nick. He emits calm assurance, and his clients really appreciate his demeanour and attitude."
"Nick is a calm and skilful advocate in court and commercially minded with clients. He is first choice for regulatory cases, having built an excellent practice over many years."
"Aside from being one of the most pleasant barristers to work with, he is also an incredibly experienced and highly thought of regulatory specialist. Clients always take to his kind but clear advice."
Chambers UK 2025/Professional Discipline/Western Bar

Nicholas Cotter of 3PB Barristers has notable experience representing private individuals as well as companies in complex health and safety cases. He regularly handles cases arising from a wide spectrum of incidents.
Strengths: "Nicholas has a very empathetic and gentle but effective style. He is without doubt a leading junior."
"Nicholas Cotter is a safe pair of hands and is good with the client."
Chambers UK 2025/Health and Safety/Western Bar/Band 1

Nicholas Cotter has a general criminal and regulatory practice, with an emphasis on the Western Circuit and London. He has a track record of acting both for the prosecution and for the defence in cases involving fraud, organised crime, serious sexual offences and murder. His expertise also includes regulatory law, with particular experience handling environmental law and health and safety matters.
Strengths: "He is very smooth and suave and judges and juries love him. He knows exactly what to do and how to present his case."
"Nicholas is regularly instructed due to the high standards he brings to every case. He has the ability to forensically analyse a case and advise on the strategy, which is invaluable."
Chambers UK 2025/Crime/Western Bar

Strengths: "Nicholas has a very smooth advocacy style and the jury pay close attention. He is also excellent at putting clients at ease when they are at their most anxious."
"Nicholas invests lots of time in the client's interests and is also very skilled in the courtroom."
"Nicholas is a class act who has a really good relationship with clients."
Chambers UK 2024/Crime/Western Bar

Nicholas Cotter has notable experience of representing private individuals as well as companies in complex health and safety

cases. He regularly handles cases arising from a wide spectrum of incidents.
Strengths: "Nicholas is experienced in this field and he's very highly regarded."
"He also goes above and beyond and has meetings with clients to reassure them."
"He's a real specialist in the area."
Chambers UK 2024/Health and Safety/Western Bar/Band 1

Strengths: "His judgement is impeccable."
"Nicholas is very pragmatic and very strategic."
Chambers UK 2023/Crime/Western Bar

Strengths: "Nicholas is a really excellent barrister. He is very pragmatic and very strategic."
"He has a wonderful way with clients."
Chambers UK 2023/Health and Safety/Western Bar/Band 1

Strengths: "He is calm in court and instils confidence in his client from the outset." "He puts his clients at ease and explains things to them in a language that they understand."
Recent work: Defended a man accused of seeking to steal the Magna Carta from Salisbury Cathedral.
Chambers UK 2022/Crime/Western Bar

Strengths: "He instils confidence in his clients and is very responsive. He is also strategic and calm in front of judges." "Very charming and knowledgeable."
Recent work: Represented the director of a demolition firm in a fatal accident case concerning the death of a construction worker during the demolition of a building.
Chambers UK 2022/Health and Safety/Western Bar

Strengths: "Always well prepared and very analytical."
Recent work: Defended a man charged with killing his father through blunt force trauma, whilst under the influence of butane gas.
Chambers UK 2021/Crime/Western Bar

Strengths: "He is very approachable and excellent with clients."
Recent work: Acted for the prosecution in Operation Red Squirrel, a multi-handed case concerning a large drug dealing network across the south coast of England.
Chambers UK 2020/Crime/Western Bar

"A very client-friendly and expert criminal counsel."
Recent work: Defended one of the defendants charged with the aggravated burglary of a Hatton Garden jeweller.
Chambers UK 2019/Crime/Western Bar

Strengths: "He has a terrific brain, a formidable work ethic, an unflappable demeanour and his tactical awareness can make the difference in a tricky case."
Chambers UK 2018/Crime/Western Bar

'Has a general criminal and regulatory practice, and is active on both the Western and South Eastern Circuits. He has a track record of acting in cases involving fraud, organised crime and serious sexual offences.'
Strengths: "Completely unflappable, he has an extremely good temperament in court. Destined for great things." "A very capable advocate."'
Chambers UK 2017/Crime/Western Bar

'Nick has excellent attention to detail and instantly puts the client at ease. He is an exceptional lawyer, terrific with clients and immensely strategic.'
Legal 500 2025/Professional Disciplinary Law/Western Circuit - Ranked Tier 1

Nicholas Cotter is 'an exceptional lawyer, immensely strategic and terrific with clients', and recently acted for the director of

a call centre charged with an advance-fee fraud concerning PPI claims; this defendant was convicted but avoided an immediate custodial sentence.
'Nicholas is an accomplished, experienced and skilful barrister. He has a fine eye for the essence of a case.'
Legal 500 2025/Crime (General and Fraud)/Western Circuit/Leading Junior

'Nick is an extremely knowledgeable barrister with a wealth of experience. He provides strategic and focused advice and has an assured and calm presence. His advocacy skills are excellent, and his client manner is impeccable.'
Legal 500 2025/Business and Regulatory Crime (Including Health and Safety)/Western Circuit - Ranked Tier 1

Nicholas Cotter 'is an excellent advocate' who 'quickly commands the respect of the court'. He has a strong presence on the Western Circuit in this area and recently defended a company and director against a charge of corporate manslaughter following two workplace fatalities.
'Nick is a real heavyweight junior with a keen sense for a sound strategy. He has a calm, responsive and pragmatic approach and an excellent manner with judge and jury alike in the heat of courtroom proceedings.'
Legal 500 2024/Business and Regulatory Crime (Including Health and Safety)/Western Circuit - Ranked Tier 1

'Nick is a real heavyweight junior; a hugely experienced lawyer with a keen sense for a sound strategy. His calm, responsive and pragmatic approach and his excellent manner with judge and jury alike in the heat of courtroom proceedings is very valuable.'
Legal 500 2024/Professional Disciplinary Law/Western Circuit - Ranked Tier 1

Nicholas Cotter is a 'thoughtful advocate' with 'a ruthless legal mind'.
'Nick is a consummate advocate who combines clarity and brevity in a very attractive style. It is only a matter of time before he attains silk status.'
Legal 500 2024/Crime (General and Fraud)/Western Circuit/Leading Junior - Tier 1

Nicholas Cotter is 'very calm under pressure and conveys an air of authority which clients find very reassuring in circumstances when they are in crisis. He is extremely knowledgeable in matters of health and safety'.
'Nicholas is an exceptional advocate and a superb tactician. He immediately puts clients at ease with his calm manner and quickly gets to grips with the key issues in large and complex cases.'
Legal 500 2023/Business and Regulatory Crime (Including Health and Safety)/Western Circuit - Ranked Tier 1

'Nicholas is a very articulate and personable barrister and an exceptional advocate. He puts clients immediately at ease with his calm manner and quickly gets to grips with the key issues in large and complex cases.'
Legal 500 2023/Professional Disciplinary Law/Western Circuit - Ranked Tier 1

'A highly polished advocate with a first-class legal brain. He always inspires clients' confidence.'
Nicholas Cotter is 'a terrific lawyer who is able to display sound tactical and strategic judgement whilst also getting to grips with the smallest detail of a case'.
Legal 500 2023/Crime (General and Fraud)/Leading Juniors/Western Circuit

'Nicholas has a measured approach to his cases and provides deliberate and carefully considered advice. He builds excellent rapport with clients and instructing solicitors. He has excellent knowledge and understanding of health and safety law.'
Legal 500 2022/Business and Regulatory Crime (Including Health and Safety)/Western Circuit

'He is extremely calm, persuasive and effective in court, which consistently inspires confidence in the clients.'
Legal 500 2022/Crime (General and Fraud)/Leading Juniors/Western Circuit

'He is a superb tactician who has a great manner with clients. He always builds a good rapport, which allows him to easily convey difficult advice and navigate through complex issues in a case.'
Legal 500 2022/Professional Disciplinary Law/Western Circuit

'He has a pleasing court style that commends itself to both judges and juries and equal measure.'
"Nicholas Cotter represented a man who was acquitted of murder after the Crown Prosecution Service offered no evidence after forensics suggested the defendant may have stabbed the deceased in self-defence. "
Legal 500 2021/Crime

'Meticulous in his paperwork and an accomplished advocate, with a calm and assured approach to clients which inspires confidence.'
"Nicholas Cotter is highly recommended, particularly for matters relating to care homes."
Legal 500 2021/Business and regulatory crime (incl. health and safety)

'He has the ability to put any client at ease.'
Legal 500 2020/Crime

'He has a very calm and measured approach.'
Legal 500 2020/Regulatory, health and safety, and licensing

'A consummately able barrister.'
Legal 500 2018/19/Crime

'A formidable advocate.'
Legal 500 2017/Crime/Leading juniors/Regional Bar/Western Circuit,

"Now this case is over, may I express my significant grateful thanks for the way you have consistently and over a lengthy period handled the complex case of R v O.

This case was never destined to be easy, and indeed it proved to be one of the most difficult cases I have dealt with in the last 30 years. I am in awe of the skill, professionalism, compassion and knowledge that you put into this case, coupled with your ability to look after, control and satisfy a very difficult Client.

Your willingness to see our Client without Solicitor and to promptly report back to myself was an outstanding pathway to enabling us to deal efficiently with a client of the most demanding nature, who barely spent a day off the telephone whilst in prison.

Notwithstanding the sentence passed, I think it is fair to say that without your extremely high level of expertise, the result could have been tremendously less beneficial to the Client.

I think it would be correct in this case to concentrate on the level of acquittals obtained for O, which speak volumes for your ability and dedication."

Instructing Solicitor, Bournemouth, June 2017

Academic qualifications

- Diploma in Law / CPE (Bristol)
- BA (Hons) History

Professional qualifications & appointments

- A Grade 4 Crown Prosecutor
- Member of the Rape Panel of Crown Prosecutors
- Member of the Serious Crime Panel of Crown Prosecutors
- Member of the Serious Fraud Panel of Crown Prosecutors
- ADR Group accredited Civil and Commercial mediator

Professional bodies

- The Honourable Society of Lincoln’s Inn
- Association of Commonwealth Criminal Lawyers
  British Association for Sport and Law (BASL)
- Member of the Western Circuit
- Proceeds of Crime Lawyers' Association
- The Health & Safety Lawyers Association
- Member of the Criminal Bar Association