

Robin Leach

Year of Call: 1979
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Crime

A Grade 4 Prosecutor on both the South Eastern and Western Circuits, Robin Leach regularly acts as a leading Junior in serious cases involving fraud, money laundering, drugs and firearms, and has been instructed in many cases involving the National Crime Squad and SOCA.As defence counsel he has been involved in all types of criminal cases including rape, corruption and large frauds.

Notable cases include:

- R –V- K
  Represented main defendant in a complex 5 handed conspiracy to facilitate the breach of immigration laws at Isleworth Crown Court. Complicated legal arguments on indictment and issues with phone and documentary evidence.

Drugs:

- R v Johnson and Others. A major police investigation by the Projects Team (Operation Alpington), leading to the prosecution of 12 men in a three-month trial at the Central Criminal Court for conspiring to import cocaine from South America and Europe. The more complex features of the case included heavy reliance on the evidence of a Colombian supergrass who was subjected to intense and highly aggressive cross-examination, and careful consideration of sensitive unused material and major disclosure issues. Led the case, assisted by two juniors. Silks represented four of the five defendants.
- R v Padoan and Others. Prosecution of four defendants involved in importing a ton of cannabis from Spain to Dover, at Winchester CC. Main evidence was recorded conversations obtained from probes placed in defendants' cars and by visits to Spain. Led the case, assisted by a junior.
- R v Ramadan and R v Costas. The cases, involving the importation and supply of large quantities of heroin, were prosecuted for the National Crime Squad at Southwark CC in linked trials involving five defendants. The main prosecution witness was a co-defendant who had pleaded guilty and turned Queen's Evidence. A major thrust of the prosecution case was based on video evidence of defendants handling drugs concealed in rucksacks. Led the case, assisted by a junior.
- R v Umeh and Others. Instructed by SOCA to prosecute five defendants at Snaresbrook CC involved in the manufacture and supply of crack cocaine in London. The defendants, from Nigeria and Zambia, had entered the UK illegally and joined cells already involved in drug dealing. The defendants were linked evidentially by mobile phone evidence. Led the case, assisted by a junior.
- Also worked almost full time for a three-year period on cases resulting from a major drugs investigation which led to the prosecution of 12 defendants in three trials. Prevailed on problematic points of law, included a three-month legal argument on the admissibility of using phone tap evidence gathered in Colombia (where the use of intercepts for evidential purposes is legal) in a UK court.
- Drawing on analysis of a thousand audiotapes, deployed technical expert evidence from both Colombia and the UK to

repudiate the defence's claim that the intercept evidence had been falsified. Complex PII issues were addressed daily, particularly in connection with the Colombian intercept evidence. Led the case, supported by two juniors.

Major fraud

- R v Mitchell, R v Marley and R-v Webber. The first two were solicitors running conveyancing practices in London, assisting clients to obtain mortgage advances dishonestly. The evidence against them was obtained from a close analysis of a vast quantity of their files, supported by a conveyancing expert instructed by The Crown. Webber was a chartered surveyor who dishonestly overvalued properties to enable the clients to obtain larger mortgages. These cases were part of a series of mortgage fraud prosecutions at the Central and Southwark CCs.
- R v Hassanyeh. Defended a solicitor who (with the firm's partners) was charged with mortgage fraud. The very lengthy nine-handed trial collapsed at the half-way point in the submission of no case. The evidence again rested on close analysis of conveyancing files, from which we were able to show that the defendants had not acted dishonestly.
- R v Gladdis. Acted for a builder at Portsmouth CC who was alleged to have colluded with a valuer in overvaluing properties. The case collapsed on a retrial when disclosure issues arose in respect of a conveyancing solicitor known to the defendants. Led the case, supported by a Junior.
- R v Higgs. Defended a charity fund-raiser who organised sponsored events in Hampshire villages attended by local sporting celebrities. The prosecution alleged that some of the money never reached the putative beneficiary, the local hospital. Defended as sole Counsel.
- R v Oke and R v Okoya. Over a period of two years, prosecuted a series of multi-handed, multi-£m Nigerian advance fee frauds at Wood Green and Southwark CCs. The perpetrators entered the UK for short periods of time to carry out their crimes while the victims were wealthy overseas-based business people. The trials were generally contested, generated a vast volume of written evidence and involved calling witnesses from the US and Far East.
- R v Burwell and Cahn-Speyer. This involved the provision of second passports to putative international businessmen. A raid on their offices revealed many counterfeit and stolen passports, mainly of South American origin. Also seized were rubber stamps and other equipment enabling passports to be altered and provide recipients with new identities.
- R v Noskova. She had been arrested with a co-defendant as a result of a newspaper investigation into marriages of convenience between East Europeans and UK citizens. Further enquiries revealed involvement in large scale mortgage fraud and international money laundering. Led the prosecution, assisted by one Junior.

International money laundering
Currently instructed to prosecute for SOCA in a serious money laundering case.

Murder, attempted murder and manslaughter
Has prosecuted a number of cases at the Central CC and at Winchester and Bristol. Cases have encompassed a wide range of defences including self-defence, accident, issues of causation and diminished responsibility.

Rape and other sex offences

- R v Townsend. Having been found guilty of rape, the defendant subsequently obtained leave to appeal on the basis of new evidence - namely that the victim (his girlfriend) had changed her story. Under cross-examination, it became apparent that the girlfriend had been pressured by the appellant into changing her account and that the original evidence was true. The appeal therefore failed.
- Prosecuted as sole counsel at trial and appeal; the defendant was represented by a Silk on both occasions.
- Other cases include defending a mother of six against charges of horrific sexual abuse of some of her children, including the youngest aged five and seven. The case collapsed because the children were too traumatised and young to give cogent evidence. Also prosecuted a case via videolink where a school caretaker was alleged to have indecently assaulted four children at the school. The jury could not reach agreement at the trial or retrial.

Corruption and blackmail

- R v Harrington. Prosecuted an ex-police officer turned private detective accused of extorting money from a top jockey

who had been arrested and was on bail for alleged race-fixing. Harrington had told the jockey that he could bribe the officer in charge of the race-fixing investigation to drop all charges against him. Harrington taped all the conversations he had with the jockey and this was used in evidence.

Firearms
Has prosecuted extremely serious firearms cases as a leading Junior, where the main allegation has been the possession of firearms and ammunition with intent to endanger life. The problem of proving 'specific intent' has been a feature of all these cases.

Burglary & Robbery

- R v Wooden. A large-scale burglary operation featuring six defendants. A gang of youths were involved in burglaries of fifty large houses in the Home Counties and also stealing expensive cars from the properties. Prosecuted as a leading junior.

Death by dangerous driving
Defended a number of cases, including R v Bean which revolved around the identity of the driver when the deceased and defendant were in a car that crashed at high speed in a county lane. The car was found upside down, the deceased in the back seat. The defence maintained that the deceased was thrown into the back of the car on impact. Experts were called on both sides and took different views of the evidence. The jury acquitted.

Confiscation
Dealt with confiscation after the conclusion of many trials both under the old drug trafficking legislation and wider POCA. More recently, involved in the enforcement of confiscation orders by civil methods including where the defendants' assets were abroad.

Recommendations

Recognised as a leading junior in horse racing disputes who gets frequent appointments from the Jockey Club, BHA and HRA. He is adept at representing jockeys in cases concerning alleged corruption, safety matters and riding offences.
"He's solid and reliable and has great understanding of the sport of racing."
Recent work: Represented a professional gambler and a flat trainer who were charged with corruption in an allegation that they had told a jockey to stop a horse from being placed or winning.
Chambers UK 2019/Sport - The Regions (Bar) - Band 2

Strengths: "He is very good, very experienced and he knows the sport."
Chambers UK 2018/Sport - The Regions (Bar) - Band 2

'Has recently represented jockeys in high-profile matters involving accusations of corruption.'
Chambers UK 2017/Sport - The Regions (Bar) - Band 1

'One of the country's foremost experts on horse-racing cases. He has amassed considerable depth of knowledge on the full range of corruption, disciplinary and regulatory issues that jockeys, trainers and others face in the sport.'
Chambers UK 2016/Sport - The Regions (Bar) - Band 1

'Noted for his expertise in horse racing, frequently defending jockeys and trainers against a wide range of disciplinary matters, including safety and riding offences, as well as against allegations of corruption.'
Chambers UK 2015/Sports Law – The Regions

'has a strong reputation in the equestrian world, and represents both jockeys and trainers in disciplinary actions and licensing cases.'
Chambers UK 2014/Sports Law – The Regions – Band 1

'Recommended for representing jockeys and trainers in disciplinary matters.'
Legal 500 2015/London Bar - Sport – Leading juniors

'His passion for horse racing supports his determination to do a proper job.'
Legal 500 2014

'seasoned, accessible'
Legal 500 2013/14/Leading Junior - London Bar - Media, Entertainment and Sport expertise.

Professional qualifications & appointments

- Standing Counsel to Revenue & Customs Prosecution Office (North Eastern Circuit)
- Appointed Counsel to the National Trainers' Federation
- Non-executive Director of the Professional Jockeys' Association
- Legal Assessor to the Nursing and Midwifery Council

Professional bodies

- British Association for Sport and Law (BASL)
- CPS Prosecutor Grade 4 on the Serious fraud and Organised crime panels