Graham Arnold

YEAR OF CALL 2002

Graham came to the bar later in life but has risen very quickly to the top of the ranks and is now one of the most successful leading counsel in the country.





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Career Overview

Graham is ranked as a leading individual in crime rankings for Chambers and Partners and the Legal 500. Recognised in the legal directories for his skill and acumen in legal argument and his strong client rapport in particular.

“There is always an artful simplicity to his skeleton arguments that hit the mark so concisely and reveal his assured grasp of the law”

“He has a good rapport with clients and is never shy to put forward a good legal argument.”

Exclusively Graham defends in the most serious criminal cases including fraud, drugs conspiracies, sexual offences, murder and terrorism. In recent years Graham has represented many clients in the most challenging and highest profile cases nationally, often representing the principal defendant in multi handed cases as leading counsel.

Graham is both a charismatic jury advocate and strong legal mind with a reputation for successfully marshalling and advancing complex legal arguments. He also has a particular reputation for the earning the trust and faith of his clients as they face the most difficult of situations.

Graham has developed a strong practice in the area of 'white collar' fraud, known for his painstaking analysis of complex financial and telecommunications evidence. In all cases, he is known for pursuing his client's case relentlessly in the face of any opposition.

Graham maintains his interest in social justice and human rights which originally brought him to law and has a wide range of publications to his name across constitutional and human rights issues.

Area of Practice

Graham is a leading junior. He takes leading, appellate and junior work.

He has particular expertise with defendants suffering from mental health difficulties and has represented a number of youths and young men in murder cases.

He is approachable and takes particular care when advising clients, giving them confidence that he will do his utmost for them.

Graham accepts regular instructions in the following areas:

- General Crime;
- Financial Crime;

Notable Cases

Notable cases:

R v B (2024) – Murder

Led by KC.

R v M (2024 – Terrorism

Led by KC (re-trial outstanding).

R v B (2024) - Operation Dragonfly – Large scale modern slavery case

Leading counsel for the first defendant in a seven handed large scale case. Operation Dragonfly related to a joint Investigation with Romanian police into the trafficking of females into the UK for the purpose of prostitution. The prosecution alleged that an organised crime group, including the seven Romanian defendants on trial, trafficked young females from Europe to work in sex work franchises in London and across the UK. Disclosure in the case ran to in excess of 200,000+ pages of evidence. The case resolved after a month of the trial with the acceptance of lesser pleas limited to controlling prostitution.

R v S (2024) - Large scale international fraud

3 month case. Leading counsel for an estate agent owning a number of offices operating under an established franchise. The case related to multi million pound property investments in Germany and Portugal between 2014 and 2015. A complex case evidentially where there were multiple complainant investors and a large volume of underlying evidence. The alleged frauds related to the offer of highly leveraged investment schemes to sell 'distressed' properties, all of which failed.

R v C (2023) - Large scale fraud

Leading counsel for principal defendant. The prosecution alleged a conspiracy to defraud involving an 'insider' banking fraud. Bank accounts were alleged to have been created using false or stolen identities for the purpose of laundering in the region of £9 million of criminal proceeds before the enterprise was halted. A highly voluminous case evidentially with a complex matrix of circumstantial evidence, including seized documents, extracted download evidence from mobiles and computers, telecommunications, IP address activity and internal bank records.

R v N (2023) - Large scale modern slavery case

Leading counsel for a principal defendant in multi-handed trial arising from a joint investigation with Bulgarian authorities into alleged trafficking of females for the purpose of prostitution. There were additional conspiracies alleged relating to Class A drugs and counterfeit cigarettes. Following extensive disclosure arguments, the prosecution dropped all conspiracies alleged against the defendant.

R v I (2023) - Large scale fraud

Leading counsel for principal defendant. A large scale insurance fraud operated over three years through a number of 'scam' brokerages set up to defraud major insurance firms. The brokerages claimed commission payments in respect of policies taken out in fake or stolen identities in a complex deception. The funds received were then layered through

multiple companies to avoid detection. Very large volumes of documentary and electronic evidence to consider.

R v P (2023) - Organised crime group case

Leading counsel in case related to a ‘gang’ related murder. Insufficient evidence to support murder case against the defendant and offences of participating in the criminal activities of an organised crime group successfully challenged by way of dismissal argument.

R v H (2022) - Attempted murder

Attempted murder case relating to an allegation of an attempted execution shooting in Hoxton in London. Young defendant, 18 at the time. The motivation for the shooting was said to be rivalry between two North London gangs. H was acquitted of the attempted murder and alternative section 18 offence.

R v E (2022) - Grave sexual offending

Leading counsel for the principal defendant in a case investigated under Operation Makedom. The defendant entered pleas to 162 counts of grave sexual offences and connected offences of blackmail and fraud relating to 72 victims in the UK and worldwide. The prosecution described the defendant as one of the most prolific sexual offenders against children ever prosecuted in the UK. Graham also represented the appellant in the subsequent appeal against sentence heard as part of a conjoined set of appeals that reviewed the correct approach in cases of very long extended determinate sentences imposed for grave sexual offending, (R v Ayo & others [2023] 1 Cr. App. R. (S.) 24)

R v T (2022) - Murder

Led by KC in a multi-handed 5 month murder trial. This was said to be a pre-planned and targeted shooting in the context of alleged gang associations. The crown’s case relied upon extensive cell site, phone contact and CCTV. Young defendant, 16 at the time but the co-defendants were all adults. T was acquitted of murder and the associated firearms offence.

R v M (2021) - Attempted Murder

Offences of attempted murder and causing grievous bodily harm against multiple victims. Young defendant, 17 at the time. Use of an intermediary. The trial lasted over two months. Successful submission of no case on the attempted murder count and acquitted by the jury on all remaining counts.

R v A (2020) - Gross negligence manslaughter

The case related to a death by electrocution resulting from the negligent installation of an off grid electrical system to a static caravan. D's son had installed the system that caused the death of his partner. D was prosecuted for gross negligence manslaughter on the basis of an alleged duty of care arising either from his position as his son's employer with the caravan as part of the workplace or else from his position as the owner and occupier of the land on which the caravan stood. D was also prosecuted for offences under safety at work regulations. A submission of no case argued that a duty of care arose did not arise on either basis and, in any event, challenged the extent of an employer's liability in the particular circumstances. The arguments provided the impetus to a prosecution decision to accept limited pleas to breaches of safety at work regulations at the close of the prosecution case resulting in a non-custodial sentence.

2019/20 cases:

R v L – Leading counsel in modern slavery/people trafficking case

(10 weeks, Blackfriars)

R v M – Murder

(Isleworth)

R v C- Fraud

Large scale conspiracy to defraud relating to TFL Oyster cards. (Blackfriars)

R v C - Drugs

Representing leading figure and first defendant in major drugs and firearms conspiracy. (6 weeks, Newcastle).

R v B - Drugs

Representing principal defendant in large scale multi-handed 'county lines' drugs conspiracy, (Worcester)

2018/19 cases:

R v A

Leading counsel representing first defendant in complex case (11 handed) relating to an 'art heist' of major fine art works. 2-month case. Successful submissions of no case to answer. (Bristol).

R v O

International fraud conspiracy relating to Nigerian ‘mafia’. Successful submission of no case. (Woolwich).

R v K

Large scale drug conspiracy said to involve major suppliers for the midlands and north eastern England. Involving very large volumes of telecommunication and surveillance evidence. (Nottingham)

R v K

Another large-scale drug conspiracy relating to organsied crime group operating nationally. Drug and money laundering related allegations. Limited pleas accepted to alternative tax avoidance offences resulting in non-custodial sentence. (Peterborough)

2017/18 cases:

R v E – Murder. Gang related shooting

Acquitted. (Central Criminal Court)

R v T – Highly unusual stranger rape case

Acquitted after trial, following disclosure of exculpatory evidence found on complainant’s mobile phone. (Southwark)

R v H - Money Laundering

Multimillion-pound money laundering alleged against defendant owner of Bureau de Change on Edgware road. Exploration of the informal Hawala money exchange system central to issues. Acquitted after trial. (Blackfriars)

R v S - Fraud

International cross border large scale fraud conspiracy. (Southwark)

R v O - Drugs

Representing principle defendant in very large-scale drugs conspiracy - multi importation from Holland. (Southwark)

R v O - Money Laundering

Leading junior in complex multi-million pound money laundering case lasting two months. (Southwark)

R v C - Drugs

Multi handed trial relating to large scale national distribution of Class A drugs where defendant was said to be a central protagonist. Large volumes of electronic evidence analysed. (Birmingham).

R v A

Represented first defendant in high profile blackmail of the Emir of Qatar. Highly sensitive case dealing with the attempted blackmail of the royal family and a diplomat. (Southwark)

R v Q - Muder

Joint enterprise murder, issues relating to accessorial liability (post R v Jogee) resulting in acceptance of manslaughter plea. (Nottingham, Led by QC)

R v B – Historic rape of a child

Secured acquittal. (Croydon)

R v A - Leading junior in complex fraud

Very large volumes of electronic evidence. Case involved complex fraud and handling offences involving the exportation of high value mobile phones in vast quantities. (Blackfriars)

R v H - Theft

13 handed conspiracy relating to haulage vehicle thefts over a lengthy period. (Maidstone).

R v W – Multi-handed conspiracy involving banking fraud

Case stayed following defence analysis of the internal electronic banking systems and where there were failures of the investigating officers to do the same.

R v M

Interesting case evidentially where defence relied upon covert evidence form German intelligence services which was inadmissible for the prosecution due to international agreements but it was successfully argued they could be deployed by the defence despite objections by German national authorities. The defendant was in fact acquitted of his

role in large scale conspiracy to import Class A drugs from the Horn of Africa. (Croydon)

R v U – Allegation of causing death by dangerous driving

Particularly sensitive case involving death of a 'war hero'. Convicted of death by careless driving in the alternative. Successful appeal against sentence imposed, [2016] EWCA Crim 809.

A sample of significant cases prior to 2017

R v G

Leading counsel for first on the indictment in allegations of a multi handed drugs conspiracy and the organisation of multiple 'high end' brothels across London, again a case built around telecommunications evidence and challenges to that.

R v A

Leading counsel in case which involved the analysis of electronic systems within a major bank, in which it was alleged the defendant was the inside man at the bank. Detailed analysis and understanding of the banks systems was required and the defendant was acquitted of having any role in the conspiracy despite the other main protagonists on the outside of the bank being convicted.

R v R

Allegations of having an explosive, defendant originally arrested under terrorist provisions. (Central Criminal Court, led by QC).

R v B

Allegations of possession of articles for a purpose connected with terrorism. Defendant was a young man stopped at UK airport travelling from Libya with various instructional and extremist videos and manuals allegedly related to terrorist purposes. (Woolwich)

R v H

Leading counsel for defendant who was acquitted on allegations of attempt murder relating to an assassination by shooting against the backdrop of serious confrontations between Tottenham gangs. (Central Criminal Court)

R v L - Murder

Murder case involving serious inter gang violence resulting in a murder. Reported authority on conducting 'recognition tests' for police officers using CCTV and related law on admissibility ([2015] Crim. L.R. 534). (Central Criminal Court, led by QC).

R v R

Defendant had been one of most successful bankers at this major bank but then faced allegations of large-scale fraud by improper lending. The high value of the transactions involved led to projections by the court of a lengthy sentence at the beginning of the case. However, following detailed mitigation lasting over a day, which revealed the target driven ethos of the bank at the relevant time, the court imposed a suspended sentence. (Central Criminal Court).

R v H - Drugs

Multi-handed conspiracy relating to a major Manchester network of drug dealers. (Manchester)

R v A - 10 handed case representing defendant first on the indictment

One of largest police operations in that year involving a co-operative investigation between the UK police and Homeland Security in the US. It was a case involving the supply chains of drugs to America with allegations of terrorism funding for Al Shabab in the background. Again, analysis of electronic communications was central to the case. (Southwark)

R v W - Large scale drugs conspiracy case with multiple defendants

Submission of no case on behalf of W successful for him alone on the basis there was inadequate evidence to prove his role in the particular conspiracy as opposed to a different overlapping conspiracy. (Middlesbrough)

R v S - Large scale drugs importation, first on the indictment in a 10-week case

Extensive challenges to police evidence, fingerprint evidence and cross admissibility points. (Snaresbrook)

R v A - Conspiracy to murder. Hiring a hit man

Junior counsel alone. Case dismissed on application to dismiss. (Central Criminal Court)

R v B - Rape of mentally ill young person

Extensive psychological and psychiatric evidence as to reliability of the complainant deployed. (Basildon)

R v C - Possession of firearm with intent case

Case stopped following abuse of process arguments. (Failures in disclosure exposing perverse decision to prosecute this defendant but not others more culpable). (Leicester Crown Court)

R v B –Represented the alleged main organiser in another large-scale drugs importation (450 kilos)

Successfully argued out crucial cell site evidence resulting in collapse of trial. (Southwark)

R v D- Rape

Historic rape of child dating back to age 7. (St Albans)

R v P - Stabbing of two police officers

Charged as attempted murder. Successful defence at trial of insanity at time of offence. Defendant received absolute discharge owing to recovery of his mental health and despite the severity of the attack upon the officers.

R v G - High profile kidnap and robbery of royal aide

Extensive defence challenges made to prosecution expert evidence relating to matched footmarks made in victim's blood at the scene. Consequent legal submissions led to case being stopped against G. (Kingston)

Memberships

Professional Memberships

- Lincoln's Inn
- Criminal Bar Association
- 'Preferred fraud panel of barristers' with solicitors relating to white-collar crime and regulatory breaches for professionals.

Education

- Inns of Court School of Law (2001)
- Trinity College Dublin, MA (hons) (1987)

Other Information

Graham is Licensed to take Direct Access work.

Fluency in French.

Likes astronomy, classical music, wine and going home to Ireland, France or England.

Publications

Whilst Graham's working practice remains almost exclusively criminal, he maintains his interest and expertise in constitutional law and human rights issues through his writing.Some of the publications below can be researched with access to Westlaw.

Articles (include):

- Brexit: the immediate legal challenges. S.L. Rev 2016
- Magna Carta and all that tosh. S.L. Rev 2016
- The cartoonists at Charlie Hebdo, a challenge to all. S.L. Rev 2015
- Eavesdropping on lawyers with their clients. S.L. Rev 2014
- The British and Europe. S.L. Rev 2014
- Repeal the human rights act, then what? S.L. Rev 2014
- Secret Courts under the Justice and Security Act 2013. S.L. Rev 2013
- Qatada - the real risks. S.L. Rev 2013
- The case of Gary Mckinnon. S.L. Rev 2013
- Extradition – the ins and outs. S.L. Rev 2013
- Extra-judicial targeted killing. International Review of Law, Computers & Technology, 2013.
- The targeted killing of bin Laden and the rule of law. S.L. Rev. 2012
- Parliamentary Privilege, S.L. Rev. 2011
- An illegal war? S.L. Rev. 2010
- The Attorney General's advice on the legality of the 2003 war in Iraq, S.L. Rev. 2010
- A presumption of guilt: the government's response to S and Marper v UK, S.L. Rev. 2009
- Time for change: human rights and counter terrorism policies, S.L. Rev. 2009
- Case Closed. (BAE systems bribery case). S.L. Rev. 2008
- Covert Surveillance in the UK. S.L. Rev. 2008

- Charter of Fundamental Rights: What's wrong with more rights? S.L. Rev. 2008
- Terrorism in a justified cause? S.L. Rev. 2007
- Freedom to be wrong: Free speech and responsible journalism. S.L. Rev. 2007
- The Human Rights Act — has it made a difference? S.L. Rev. 2006
- The Judicial use of torture. S.L. Rev. 2006
- ID Cards Bill: A new relationship between the individual and the state. S.L. Rev. 2006
- The Parliament Acts: is Parliament's legal sovereignty limited after all? S.L. Rev. 2005
- Indefinite detention without charge: is it lawful? S.L. Rev. 2005
- The future of Europe: highlighting key innovations of the draft constitutional treaty. S.L. Rev. 2004
- Open government and the Freedom of Information Act, S.L. Rev. 2002
- Protecting us all? Unfettered powers of questioning and search under the Terrorism Act 2002. S.L. Rev 2015

Books:

- Human Rights Law, Routledge-Cavendish publishing.
- Constitutional Law, Routledge-Cavendish publishing.