

# Maya Chopra

YEAR OF CALL 2014

Maya is a dedicated, tactical and fearless advocate with a busy criminal practice. She regularly appears in cases concerning high value drugs, serious violent crime and complex telephone evidence.

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## Career Overview

Maya is a dedicated and fearless advocate with a busy criminal practice. She is regularly commended for her tactical approach to defending cases and her ability to connect with defendants from a wide range of backgrounds and abilities. She receives legal aid and private instructions, providing assistance and advice at every stage throughout the lifespan of a case and building an ongoing relationship with her lay and professional clients. Her legal drafting in advance of trial has led to Prosecutions being stopped, or lesser charges being preferred. Once a case has progressed to trial, Maya is skilled in arguing matters of law as they arise and, most importantly, presenting a case powerfully and persuasively to a jury.

## Area of Practice

Maya has a busy and wide-ranging criminal defence practice and is regularly instructed in cases of drug trafficking, violence, dishonesty, and sexual offences. She has a particular focus on organised crime and fraud. Her cases often involve large volumes of complex evidence, and she is experienced in the cross-examination of a range of different types of expert.

## Notable Cases

### **R v D & another – Luton Crown Court – Ongoing ‘Encrochat’ case**

A re-trial is due to take place in 2022. The first trial collapsed after a week of evidence due to issues concerning disclosure, expert evidence and the accuracy of Encrochat data. Maya is engaged in advising on further expert reports and analysing the vast amount of material served in this case.

### **R v C & another [Operation Eastmain] – Newcastle Crown Court - Cocaine supply**

Maya appeared for the first Defendant. The Defendant was accused of supplying cocaine across county lines. Due to separate investigations being taken by different police forces around the same time, the defendant had already pleaded guilty to supplying heroin and received a significant custodial sentence. The Court heard arguments on abuse of process. Maya spent considerable time analysing telephone messages, the result of which the Prosecution expert conceded where many messages pertained either to legitimate business dealings or drugs for which the defendant was already serving a sentence.

### **R v B & others [Operation Holms] – St Albans Crown Court - Gang warfare**

Maya appeared for the first Defendant. This case related to gang warfare in the Bedford area. The page count was in excess of 25,000, largely due to the volume of telephone data served. Maya analysed raw phone data to observe patterns in communications and cell sites. She scrutinised the Crown’s schedules, which led to a number of exhibits being amended. She conducted cross examination of the telephone data analyst and cell site expert and made ongoing applications for disclosure.

### **R v D & others [Operation Seacourt] – Warwick Crown Court - Conspiracy: High value commercial robbery**

Maya represented the only Defendant acquitted in Operation Seacourt. The defendant was accused of taking part in a conspiracy concerning numerous high value commercial robberies, including a cash in transit delivery. The Crown’s case relied heavily upon telephone evidence and CCTV, which Maya considered in minute detail. She identified a significant inaccuracy in how the CCTV evidence had been interpreted, and as a result the Prosecution case against her client was substantially weakened.

## **R v LM – Woolwich Crown Court - Knifepoint robbery**

The Defendant was accused of an attempted knifepoint robbery of a taxi driver. The complainant identified him in a PACE compliant ID procedure. After Maya identified a potential alternative suspect in the unused material and put his picture to the complainant, the Court acceded to a submission of no case to answer and the jury was directed to enter a not guilty verdict. Successful submission of no case to answer

## **R v A – Basildon Crown Court - Perverting the course of justice**

Unanimous acquittal by the jury on the defence of duress. The defendant, a woman of good character, was prosecuted for perverting the course of justice after she reported her ex-partner for domestic violence and admitted that he forced her to accept penalty points on her drivers licence on his behalf. Maya advised on a psychiatric expert and cross-examined the Prosecution's own expert when the defence report was contested. The defendant gave harrowing evidence of the abuse she had suffered, and Maya persuaded the Court to give a direction against stereotyping to the jury – a direction usually reserved for complainants called by the Prosecution in cases of sexual offences.

## **R v T – Blackfriars Crown Court - Sexual assault**

Unanimous acquittal by the jury of two Counts of sexual assault. The defendant was accused of sexual assault by two separate, independent complainants. Maya cross-examined both complainants and forensically examined the CCTV in the case. The defendant was a family man of good character who was spared a conviction for a sexual offence.

## **R v E – Harrow Crown Court – Complex benefit fraud**

The defendant faced four Counts of benefit fraud covering a 15-month period. The allegations concerned receipt of benefits to which she was not entitled. The Prosecution case relied entirely upon documentary exhibits. Maya made a successful submission of no case to answer on one Count. The jury returned not guilty verdicts on two Counts and could not reach a verdict on the final Count. The Prosecution offered no evidence on the final Count.

## **R v M (a youth) & another – Stratford Magistrates Court – Grievous bodily harm (certificate for counsel)**

The Defendant was accused of being involved in the stabbing of another youth during a group attack. The trial involved the cross examination of youth witnesses, forensic evidence and submissions on joint enterprise. The Defendant was acquitted.

## Education

Kaplan Law School, Bar Professional Training Course, V.C.

University of Exeter, Law LLB, 2:1

Exeter College, International Baccalaureate

Scholarships:

Inner Temple Duke of Edinburgh Scholarship

Inner Temple Exhibition Award

## Other Information

Professional memberships:

The Honourable Society of the Inner Temple

Criminal Bar Association

Women in Criminal Law

Society of Asian Lawyers

Maya was interviewed for the UNJUST podcast, broadcast by The Justice Gap, to discuss the criminal justice system, disclosure and miscarriages of justice. [Read the article.](#)