Email: clerks@churchcourtchambers.co.uk
Phone: 020 7936 3637

Christopher Johnston

Year of call: 1983 | Year of silk:

About

Christopher Johnston has been in continuous practice at the Bar since his call in 1983, bringing over four decades of courtroom experience to every case. His skills, sharpened through thousands of trials, are underpinned by meticulous preparation, strategic thinking, and an unwavering commitment to client care. Known for his thorough briefings and tireless work ethic, Chris ensures that clients, solicitors, and all stakeholders are kept fully informed at every stage. A specialist criminal barrister, Chris predominantly defends but is also an experienced prosecutor. He is a Level 4 CPS advocate for the South Eastern (London and non-London) and Midland Circuits. His career has seen him instructed in many high-profile and complex cases, including: Murder and manslaughter Kidnap involving torture and blackmail Serious violent assaults Sexual offences, including rape and historic familial abuse Large-scale organised drugs conspiracies Firearms offences Serious and complex fraud Chris has acted as leading defence counsel in numerous murder trials and major criminal cases. He is regularly instructed in matters requiring deep forensic analysis, such as examining extensive social services files, educational records, and psychiatric reports. His practice also spans large-scale car-ringing conspiracies, local authority internal frauds, sophisticated retail frauds, and armed robberies. He frequently appears in the Court of Appeal, representing appellants in criminal appeals. His expertise extends to the Military Courts, where he has a substantial track record in court martial trials, often conducted overseas. In 2010, Chris was instructed by a Magic Circle law firm to advise a multinational corporation on an internal employee fraud investigation. A respected mentor, Chris has been a pupil supervisor since 1996, sharing his knowledge and advocacy skills with the next generation of barristers. His professionalism, judgment, and advocacy have earned the enduring trust of a wide network of solicitors who continue to rely on his counsel in the most challenging cases.

Practice Areas

- Business Crime
- Criminal Law

Languages

- English

Reported Cases

R v Pommel (1995) 2 Cr. App. R R v. Jason Graham [2007] EWCA Crim 1499

Memberships

Criminal Bar Association South Eastern Circuit

Cases of note

R v B 2018

Snaresbrook CC. Successfully defended a warehouseman in 8m value drugs importation from Holland investigated by The Serious and Organised Crime Command. Operations Ultra, Bush

R v M 2018

Successfully defended a man at The Central Criminal Court accused of wounding his brother with intent to cause

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GBH when he drove his truck onto the pavement at the victim.

R v K 2018

Operation Cave, Wood Green CC, defended in a 1m tobacco and alcohol duty evasion organised crime case.

R v O 2017

Operation Pileated, Cambridge CC Represented a defendant in a courier fraud conspiracy involving multiple elderly victims.

R v S 2017

Operation Limit, Leicester CC. defended in an allegation of the supply of Skorpion machine gun and ammunition as part of organised crime group.

R v K 2017

Nottingham CC, Operation Feast & Zephyr. Lead defence counsel in industrial scale cocaine supply from London to Northampton.

R v S 2017

Leicester CC. Represented a man accused of serial rape and sexual offences on young boys in 1980s.

R v S 2017

Leicester CC. Represented a male accused of serious sexual assault by penetration of a resident in a special needs care home.

R v A

Snaresbrook CC. Prosecuted a teenage male for rape of 10 year-old sister.

R v B 2015

Represented the alleged leader of gang of five men responsible for the kidnap, false imprisonment and torture of two separate victims and subsequent blackmail of the families.

R v S 2015

Defended one of five men accused of largest haul of ram -raid burglaries of rural banks in East Anglia.

R v N 2015

Successfully defended man accused of multiple rape counts.

R v H 2015

Prosecuted a case of familial sexual allegations dating back to 1965.

R v G 2015

Represented the man known as the night stalker in his appeal against conviction for several rapes of elderly people in their homes.

R v R 2014

Represented man accused revenge slashing of former police officer investigating licensed taxi offences.

R v T 2015

Successfully prosecuted a leader of a gang of men who had embarked upon a campaign of rape and sexual offences towards a 12-16 year old girl in Bucks in 2004-13.

R v M 2013

1.5 m VAT Evasion Prosecution Central CC for HMRC.

R v W 2012/13

Central Court 25 Southampton Buildings London WC2A 1A

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Leading defence counsel in the largest ever Flying Squad Bank Robbery Operation involving over 12 armed bank robberies spanning 10 years.

R v H 2013

Successfully defended one of the three acquitted defendants out of ten Charlton FC fans accused of racist violence.

R v K 2013

Defended man in multi handed trial in which he was accused of firearm possession in large Trident case.

R v T 2013

Defence counsel in successful defence of man accused of domestic violence featuring all the accuseds children supporting his battered wife.

R v M 2013

Successfully represented woman accused of stabbing her former boyfriend in the street.

R v C 2012

Defence counsel in multi handed car ringing/burglary case in Maidstone CC.

R V A 2012

Central CC. Successfully defended when led by QC man accused of murdering drugs rival with shotgun.

R v M 2010

Conducted an appeal against conviction before full Court of Appeal in the case of an appellant who had been convicted of throwing acid over barristers appearing against him in a High Court action he was bringing. High Court barrister burned in courtroom acid attack.

R v M 2010

Defended an alleged gang member accused of having a sawn off shotgun which was alleged to have been used to threaten others.

R v G and others 2008

Represented a defendant who was acquitted of his part in a murder and further stabbing of another victim in an alleged racist gang attack in the Isle of Sheppey.

R v A 2009

Familial historic sexual assault.

R v W 2007

Leading defence counsel for one member of a cash-in-transit robbery gang. K.B., the leader of said gang, was a notorious criminal. The trial lasted three months and was conducted under the tightest security ever witnessed in an English court.

R v A 2007

Representing as leading counsel one female member of a gang said to have committed the largest alleged fraud of its time on a health authority: NHS fraudsters jailed (From News Shopper).

R v H 2010

Sexual assaults on children within a church congregation.

R v N 2010

Random slashing of stranger giving rise to IPP sentence.

R v S and others 2010

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An internal fraud of a national bread manufacturer by managers worth 300k.

2016

Instructed for the Finance Officer of a business who along with others is accused of a 1.5m fraud on State/ local authority agencies in a trial listed for 2016.