

Simon Ralph

Junior Counsel - Above 15 Years

CALLED 2009



Simon is an established practitioner and former military legal advisor with unique experience in a range of tribunals and jurisdictions.

He has prosecuted and defended serious crime in the Crown Court and Court Martial, acted in a number of quasi-criminal cases, and advised at the highest levels on matters of public international and international humanitarian law. He has established a reputation as an astute and tenacious advocate, and a robust and client-focused advisor. He currently accepts instructions in crime, military law, international law, and inquiries & inquests. He also undertakes work on behalf of government departments as a member of the Attorney General's B Panel of Counsel.

Background and experience

As a criminal practitioner, Simon has acted for the defence as junior alone across the spectrum of offences, successfully representing individuals on charges as diverse as drugs importation, multi-handed fraud, and rape. As a led junior he has defended the most serious allegations, including murder. For the first seven years of his practice Simon acted only for

the defence, and was regularly sought after in cases requiring skilled and sensitive cross-examination, such as RASSO trials and trials involving vulnerable witnesses. He is particularly adept at cross-examining experts, whether in relation to forensic science, cell-site data, or accountancy. In one case the Court of Appeal praised Simon's 'obviously effective' cross-examination of an expert, describing him as 'a credit to himself and his profession'.

He is a CPS Grade 4 prosecutor and routinely prosecutes at that level, with a particular emphasis on fraud and complex money laundering trials. As a prosecutor in the Court Martial he focussed on fraud, serious violence and RASSO work. His cases included major firearms offences attracting mandatory five year sentences, routine prosecution of s.18 GBHs, offences committed on operations, and offences under RIPA. He understands the needs of the three services, as well as the particular requirements of service personnel. He has undertaken RASSO and vulnerable witness training.

Simon takes a keen interest in 'quasi-criminal' cases, and in the past has appeared in committal for contempt proceedings in the High Court, represented a business and its owner in a large scale prosecution for breach of planning law (where he successfully argued abuse of process over two days), and represented an acquitted defendant in a civil claim against the police for malicious prosecution.

He also has a particular interest in cases involving the military, national security, or terrorism. Following his time at the defence Bar he joined the British Army as a legal advisor, promoting to Major shortly before re-entering private practice. In addition to prosecuting in the Court Martial he advised the chain of command and Whitehall on counter-terror and state-focussed operations in the UK and overseas. His primary expertise relates to international humanitarian law and the treatment of detainees, but extends to general public international law (e.g. prohibited interventions), international criminal law/war crimes, cybercrime, human rights, RIPA and IPA, and the extra-territorial application of the ECHR. He is comfortable working in hostile environments and liaising with UK government departments, allied forces, and local overseas security forces.

His work in the Army has encompassed the sorts of issues routinely litigated in public inquiries and high profile inquests, and his combination of insight, experience, and ability as an advocate, makes him ideally placed to act and advise in these most sensitive of cases.

Simon is qualified to accept instructions directly from members of the public in appropriate cases and has done so successfully for many years. He brings to his direct access practice the additional benefit of being qualified to litigate on behalf of his clients. In criminal cases he accepts instructions on both a private and publicly funded basis.

In addition to his routine practice Simon also sits as a Deputy District Judge (Magistrates'

Court).

Notable Cases

Court Martial

R v P, 2021

Prosecuted the first ever service case of breach of a s.49 notice under RIPA (a notice requiring access to a suspect's phone). Provided training to Royal Military Police on subsequent cases, and the application of RIPA to military investigators.

Catterick Court Martial Centre

R v C, 2020

Prosecuted offences of dishonesty alleged to have been committed overseas in a sensitive location. PII and witness anonymity applications required and challenged by the defence throughout. Further challenges in relation to the police and unit-level investigation, culminating in an (unsuccessful) abuse argument. Three days of legal argument took place before the trial could commence.

Bulford Court Martial Centre

[Military](#)

Driving

R v M, 2014

20 month sentence for dangerous driving appealed to the Court of Appeal where it was argued that the judge's approach to sentencing such offences was flawed. Appeal allowed and case cited in Banks on Sentence and Wilkinson's as a guideline authority.

Isleworth Crown Court

[Driving](#)

Financial Crime

R v K, 2024

Prosecuted million-pound gold bullion fraud and money laundering case. Convictions resulted on four out of five counts, one of which was the subject of an application to dismiss at an early stage.

[Financial Crime](#)

Firearms

R v S, 2021

Secured guilty pleas to a charge sheet containing 17 charges related to the possession, acquisition, storage or adaptation of thousands of illegal firearms. Some charges carried mandatory five year terms of imprisonment.

Catterick Court Martial Centre

[Firearms](#)

General Crime

R v W, 2018

Acted on a private basis for an individual and business being prosecuted alongside others for breach of a planning enforcement notice. The criminal proceedings had been preceded by years of civil litigation between the parties. Following two days of legal argument in the Crown Court the case was stopped as an abuse of process.

Reading Crown Court

R v O, 2016

Represented one of three defendants charged with a spree of distraction burglaries against vulnerable individuals. The vast majority of evidence was cell site. Following cross-examination of the prosecution expert the OIC was required to obtain extensive further evidence to shore up their case, the admission of which was opposed. Appeared pro bono in the Court of Appeal and described as 'a credit to the profession'. Cited by Prof Ormerod as a key case on disclosure.

St Albans Crown Court

R v R, 2016

Following the collapse of a criminal prosecution, and some remarkable disclosure in respect of the investigation, acted for the Claimant in a claim for malicious prosecution. Settled on favourable terms following exchange of pleadings and witness statements.

[Crime](#)

Murder and Manslaughter

R v J, 2017

Murder, defending as led junior. The case involved a violent death inflicted on an elderly man with a golf club, following which a fire was set. The evidence involved eyewitnesses (including the defendant's own father), blood spatter analysis, autopsy reports, and expert opinion on shoeprints.

Central Criminal Court

[Murder and Manslaughter](#)

Rape and Sexual Offences

R v H, 2024

Successful submission of no case to answer after five days on behalf of the second defendant in a case involving serious allegations of sexual offending against children.

R v M, 2021

Successful prosecution of a difficult rape case in a service context with numerous disclosure issues raised by the defence. Intoxication and post-incident communication between the defendant and complainant were both in issue.

Bulford Court Martial Centre

R v , 2017

Represented lead defendant in two-handed alleged rape of a 15 year old. Exceptionally sensitive cross-examination of a vulnerable witness required. Acquitted.

Lewes Crown Court

[Rape and Sexual Offences](#)

Violence

R v C, 2015

Acted on a private basis for an individual accused of GBH. The defendant's partner had leapt from a window, causing serious injury, alleging that she had done so to avoid further torture being inflicted upon her. Acquitted.

St Albans Crown Court

[Violence](#)

Achievements

Memberships

- The Honourable Society of Gray's Inn
- Criminal Bar Association
- Association of Military Court Advocates

Appointments

- AG's London B Panel of Counsel
- Deputy District Judge (Magistrates' Court)
- CPS Grade 4 Prosecutor

Education

- Royal Military Academy Sandhurst - 2018
- BVC - Inns of Court School of Law - 2009
- BA Law (Jurisprudence) - St Edmund Hall, University of Oxford - 2008

Activities and Interests

In the ever diminishing gaps between spending time with his children, Simon enjoys playing the piano, looking at paintings, hiking, and eating nice food in interesting places.