

Mark Cotter KC

Call: 1994 | Silk: 2017

"An absolute foundation for any high-profile or complex criminal case. Throws everything into the case, and it consumes him for that period. He is easy to work with and is excellent on his feet, with jurors, judge and opponent."

Legal 500 2021



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Mark Cotter KC is a leading criminal silk whose principal specialisms are in homicide, sexual allegations, fraud and the regulatory aspects of business and corporate crime. He has been ranked in the Legal 500 and Chambers and Partners as a leading criminal silk for many years.

Mark has significant experience of dealing with high net worth individuals and corporates who have come under investigation. He is often retained in cases where reputational issues are at stake. He has represented medics, lawyers, accountants, professional sports people and those working in the arts.

Mark also has substantial experience of dealing with young and otherwise vulnerable defendants and cases where child witnesses are involved.

In the field of business crime Mark has extensive experience of dealing with the most complex investigations, including those with an international element. He has dealt with trader frauds, tax frauds, land bank frauds, mortgage frauds, carousel frauds, companies frauds and those involving the most complex financial instruments (including crypto) and/or corrupt practices.

Mark also provides second opinions in relation to proposed appeals against conviction and sentence.

Expertise

Crime

Mark is a highly experienced criminal silk whose practice spans homicide, sexual offences, serious fraud and corporate crime. He regularly acts for high-profile individuals and professionals, particularly in cases involving reputational risk. He also has significant expertise in complex financial crime and in representing vulnerable defendants and witnesses.

Appointments

- Recorder (2019)

Education

- LLM
- LLB (Hons)

Memberships

- Criminal Bar Association
- Wales Circuit
- Western Circuit
- South-Eastern Circuit

Notable and reported cases

HOMICIDE

R v. W and Others (2025)

Instructed to defend one of five men charged with the murder of a man wrongly believed to have been convicted of child sex offences. The case was prosecuted as a missing body killing. During the defence case Mark uncovered a disclosure failure on the part of the prosecution which resulted in significant phone handset data being disclosed to the defence. This resulted in Mark making a successful submission of no case to answer on the murder count. Mark's client was also charged with conspiracy to inflict grievous bodily harm with intent, however, he was found to be 'not guilty' by the jury.

R v. C (2024)

Instructed to defend a man charged with the fatal shooting of drug money collector. The defendant was charged following the unlocking by police of a phone they had held for some years. Another defendant was convicted of the murder in an earlier trial and sentence to life imprisonment with a minimum term of 34 years in what was described as a 'deliberate, cold blooded and planned murder'. The deceased was shot with a Glock semi-automatic pistol having been lured to an estate in South London. The case against Mark's client was built on CCTV, phone and text communications, cell site analysis, eyewitnesses, ballistics and vehicle recognition evidence. Mark's client was found not guilty of murder and manslaughter following a trial lasting several weeks.

R v. P and Others (2022)

Instructed to defend in multi-handed gang related knife murder. Mark's client was acquitted of murder, manslaughter and three separate conspiracies to cause grievous bodily harm. The only offence of which Mark's client was convicted was robbery for which Mark secured a youth rehabilitation order.

R v. Adeyanju and Others (2021)

Instructed to defend in multi-handed murder trial linked to a conspiracy to rob. Mark's client was a lead defendant and was acquitted of murder and convicted of the lesser offence of manslaughter.

R v. Jessop (2021)

Instructed to prosecute domestic murder in the context of coercive and controlling behaviour. The case involved substantial expert evidence dealing with insanity, diminished responsibility and loss of control. Mark secured a conviction and successfully resisted the follow-on appeal proceedings in relation to both conviction and sentence.

R v. M and others (2020)

Instructed to defend the third defendant in a high profile eight-handed murder. The trial is due to take place in late 2020 before Picken J and involves issues relating to mental health and joint enterprise.

R v. J (2019)

Instructed to prosecute an evidentially challenging allegation of manslaughter. The deceased fell from the steep edge of his front garden and suffered fatal injuries. It was alleged that the fall was the result of an assault by the defendant, however, there were no witnesses. The case was based purely on circumstantial evidence, including forensics and, footprint evidence and pathology. Mark successfully resisted a dismissal application and went on to secure a conviction.

R v. O and others (2019)

Instructed to defend the first defendant in a three handed knife murder. The deceased was tortured and killed having been released from prison. He had served 33 years of a life sentence for the murder of a child in the 1980's. Mark's client ran a cut throat defence, asserting that the second defendant was solely responsible for the killing. Mark's client was acquitted of murder and manslaughter following a six-week trial in Cardiff Crown Court before Lewis J. The second defendant was convicted of murder.

R v. M and another (2018)

Instructed to prosecute this two-handed knife murder. Mark secured the conviction of both defendants following a four-week trial in Newport Crown Court before Simler J.

R v. F and Others (2018)

Instructed to defend the second defendant (aged 14) in a three handed knife murder. Mark's client also faced an additional charge of attempted GBH. Mark's client was acquitted of all charges following a six week trial at the Old Bailey. Mark's client was the only defendant to be acquitted of all charges.

R v T and others (2011)

Instructed to defend the lead defendant in a nationally reported, three-handed murder, where the body of the deceased was kept in a flat for a number of days before being disposed of via a wheelie bin.

SERIOUS SEXUAL OFFENCES

R v. Z (2025)

Instructed to defend a Chinese PHD student charged with eleven separate rapes, including offences said to have taken place in China. The case is one of the highest profile sex cases ever to be tried having been widely reported nationally and internationally. The defendant was also charged with video recording the rapes and possession of date rape drugs and extreme pornography. The case involved disclosure of millions of items of digital data, the dual criminality provisions and technical expert evidence. Mark secured several not guilty verdicts with the defendant also being convicted of a number of offences.

R v. I (2023)

Instructed to defend in highly unusual sexual assault case where the defendant was accused of multiple assaults of a masseuse during massages. The defendant was unanimously acquitted following trial.

R v. F (2023)

Instructed to defend a student accused of sexually assaulting another student. The case was dropped pre-trial following focused disclosure requests.

R v. D (2022)

Instructed to defend a doctor who pleaded guilty to distribution of category A indecent images. Mark secured a suspended sentence, despite the guidelines indicating immediate custody. Mark has had similar successes in many other serious distribution and possession cases.

R v. Starr (2020)

Instructed to prosecute historic allegations of sexual offending within the context of a special educational needs school. The case presented numerous complications to the mental health and other vulnerabilities of the complainants. After a six-week trial the defendant was convicted.

R v. W and another (2019)

Instructed to represent high profile UK boy band member accused of rape following a show in the UK. The defendant was unanimously acquitted by the jury.

R v. G (2016)

Instructed in an 'out of time' application to the Court of Appeal in relation to a sentence of imprisonment for public protection imposed following convictions for child sex offences some years ago. Mark successfully submitted that the sentence was unlawful. In addition, once the CCA corrected the error, Mark succeeded in persuading the Court that an IPP was, in any event, wrong in principle. The sentence was quashed and replaced with a determinate sentence

R v. B (2016)

Instructed to defend a renowned 1960's film director accused of various indecent images offences. Mark eventually caused the Crown to drop the case following legal submissions and evidence gathering that demonstrated that the images in question could not be proved to be unlawful.

R v. B (2015)

Instructed to defend an eminent surgeon accused of sexual offences within the workplace. An acquittal was secured.

R v. M (2014)

Instructed to defend in a sexual assault case where the complainant was only four years of age. Commended by the Resident Judge of Lewes Crown Court for conduct of the case.

R v. B (2013)

Instructed to defend one of the four Brighton and Hove Albion footballers accused of sexual assault. Mark represented the first defendant and co-defended with three Queen's Counsel. Mark was the only junior in the case and undertook all the central cross-examination of the Crown's witnesses which ultimately contributed to the across the board acquittals that followed a trial and re-trial.

R v. J (2013)

Junior alone in defending a high profile musical composer accused of rape. Mark was privately instructed in this case and secured a jury acquittal within six minutes of jury retirement.

R v. A (2013)

Instructed to defend a leading transplant surgeon accused of sexual assault in a clinical setting. Mark's vigorous and detailed approach to disclosure in this case contributed to another swift jury acquittal.

BUSINESS CRIME AND FRAUD**SFO v. D and Others (2024)**

Instructed to defend a military telecommunications specialist alleged to have been involved in bribing Saudi Royalty and Officials in return for the purchase of military telecoms and support systems for use by the Saudi Arabian National Guard. This was an ultra-high profile and politically sensitive SFO prosecution involving a defence that asserted high-level UK Government authorisation for the allegedly corrupt payments. Mark's client had the case against him dropped by way of the grant of a 'nolle prosequi' following detailed representations advanced in the final lead up to the first of two lengthy trials.

R v. Nethercott (2023)

Instructed to defend an ex-finance director of the post office in relation to allegations of tax fraud over many years. The first trial collapsed after Mark launched a section 8 application for disclosure. The result was thousands of pages of additional relevant material being disclosed. At the follow-on trial Mark's client was unanimously acquitted.

R v. Moore and Others (2022)

Instructed to prosecute investment and mortgage fraud. The case was highly unusual as the defendants initially had all pleaded guilty but later had their convictions quashed by the court of appeal, who sent the case back to the Crown Court. Mark was then instructed to prosecute the trial that followed and secured across the board convictions.

R v. Patel (2022)

Instructed to defend a highly complex private prosecution for forgery and fraud. The company law aspects of the case were so involved that a specialist companies court judge was drafted in as the trial judge. Mark secured an advantageous plea deal following a heavily contested abuse of process argument which resulted in the trial judge referring the case to the DPP for consideration as to takeover. Mark has specialist expertise in relation to private prosecutions.

SFO v. K (2021)

Instructed to defend a suspect in the Amec Foster Wheeler bribery case. Mark was instructed to draft representations on charge. His client was a senior corporate manager and, ultimately, he was not charged following Mark's representations.

R v. P (2020)

Instructed to defend company director in a very high profile private prosecution involving complex international corporate issues.

R v. K (2018)

Instructed to advise pre-charge on SFO investigation into corrupt practices with regard to issuing work visas in Saudi Arabia.

R v. P (2018)

Instructed to advise as to interaction between insider dealing legislation and disclosure obligations within family proceedings.

R v. F (2017)

Instructed by the Specialist Fraud Division to prosecute this multi-million pound trader fraud that was heard over ten weeks. The case involved a complex Ponzi scheme and substantial issues surrounding Forex trading on the spot markets. Convictions were secured.

R v. K and others (2017)

Instructed to defend in this 10-week conspiracy to money launder, pervert the course of justice and false accounting case. Mark's client was acquitted on all counts. The investigation into the case by the Anti-Money Laundering Task Force had spanned more than five years and over 35,000 pages of material were relied upon by the Crown. The principal issues in the case involved allegations of computer manipulation and forgery. Mark's substantial experience of white collar fraud and the Money Laundering Regulations were brought to bear during this complex trial.

Privacy Policy

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