

John Femi-Ola KC

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John Femi-Ola KC is a highly regarded criminal silk with a practice centred (though not exclusively) at the Central Criminal Court, where he is routinely up against senior treasury counsel and other leading silks.

He has been instructed in factually complex, intellectually demanding, and unusual cases. In the past five years, he has been instructed as silk in more than thirty murder-related allegations in London and other parts of the country. These cases are amongst the most serious and high profile, including allegations of double murder (e.g. R v Cohen, Bagel shop heir), baby shaking (e.g. R v C) and fatal shootings. Several of these cases are multi-handed.

He has also been instructed in cases alleging terrorism (he represented Sudesh Annan in an earlier matter before he was subsequently shot dead by police in Streatham). John also represented Sonia Ekweremadu, one of four defendants to stand trial in a kidney harvesting case, which was the first prosecution of its kind under the Modern Slavery Act 2015. John's client was the only defendant acquitted.

His practice is diverse, and he has a wealth of experience in all areas of criminal law. He has been instructed in cases of large-scale fraud and international money laundering – such as the case of Neil More, which involved an investigation by the FBI into financial attacks on UK banks and the US Federal bank, with more than £1.8m stolen.

He has extensive experience acting in very serious drugs allegations – such as in the case of S, who was alleged to be part of an international cartel masterminding substantial importations of cocaine from Latin America via South Africa into the UK. Of the five men who stood trial, he was the only one acquitted by the Jury.

John acts in sex and historical sex cases with multiple complainants. He recently represented H, a multi-millionaire businessman accused of such offences. Another high-prolife case concerned allegations of serious sex assaults alleged to have been carried out by a religious elder. He was subsequently acquitted at trial.

He receives instructions to represent medical professionals, lawyers, pharmacists, and sporting professionals.

Late last year, he represented a defendant in a case alleging ritual/religious circumcision of a male child. This was the first prosecution of its kind in this country. The defendant was acquitted on the main allegation.

As a junior barrister, he worked on a national newspaper as a night libel lawyer. He was also a visiting lecturer and tutor on a graduate diploma course for non-law graduates wishing to enter the law profession. He is devoted to encouraging greater entry to the Bar of black people and others from minority backgrounds.

He previously served on the Gray's Inn Barrister's Committee. He is a member of the Criminal Bar Association and the South Eastern Circuit.

He is accredited by the Bar Council to provide Public Access Services.

John is ranked as a Leading Silk in the 2024 edition of The Legal 500

Expertise

Sexual Offences

Notable Sexual Offences cases

R v CY (Woolwich Crown Court)

Representing a defendant charged with a stranger rape. After a trial that occupied the court for two weeks the defendant was acquitted following a section 41 application. Applications under section 41 are difficult and rarely successful.

R v B (Wood Green Crown Court)

Secured acquittal for doctor accused of rape and other serious sexual assaults upon another doctor following a Christmas party.

R v G (Croydon Crown Court)

Pastor accused of number of rapes – acquitted.

R v G (Snaresbrook Crown Court)

Allegation of a campaign of rape against women over the course of a year, four complainants.

R v O (Isleworth Crown Court)

Allegation of sexual abuse of a four-year-old child by her uncle.

Murder

Notable Murder cases

R v P & Others (Central Criminal Court)

Secured the acquittal of a Bouncer accused of manslaughter by gross negligence following a four-week trial.

R v B & Others (Kingston Crown Court)

Represented a defendant charged with the murder of a teenager following a gangland dispute. The defendant was acquitted after a trial which lasted for longer than a month.

R v A & others (Central Criminal Court)

Indictment included allegations of murder, conspiracy to transfer firearms, and possession of firearms with intent to enable others to endanger life. The case included an allegation that a co-defendant was executed in order to prevent his participation in the trial (the murder count).

R v N

Murder and attempted murder of 15 others in an arson attack.

R v Wabara (Central Criminal Court)

7 Defendants. Gangland murder and attempted murder.

R v Adusei (Central Criminal Court)

9 Defendants. Conspiracy to cause GBH with intent, related to a murder.

R v Joseph (Central Criminal Court)

2 Defendants. Attempted murder.

R v Kabalika (Central Criminal Court)

2 Defendants. Murder.

R v Ahmed (Wood Green Crown Court)

12 Defendants. Conspiracy to cause GBH with intent, linked to a murder.

Organised Crime

Notable Organised Crime cases

[R v E \(Central Criminal Court\)](#)

Led Hayley Brickel (Nexus Chambers) and secured the acquittal of the defendant who was one of four on trial in a kidney harvesting case which attracted global interest and press coverage. The case was the first prosecution of its kind under the Modern Slavery Act 2015. The trial before Mr. Justice Johnson and a jury at the Old Bailey lasted 8 weeks.

The defendant, her wealthy and high-ranking politician father; her mother and a medical doctor were charged with a conspiracy to commit an offence of human trafficking of a young, impoverished and vulnerable male to London in order to exploit him by harvesting his kidney in return for a reward, the beneficiary being the defendant who suffers from kidney disease. The plot over a period of several months, included an allegation that a corrupt relationship was established with a member of the Royal Free hospital staff, who agreed to help coach the boy in relation to a second interview with doctors. The defendant was said to be central to the whole case and complicit in various aspects of the plot.

The evidence was complex and voluminous, several experts including clinicians were called and cross examined. An application to stay the proceeding on behalf of the defendant was refused. The defendant was not called to give evidence and was the only one acquitted.

R v S (Maidstone Crown Court)

Representing a University Officer charged with others of conspiracy involving the importation of 19 kilos of cocaine.

R v A & others (Croydon Crown Court)

Allegations of 'honour' kidnapping (teenage lovers); false imprisonment; violence and perverting the course of justice. Six defendants and instructed to represent the first defendant on the indictment.

R v E (Southwark Crown Court)

Human trafficking; women from Eastern Europe for the purpose of prostitution, controlling prostitutes and running brothels.

R v W (Plymouth Crown Court)

7 Defendants. Trafficking of women from the Far East for purpose of prostitution across the UK.

R v L (Maidstone Crown Court)

6 Defendants. Armed Robbery and endangering the lives of police officers.

Fraud

Notable Fraud cases

R v A & others (Snaresbrook Crown Court)

A substantial conspiracy to defraud involving an international dating company. A number of complainants gave 'live' evidence at the trial from the United States via video link.

R v H & others (St Albans Crown Court)

Large scale wine fraud. Allegation of conspiracy to defraud over a number of years involving millions of pounds. Defendant was one of the directors of the wine company.

R v A (St Albans Crown Court)

Conspiracy to defraud financial institutions over a number of years. First on indictment. Acquitted after 8-week trial

R v O (Woolwich Crown Court)

2 Defendants. Large scale conspiracy to defraud banks and financial institutions.

R v A (Croydon Crown Court)

7 Defendants. Conspiracy to defraud several banks. Client sole defendant to fight the case.

R v A (Basildon Crown Court)

Fraud

Memberships

- Gray's inn
- Criminal Bar Association
- Criminal Bar Association Executive Committee (2021)

Awards

