

5 KING'S BENCH WALK



Sarah Forshaw QC

Call 1987 Silk 2008

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Practice Profile

Sarah Forshaw QC, described by an independent FT journalist as the 'criminal barrister of choice if you can get her', has maintained an impressive and diverse practice since taking Silk. She is frequently instructed to represent high profile individuals charged under the Sexual Offences Act and her track record marks her out as a leader in this field.

Her skill and experience in cases involving historic sexual allegations are legendary. They include the successful defence of publicist Max Clifford against a second round of allegations from the 1970's, of a doctor accused of sexual assault on patients and of a high-profile businessman alleged to have engaged in sex with a minor. In 2019 she was instructed to defend a music producer charged with the historic rape and sexual assault of two young complainants. He was unanimously acquitted of all counts.

She has built a formidable reputation at the Central Criminal Court, having defended in over 40 Old Bailey murder trials. Notable successes include the defence of one of 19 boys on trial at the Old Bailey for the murder of a 15 year old schoolboy at Victoria station and of a 17 year old boy charged with a double murder in Leytonstone in a drug related gang attack. She is often sought out for young defendants in joint enterprise killings, and was involved in the recent post "Jogee" appeals of Johnson and others. More recently, she represented the first defendant in the Jodie Chesney murder. Her client was unanimously acquitted of both murder and manslaughter.

In cases of Fraud and Financial crime, she is frequently instructed to defend professional clients in the most complex and demanding cases. A firm believer that the best advocates undertake both prosecution and defence work, Miss Forshaw secured convictions for the Serious Fraud Office against all defendants in a long-running £80 million PONZI fraud. Sarah also recently successfully argued for the dismissal of all charges against her client in Operation Lunar, a multi-million Tax fraud using capital loss relief, that had been listed for several months in 2018.

General Crime experience has included the successful prosecution of the "Fake Sheikh", Mazher Mahmood, for conspiracy to pervert the course of justice, and successfully defending the only individual acquitted in a multi-handed international conspiracy to import £5m of cocaine from South America. She has been described as 'silky smooth' in court and 'a class advocate...brief, eloquent, with a dash of theatre'.

Alongside her criminal practice, Sarah is often instructed to appear before regulatory bodies, primarily for members of the medical profession. Recent cases before the General Medical Council include the successful reinstatement of a doctor accused and subsequently cleared of raping a nurse, and the trial at GMC (following acquittals in the Crown Court) of another doctor against whom a young patient had made allegations of numerous sexual assaults, all of which were found not proven by the GMC. Sarah Forshaw QC was appointed Queen's Counsel in 2008 and quickly established a formidable practice in Silk. She was appointed co-Head of Chambers in 2009 and from 2012-2014 was Leader of the South Eastern Circuit (the largest of the six geographical Circuits of the Bar of England and Wales). She was nominated for Crime silk of the Year 2014 by Chambers & Partners and is a band 1 silk in the current edition.

Fees for regulatory and all private criminal work are agreed by the **Senior Clerk**.

Sarah's Privacy Policy can be downloaded [here](#).

Areas of Practice

- General Crime
- Sexual Offences
- Serious & Organised Crime
- Homicide & Corporate Manslaughter
- Fraud & Financial Crime
- Appellate
- Confiscation, Civil Recovery & Asset Forfeiture
- Inquests
- Prosecution
- Regulatory & Professional Discipline

- Cyber Crime
- Military Law
- Terrorism

What The Directories Say

“Sarah is a real force to be reckoned with, and hugely respected in the Crown Court and Court of Appeal.” *Chambers UK 2020*

"Her refusal to back down is one of her greatest attributes. She is extremely dedicated and hard-working, which instils great confidence in her clients and solicitors alike." *Chambers UK 2020*

‘She excels in serious sexual offence cases and the disclosure issues that arise during them.’ *Legal 500 2020*

"She's a silk who reads every piece of paper. She's demanding on those she works with and she's got great client rapport. Juries love her." *Chambers UK 2017*

"Brilliant. An amazing advocate who's comfortable with the clients, takes an uncompromising approach to case presentation and develops a very good rapport with the jury." *Chambers UK 2018*

"Silky smooth." *Legal 500 2016*

"An excellent jury advocate who makes clients feel at ease." "She is a very hard-working and accomplished advocate in whom clients have faith." *Chambers UK 2019*

‘Her key strength is her very engaging advocacy style – juries and judges are rapt.’ *Legal 500 - 2019*

‘She is robust in defending with a velvet-clad iron fist.’ *Legal 500 2017*

News

Lee Chapman Murder

15 December 2020

Sarah Wahid, 46, of High Road, Grays, in Essex, represented by Sarah Forshaw QC, was found not guilty of murder. Three others have been found guilty of murdering Lee Chapman who they stabbed to death in a "frenzied" street attack.

Recent Cases

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R v MGK [Southwark] 2021

Historic Rape

Instructed privately to defend a businessman who had been extradited from the Netherlands to face multiple historic rape charges. Following Sarah Forshaw QC's cross-examination of the complainant and a second prosecution witness, the prosecution offered no evidence, and the defendant was formally acquitted on all counts.

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R v GO [CCC] 2021

Murder

Sarah Forshaw QC was instructed to defend the young son of a lawyer in an 8 week murder trial at the Central Criminal Court. It was agreed that Miss Forshaw's client had delivered the fatal blow. The incident was captured on CCTV. Her client was acquitted of both murder and manslaughter.

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R v W & Ors [Basildon Crown Court] 2020

County Lines Drug Related Murder

Representing the first of four defendants in a County lines drugs-related murder trial. Miss Forshaw's lay client was said to be the ringleader but was the only defendant to be acquitted on all counts; the other three defendants were unanimously convicted of murder. Instructed by Imran Khan & Partners.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-esssex-55321822>

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R v K [CCC] 2020

Murder

Sarah Forshaw QC leading for the defence in a two-defendant murder trial at the Central Criminal Court. The deceased was shot dead close to the Houses of Parliament. The jury acquitted of murder and convicted only of manslaughter by a majority. Instructed by Lloyds PR solicitors.

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Inquest LW 2020

Inquest touching upon the death of LW

Instructed to represent a Doctor by Max Anwar, McCormacks. Dr absolved of any wrongdoing and no criminal proceedings instituted.

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R v M [CCC] 2020

Gang Related Murder

Sarah Forshaw QC was instructed for the defence in this four week gang-related murder trial at the Central Criminal Court. There were two defendants. The jury unanimously acquitted her lay client of all charges, including the murder of one victim and the attempted murder of a second. Instructed by Waterfords Law.

- **R v. EG [C.O.A.] 2019**

Multiple Allegations of BDSM Rape

Sarah Forshaw QC successfully overturned the appellant's convictions in the Court of Appeal Criminal Division in a case involving allegations of BDSM rape. The original trial attracted considerable media attention and involved multiple complainants. Instructed by Nigel Richardson of Hodge Jones Allen.

- **R v. Petrovic & ors [C.C.C.] 2019**

Murder of Essex Schoolgirl Jodie Chesney

Sarah Forshaw QC represented the first of four defendants in the high profile Jodie Chesney murder trial. Following the highly publicised 8 week trial Miss Forshaw's client was acquitted of both murder and manslaughter. Instructed by Sunita Mehta of ABV Solicitors.

BBC News report [here](#).

- **R v. O [Isleworth] 2019**

Allegations of Historic rape & sexual assaults

Sarah Forshaw QC was privately instructed to represent a music producer who faced 8 counts alleging historic child cruelty, indecent assault and rape. Following a 3 week trial the jury unanimously acquitted on all counts. Instructed by Zahir Ahmed of Gentle Mathias Solicitors.

- **R v Dr V [GMC & Crown Court] 2019**

Sexually Motivated Misconduct

The defendant doctor, having been acquitted of sexual assaults on a patient at the Crown Court (also represented by Sarah Forshaw QC), was to face similar allegations brought by the GMC. Miss Forshaw, assisted by Olivia Haggard, was asked to represent him again at the full contested hearing which lasted 3 weeks. Once again, the complainant and other witnesses were cross-examined. The allegations were all found 'not proved' by the Tribunal. The Doctor has returned to full-time work. Instructed by BCL.

- **Operation Zajic [Southwark] 2019**

£Multi-Million Charity Fraud

Sarah Forshaw QC acted in this Multi-million pound charity fraud. Our client, a Rabbi, was said to have facilitated the laundering of millions of pounds using Chabad UK Charities as a front for his illegal activities, the accounts it is alleged, were used to process the proceeds of sales of counterfeit, prescription or unlicensed medication sold online. The money was thereafter withdrawn through currency exchanges, payments to Money Service Bureaus, cheques, withdrawn in cash. 234 transfers totalling £8.4 million were sent to 51 different entities based overseas, predominantly in Hong Kong and Cyprus to remove the money from the UK. Instructed by ABV Solicitors.

- **R v. T [Durham] 2019**

Allegation of Sexual Assault in University Halls of Residence

Sarah Forshaw QC successfully persuaded the prosecution to offer no evidence on second day of this sexual assault trial following ongoing evidential and disclosure issues. The defendant had been accused of sexually assaulting a fellow student in the Halls of Residence. Instructed by Andy Malik of DJMS Solicitors.

- **R v. R.B [Shrewsbury] 2018**

Alleged Rape of woman met on "Ashley Madison" dating site

Sarah Forshaw QC represented this professional man whom was alleged to have raped and sexually assaulted a young woman he had met using the '*Ashley Madison*' dating site for married people. RB was cleared of all charges following a successful half time submission. Instructed by Paul Morris of BCL Solicitors LLP.

- **G.M.C. v. Dr S 2018**

Contested Fitness to Practice Hearing before the MPTS

Sarah Forshaw QC successfully represented this Doctor on his full hearing at the MPTS re: fitness to practice. Following a four day contested hearing the tribunal found no 'adverse findings'. Instructed by Zahir Ahmed of ABV Solicitors.

- **R v. M [I.L.C.C.] 2018**

Allegations of Marital Rapes and Sexual Assault

Sarah Forshaw QC acted for this defendant who was charged with and cleared of 7 allegations of marital rape and sexual assault over a thirteen year period. Following an aborted trial in February 2018 due to disclosure problems the Crown eventually offered no evidence in September 2018, days before the second trial listing was due to commence. Instructed by Paul Morris of BCL Solicitors LLP.

- **R v. T [I.L.C.C.] 2018**

Alleged Historic Sexual Assaults on young male

Sarah Forshaw QC represented this defendant who was cleared of 13 counts of sexually assaulting a young boy between 1998 and 2004. Following a 2 week trial the defendant was acquitted of all charges. Instructed by Gary Rubin of Blackfords LLP.

- **R v.P [Aylesbury] 2018**

Alleged anal rape of 4 year old by Father

Sarah Forshaw QC led Paul Jackson in this successful defence of a father charged with the anal rape of his 4 year old son. The jury acquitted in 10 minutes. Instructed by Rob Borwick of ABV Solicitors.

- **R v. M [ILCC] 2018**

Multiple rape case

Jonathan Reuben led by Sarah Forshaw QC defending in a multiple count rape case. The trial had to be adjourned after serious disclosure failings were discovered by defence. Successful application for costs against the CPS under section 19 Prosecution of Offences Act 1985.

- **R v. X [Teesside] 2018**

Alleged historic sexual offending in prestigious boarding school

Sarah Forshaw QC acted for the defence in this case of alleged historic sexual offending committed whilst our client was a Gap Year Student in 2002 at a prestigious all boys boarding school in the North of England. The defendant was acquitted of all charges by a jury in 14 minutes. Instructed by Ellen Peart of BCL LLP.

- **Operation Lunar [Birmingham] 2017**

£Multi-Million HMRC Tax Avoidance Prosecution

Sarah Forshaw QC and Robert Ellison acted in the defence of this defendant charged with 10 others of a multi-million pound conspiracy to cheat HMRC. The fraud centred around multiple tax avoidance schemes. The charges were dismissed against our client following legal argument. The trial on the remaining defendants is listed for 6 months in 2019. Instructed by King and Spalding LLP.

- **R v. M & anr [CCC] 2017**

Fatal Stabbing of Teenager in Northolt

Sarah Forshaw QC represented this 17 year old man who was cleared of the murder and manslaughter of an 18 year old man in Northolt. The jury returned a unanimous verdict after a 3 week trial at the Old Bailey. Instructed by McCormacks Solicitors.

News report here.

- **R v. NC [Aylesbury] 2017**

Ex Teacher accused of Historic Sexual Assaults

Sarah Forshaw QC acted for this retired ex-teacher who was charged with a series of historic sexual assaults in the 1980's. NC had been extradited from Spain to stand trial but was cleared of all charges. Instructed by Sonn McMillan Walker.

- **R v. GS [C.C.C.] 2017**

Sexual Assault upon 5 year old niece

Sarah Forshaw QC defended this Merrill Lynch banker whom was charged and cleared following an 8 day Old Bailey trial of Sexually Assaulting his 5 year old niece during a bout of "Parasomnia". Instructed by BCL Solicitors LLP.

- **R v. Te [C.C.C] 2017**

Murder

Sarah Forshaw QC acted for the defence in this Old Bailey trial concerning the fatal stabbing in the neck and chest of a 20 year old man during a brawl in an East London park in front of picnicking families. The defendant was acquitted of murder, convicted of manslaughter. Instructed by McCormacks.

- **R v. R [Croydon] 2017**

Alleged Rape of married woman

Sarah Forshaw QC, successfully represented a 39 year old father of two whom was cleared of raping a married woman after walking her home. A jury acquitted the defendant of four counts – sexual assault, rape and two counts of attempted rape. Instructed by ABV Solicitors.

News Report here.

- **R v. Newman [C.C.C.] 2016**

Fatal Stabbing

Sarah Forshaw QC successfully defended an 18 year old man who was cleared of murder and

manslaughter following the fatal stabbing of a 20 year old man in Thornton Heath, the jury accepting he acted in self-defence. Instructed by MK Law.

News report here.

- **R v. Dr V [Wood Green] 2016**

Doctor accused of Sexually Assaulting young patient

Sarah Forshaw QC successfully represented this Doctor whom was cleared of an allegation of sexually assaulting a young female patient. Instructed by EBR Attridge. Now instructed by BCL Solicitors LLP in regulatory proceedings before the GMC and NHS Trust.

- **R v. Sykes [C.C.C.] 2016**

Murder of a pensioner

Sarah Forshaw QC led Orla Daly for the defence in a case prosecuted by Queen's Counsel and Treasury Counsel. The case related to the death of a pensioner bludgeoned to death by a defendant with learning difficulties. Issues of diminished responsibility and assisted suicide. Instructed by Thomas Boyd Whyte Solicitors.

- **Operation Canon [Southwark] 2016**

£80m Ponzi Scheme

Sarah Forshaw QC, instructed by the SFO, successfully prosecuted this £80m "Ponzi" scheme. The defendants purported to be a successful supplier of electrical goods such as light bulbs, air conditioning units, trouser presses and televisions to major hotel chains such as the Marriott and Hilton. They also falsely claimed to be the preferred supplier of the Olympic village, ahead of the 2012 Games.

<https://www.sfo.gov.uk/2016/05/24/ponzi-fraudsters-sentenced-total-21-years/>

- **R v. A [Aylesbury] 2015**

Allegation of Rape against a professional footballer

Sarah Forshaw QC was successful in the defence of a professional footballer charged with rape and sexual assault upon teenage victim. Instructed by BCL Solicitors LLP.

- **R v. D & ors [C.C.C.] 2015**

Drug related double murder

Sarah Forshaw QC appeared for a 17 year old man who was cleared of involvement in the double murder of two men in Leytonstone, East London. Instructed by McCormacks.

BBC news report [here](#).

- **R v. Riaz & anr [C.C.C.] 2015**

Murder

Sarah Forshaw QC successfully represented a law student who was cleared of arranging the murder of her boyfriend by a former boyfriend. Instructed by Imran Khan & Partners.

Daily Mail report [here](#).

- **R v. Kharrahassan & ors [C.C.C.] 2014**

Importation of £5m of Cocaine

Sarah Forshaw QC leading Charlotte Newell represented a greengrocer who was charged and cleared of smuggling £5m of cocaine in fruit and vegetables. Co-defendants sentenced to 17 years. instructed by Bark & Co.

Daily Mail report [here](#).

- **Coats, R. v [2013] EWCA Crim 1472 (24 July 2013) 2013**

"Battered Woman Syndrome"

Sarah Forshaw QC acted on behalf of this appellant on a case referred to the COA by the Criminal Cases Review Commission. The appeal centred around "Battered Women Syndrome" after the appellant was convicted of cocaine smuggling. Instructed by Blackfords LLP.

Reported Judgment can be read [here](#).

Guardian report can be read [here](#).

- **R v. Thompson [Aylesbury] 2013**

Historic Sex Abuse

Sarah Forshaw QC leading Dickon Reid successfully represented this defendant who had Aspergers and was charged and cleared of 42 counts of historic sexual assaults. The defendant had similar fact previous convictions which were renewed to the Court of Appeal and subsequently overturned. Instructed by Edward Hayes LLP. Internet report [here](#).

Notable Cases

- **R v H [Southwark] 2020**

Sexual Assault

Miss Forshaw QC was instructed privately to represent a Member of the House of Lords in his high profile trial for sexual assault before Edis J at Southwark Crown Court. Lord H was found not guilty. Instructed by Blackfords.

News reports can be found here:

BBC

Daily Mail

- **R v G [Kingston CC & Court of Appeal] 2019**

Sarah Forshaw QC was leading counsel for the defence, representing a young man facing five counts of rape. There were three separate complainants. The allegations involved BDSM and one of the complainants was not previously known to the defendant. The jury found the defendant not guilty on 3 of the 5 counts.

Miss Forshaw appealed the two remaining convictions and the Court of Appeal overturned them. The judgment of the Court of Appeal is now a recognised authority, featuring in the Crown Court Compendium and in the leading textbooks on criminal law. Instructed by Hodge Jones & Allen.

Gabbai v R. [2019] EWCA Crim 2287 (20 December 2019)

- **R v. Armstrong [Southwark] 2017**

Alleged Rape in the Palace of Westminster

Sarah Forshaw QC represented Samuel Armstrong, Chief of Staff to conservative MP Craig Mackinley, whom was accused of raping and sexually assaulting a young woman following a drinking session after work in the bar at the Houses of Parliament. The case attracted considerable media attention. Mr Armstrong was cleared by a jury after an 9 day trial. Instructed by Taylor Haldane Barlex.

BBC report here.

- **R v. Max Clifford [Southwark] 2016**

Defence of celebrity publicist for historic sexual assault

Sarah Forshaw QC leading Orla Daly were successful in their defence of the renowned celebrity publicist who was cleared of a further charge of historic sexual assault.

BBC news report here.

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R v. Mahmood & Smith - “The Fake Sheikh Trial” [C.C.C] 2016

Trial of the "Fake Sheikh"

Sarah Forshaw QC leading Danny Robinson were instructed by the CPS in the successful prosecution of the 'Fake Sheikh' and his driver for perverting the course of justice surrounding the 2013 failed prosecution of popstar Tulisa Contostavlos.

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3819690/Fake-Sheikh-Mazher-Mahmood-guilty-Tulisa-cocaine-sting-trial.html>

- **Appeal of Johnson & ors 2016**

Post "Jogee" Joint Enterprise Appeal

Sarah Forshaw QC was involved in the post "Jogee" conviction appeals. A matter that is to be considered by the Supreme Court.

Judgment can be found here.

- **R v. Brennan [2015] 1 WLR 2060 2015**

Murder

Sarah Forshaw QC was instructed in the defence of a gay escort accused of killing 53 year old antiques dealer in a ritualistic satanic attack. The murder conviction was overturned on appeal in 2015 and the sentence reduced. It has become an important decision in cases of diminished responsibility and expert psychiatric evidence. Instructed by Bailey Nicholson Grayson.

The judgment of the Court of Appeal, Criminal Division, is now reported <http://www.bailii.org/ew/cases/EWCA/Crim/2014/2387.html>.

BBC news report here.

- **Operation Farnhams [C.C.C.] 2012**

Murder of schoolboy at Victoria Station

Sarah Forshaw QC leading Sue Rodham, successfully represented their defendant in the trial in respect of the brutal killing of the schoolboy Sofyen Belamouadden at Victoria Railway station by a gang of 19 youths in March 2010. The horrific nature of this killing led to widespread publicity of joint enterprise, knife related gang crime. Instructed by Whitelock and Storr.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-15310015>