



Practice Profile

Jonathan Polnay KC is a truly outstanding criminal barrister and recognised as being at the very top of the profession. Jonathan was appointed Senior Treasury Counsel in 2024, having been a junior in "the room" since 2017 and is regularly instructed in the most serious and high-profile cases and accepts instructions on behalf of both the prosecution and the defence.

He has been instructed in some of the most high-profile cases in the criminal courts, which include the recent prosecutions of the murder of Sir David Amess MP, John Worboys ('the black cab rapist), the PC Harper trial and the trial concerning the manslaughter of 39 Vietnamese migrants. He brings to all cases his fierce intellect, unstinting hard work and dedication and an approachable and down-to-earth manner. He is much admired for his excellent and incisive judgment and legal knowledge as well as his ability to communicate complex evidence in a way that is clear and attractive to juries.

Jonathan accepts instructions from all specialist divisions of the Crown Prosecution Service, Solicitors and when appropriate Direct Professional Access "DPA". Instructions in privately funded matters are accepted subject to The (New) Standard Contractual Terms for the Supply of Legal Services by Barristers to Authorized Persons 2012.

Jonathan's Privacy Policy can be found [here](#).

Areas of Practice

- Financial & Corporate Crime
- Homicide
- Prosecution
- Road Traffic
- Serious & Organised Crime
- Sexual Offences
- General Crime
- Confiscation, Civil Recovery & Asset Forfeiture
- Cyber Crime
- Inquests
- Military Law
- Regulatory & Professional Discipline
- Terrorism
- Public Access
- 5KBW Criminal Appeals
- 5KBW Criminal Appeals Resources

What The Directories Say

"He's a superstar on the rise." *Chambers UK 2024*

"He's exceptional in terms of his legal ability and the way he deals with tribunals and co-counsel." *Chambers UK 2024*

'Jonathan is at the very top of the profession, an excellent advocate and lawyer. He is a class act: fair, hardworking, and clever. He is in so many ways just an ordinary bloke but he has an extraordinary talent.' *Legal 500 2024*

"He is outrageously good and instils total confidence from the outset. A hugely impressive professional who is very, very responsive and able to grasp cases immediately." *Chambers UK 2023*

'Jonathan is immensely impressive. He is incredibly clever, extremely hard working, and thinks incredibly quickly on his feet. A lethal cross-examiner.' *Legal 500 - 2023 [Financial Crime]*

'Jonathan's legal knowledge and tactical acumen are second-to-none. He is a formidable advocate both on paper and on his feet.' *Legal 500 2023*

'He is highly intelligent; he is prolifically hard-working and has endless stamina and he is a great strategist and his judgment is pretty perfect. He is one of the best junior Treasury Counsel at the Old Bailey. A masterful advocate; he makes winning look easy.' *Legal 500 2021*

Has the ability to simplify complex prosecution cases that might be strong evidentially but are on paper difficult to communicate to a jury." "He is good with the jury and is also someone whose judgement you can trust.' *Chambers & Partners 2021*

"He has extensive experience of how the criminal justice system operates in practice, particularly in relation to the processes used by law enforcement and the mechanics of the various powers available to law enforcement agencies. He has excellent judgement and is able to offer simple, but highly useful suggestions." *Chambers UK 2020*

"There are not enough superlatives to do this gentleman justice; he has a prolific energy that galvanises his cases." *Chambers UK 2019*

"He instils great confidence in clients." *Legal 500 2016*

'A very effective prosecutor, and also a very hardworking defence junior, who gets on very well with clients.' *Legal 500 2017*

'A masterful advocate – eloquent, sharp and irresistibly persuasive.' *Legal 500 2020*

Reported Cases:

- R v Shaikh and anor [2021] EWCA Crim 45 – Approach to calculating minimum term in life sentences imposed for terrorist offending
- R v Long, Bowers and Cole [2020] EWCA Crim 1729 – Interaction between the offences of causing death by dangerous driving and unlawful act manslaughter.
- McIntyre [2020] 4 WLR 144 – Sentencing powers of Court-Martial on an elected trial
- Riley [2019] EWCA Crim 816 – Role of the Attorney General as guardian of the public interest
- Zaheer [2019] 1 Cr App R (S) 14 – Appropriate level of adjustment in sentence for attempts
- James [2018] 1 WLR 2749 – Special Court convened to consider procedure on renewed applications to appeal
- Thompson [2018] 1 WLR 4429 – 5-Judge Court of Appeal considered extended sentence provision
- Muss [2018] 1 Cr App R S 17 – Level of sentence for large-scale DDoS attacks
- Bala [2017] MHLR 375 – Historic manslaughter appeal

- Dorling [2016] EWCA Crim 1750 – CCRC reference on murder conviction
- Barre [2016] Crim LR 768 – When manslaughter should be left as an alternative to murder
- Hamilton [2016] 2 Cr App R S – Approach to be taken to drug smuggling in prison
- Bhatti [2016] 1 Cr App R 1 – Special procedure warrants in relation to credit reference
- Henry [2015] 2 Cr App R 1 – Double jeopardy trial, definition of 'new' evidence
- Patel [2013] Med LR 507 – Actus reus in offence of ill-treatment of mental patients
- King [2012] EWCA Crim 805 – Covert surveillance involving breaches of PACE
- A, B, C, D [2011] 2 WLR 647 – Parasitic accessory liability, pre-Jogee
- Jordan [2009] EWCA Crim 953 - Single act propensity/coincidence in bad character

News

Jonathan Polnay to be appointed Senior Treasury Counsel

20 February 2024

Chambers are delighted to announce that the Attorney General has appointed Jonathan Polnay as Senior Treasury Counsel as of 1 April 2024. Jonathan Polnay's appointment follows the January announcement that he is to be appointed one of His Majesty's Counsel [KC] on 18th March 2024.

Treasury Counsel are a team of specialist advocates who prosecute many of the most serious and complex cases in the country, and advise and appear on behalf of the Law Officers, and other government departments. Jonathan follows in the footsteps of Mark Heywood KC our joint Head of Chambers who was the First Senior Treasury Counsel between 2015-2018.

King's Counsel Appointments

15 February 2024

We are delighted to announce that Catherine Farrelly and Jonathan Polnay are to be appointed as King's Counsel (KC). The 2024 Silk appointment ceremony will take place at Westminster Hall in March.

King Charles III has approved the appointment of 95 barristers and solicitors as King's Counsel in England and Wales. A ceremony at Westminster Hall on 18th March will take place where the Lord Chancellor will formally swear in the new silks. The title of KC is awarded to those who have demonstrated particular skill and expertise in the conduct of advocacy.

Joint Head of Chambers, Sarah Forshaw KC said:

"The award of King's Counsel is for 'excellence in advocacy'. That is the standard we seek to achieve at 5 King's Bench Walk. We could not be more proud and delighted that two of our home-grown advocates, Jonathan Polnay and Catherine Farrelly, are to be appointed King's Counsel in 2024. Firm friends, they started out as pupils together at 5 King's Bench Walk in 2000/2001. Both are true stars; hugely impressive advocates with unrivalled judgment. That they are, each of them, also thoroughly likeable and fiercely popular is the icing on the cake."

Congratulations from everyone at 5KBW

Opening statement at the Independent Inquiry Relating to Afghanistan

13 October 2023

Oliver Glasgow KC has this week made the opening statement as counsel to the inquiry in the Royal Courts of

Justice at the start of the Independent Inquiry Relating to Afghanistan. Counsel includes Jonathan Polnay from 5KBW and Kerry Broome from QEB.

YouTube Live: Opening Statements Day One - Monday 9 October Morning Session | Opening Statements Day One - Monday 9 October Afternoon Session | Opening Statements Day Two - Tuesday 10 October (AM 1/1)

YouTube Live: Channel for the Statutory Inquiry Relating to Afghanistan

More information can also be found on the IIA website: [Home](#) | [Team](#) | [News](#) | [Hearings](#) | [Documents](#) | [FAQ](#)

Recent Cases

R v. Ali Ali 2022

Prosecution of Islamist terrorist for the murder of Sir David Amess MP

Jonathan Polnay, led by Tom Little QC, prosecuted this high profile murder concerning the tragic killing of the much loved Conservative MP for Southend, Sir David Amess MP.

Wikipedia link here.

R v. Walker [Cambridge] 2021

Step-Father convicted in Missing Body Murder Trial

Jonathan Polnay, led by Lisa Wilding QC secured convictions in a missing body murder trial at Cambridge Crown Court.

17 year old Bernadette Walker disappeared on 18th July 2020 after alleging that her step-father, Scott Walker, had been sexually abusing her for a number of years. She was last seen having been collected from her grandparents' house by Walker who claimed she had simply walked away following an argument.

Walker and Bernadette's mother, Sarah Walker, were also found guilty of perverting the course of justice by using the dead girl's phone to send messages suggesting she was still alive and lying to the police about her disappearance.

Bernadette's body has never been found. The trial lasted 6 weeks.

Bernadette Walker: Scott Walker guilty of murder – BBC News

R v. Sahayb Abu - [C.C.C.] 2021

Conviction for man preparing to carry out an IS inspired sword-attack

Jonathan Polnay, led by John McGuinness QC prosecution Sahayb Abu, the 'masked menace' for preparing to carry out a terrorist sword attack.

News Report.

R v. Hughes & ors [C.C.C.] 2021

Essex lorry deaths case - 39 counts of manslaughter

Jonathan Polnay, led by William Emlyn Jones, prosecuted eight men for conspiracy to facilitate illegal immigration and 39 counts of manslaughter, arising out of the death of Vietnamese migrants in a sealed lorry trailer.

BBC Report here.

R v. Long & ors [C.C.C.] 2020

Killing of serving Thames Valley Police officer, PC Andrew Harper

Prosecution of three young men for the homicide of Thames Valley Police Officer, PC Andrew Harper, who was tragically killed whilst trying to apprehend thieves. (Leaders, Brian Altman QC, and then Jonathan Laidlaw QC).

BBC News report here.

R v Fuller [Kingston] 2020

Far Right Extremist charged with Car Park Stabbing of Bulgarian National

Jonathan Polnay prosecution Vincent Fuller for attempted murder. Having been inspired by the Christchurch massacre, Fuller tried to carry out a terrorist-motivated knife attack in South West London.

BBC News report here.

R v. Abdullah [C.C.C.] 2020

Man who incited German terror cell to commit terrorist atrocities by training them in use of explosives.

Jonathan Polnay, led by Barnaby Jameson QC, prosecuted Abdullah for assisting another to prepare an act of terrorism. He incited a terror cell, based in Germany, to commit terrorist atrocities that would have caused mass fatalities. His encouragement was not limited to words. He researched, obtained and tested explosives in order to teach the German cell to carry out the terrorist attacks to maximum effect.

BBC News report.

R v B-L & J [CCC] 2020

Shooting of drug dealer

Danny Robinson QC lead Jonathan Polnay in the prosecution of two individuals, charged with the murder of a drug dealer. At the time of the murder, police discovered drugs concealed by the victim's car. The victim was a delivery driver who was found with a gun shot wound to the head.

R v Anwar Hussain & ors [Southwark] 2019

MTIC Fraud

Jonathan Polnay led William Davis in this long running MTIC fraud involving five companies and tax losses of around £13M. There were multiple trading chains supported by a wealth of forged documentation, and the proceeds of the fraud were transferred offshore via banks in Eastern Europe and Hong Kong.

R v David [Southwark] 2019

£15m Investment Fraud

Jonathan Polnay acted in the Prosecution of investment advisor for defrauding nearly £15 million from investors. The case involved complex third party confiscation proceedings.

R v. John Worboys [C.C.C.] 2019

Further prosecution of notorious black-cab driver for drugging passengers with sexual intent

Jonathan Polnay, led by Duncan Penny QC prosecuted the notorious black-cab driver for drugging a further four passengers with sexual intent. All the women made their allegations to the police in early 2018, shortly after the Parole Board announced it had decided he was fit to leave prison after serving less than nine years of an indeterminate sentence, plus time spent on remand.

[News article here](#)

R v. Drenova [C.C.C] 2019

Prosecution of Lithuanian serial-killer

Jonathan Polnay, led by Tim Cray QC, acted for the Prosecution in this case involving a serial killer nicknamed Scarface who went on a bloody crime spree across Europe. He was jailed for at least 20 years for his fifth murder.

[News article here](#)

Operation Major [Guildford] 2019

Multi handed conspiracy to money launder and commit fraud

Jonathan Polnay led Ben Holt for the Crown in this seven-handed conspiracy to launder the proceeds of a two-million-pound fraud. Instructed by CPS Specialist Fraud Division.

R v Abdi-Jalebi [Southwark] 2018

Multi-million pound renewable energy research fraud committed by Cambridge academic

Jonathan Polnay proesecuted this Cambridge University academic who carried out a £2.5 million fraud in government grants. Dr. Ehsan Abdi-Jalebi, 38, a former engineering student and Bye-Fellow at the university, used faked documents to siphon off money into his own accounts from funding allocated to the development of renewable energy projects.

News article here.

R v Freddy David [Southwark] 2018

Prosecution of financial advisor for £15m fraud on clients

Jonathan Polnay prosecuted this rogue financial advisor who stole nearly £15 million from wealthy clients to fund his gambling addiction and pay his children's school fees.

News article here.

R v Ngueyn [Southwark] 2018

Grenfell Tower Fraud

Jonathan Polnay prosecuted this serial fraudster who has been jailed for 21 months after he pretended his wife and son were killed in the Grenfell Tower fire in a "despicable" attempt to pocket £12,500 set aside for victims of the disaster.

News article here.

Operation Tandil [Croydon] 2018

Violent disorder arising out of an attack on an asylum seeker in Croydon

Two linked trials. Jonathan Polnay led Ben Holt in the first and Ben Holt led Dickon Reid in the second. A total of 14 defendants were charged with violent disorder arising out of an attack on an asylum seeker in Croydon. The case attracted international media attention. Instructed to SCU at CPS London.

Daily Mirror report here

Daily Mail report here

R v. Garang & Galean [C.C.C.] 2017

Teenagers who stabbed selfridges wine salesman to death found guilty of murder

Jonathan Polnay, led by Jonathan Rees QC, prosecuted these two teenagers for the murder of an 23 year old man in North London. The victim was lured to a location just off of Turnpike Lane under the pretence of a car insurance sale, but was robbed and murdered due to a previous dispute over the purchase of a laptop on the gumtree internet site.

Guardian news report [here](#).

R v. Whitlock & Baker [Blackfriars] 2017

Escape from HMP Pentonville

Jonathan Polnay prosecuted this escape from HMP Pentonville by two cell mates serving substantial sentences. Whitlock & Baker sawed through a bar, crossed a roof and swung out on a CCTV pole before going on the run, being caught after 6 and 2 days.

News Report [here](#).

Operation Polarity [C.C.C.] 2017

Teenager who masterminded Cyber crime attacks upon Sony & Microsoft

Jonathan Polnay prosecuted this teenager who set up a computer hacking business that caused chaos worldwide. Adam Mudd was 16 when he created the Titanium Stresser program, which carried out more than 1.7m attacks on websites including Minecraft, Xbox Live and Microsoft and TeamSpeak, earning the equivalent of more than £386,000 in US dollars and bitcoins from selling the program to cybercriminals.

News Report [here](#).

R v. Pantellaro [I.L.C.C.] 2017

Attempted Murder of Brother & Sister

Jonathan Polnay was instructed to prosecute this Italian Martial Arts expert whom broke into and stabbed a brother and sister as they slept in their home. The attack was racially motivated and random. The Judge directed a not guilty verdict by reason of insanity and the defendant was detained for mental health assessment.

Evening Standard report [here](#).

R v. Dobby [C.C.C.] 2017

Drug user admits manslaughter after two killed in Penge car chase

Anthony Orchard QC leading Jonathan Polnay appeared for the Crown in this case involving the death of an aunt and 10 year old nephew killed by a drug user during a car chase with Police. The defendant was sentenced to 12 years.

News report [here](#).

R v. Chandler [C.C.C.] 2017

Serial Rapist

Jonathan Polnay prosecuted this defendant, dubbed one of Britain's worst sex offenders, who was sentenced to a further 3 life sentences for rapes committed over 30 years ago.

News report here.

R v. Coe [Southwark] 2016

'Anjem Choudary' associate

Jonathan Polnay prosecuted this notorious associate of Anjem Choudhary for assaulting teenage muslim children who he saw holding hands.

Press report here.

R v. Oorloff & Dickinson [Guildford] 2016

£2m 'Rare Earth Metal' Fraud

Jonathan Polnay led Ben Holt in this "boiler room" rare earth metals fraud. Both Defendants were convicted after trial of selling worthless Rare Earth Metals as part of an investment. The total value of the scam was £1.9m. Both defendants were convicted and sentenced to a total of 11 years' imprisonment. Instructed by CPS Headquarters Central Fraud Group.

News report here.

R v. Orhon [Kingston] 2016

Multiple attempted murders

Jonathan Polnay prosecuted this "disturbed loner" who randomly attacked four women during a stabbing spree in a supermarket car park in Hampton Court as revenge for his perceived mistreatment by police.

News Report here.

R v. Denning [Southwark] 2016

Historic Sexual Abuse by former Radio 1 DJ

Jonathan Polnay prosecuted this former BBC DJ whom was jailed for 13 years for a series of child sex offences committed between 1969 and 1986.

BBC News report here

R v. Eren & ors [Wood Green] 2016

Plan to commit armed escape from Wood Green Crown Court

Jonathan Polnay prosecuted this six-handed conspiracy to escape and possession of imitation firerarm case at the Crown Court at Woolwich, as a sole junior. The case centred around a plot to free Izzet Eren whilst he was being transported to Crown Court at Wood Green to be sentenced for firearms offences. During the police police operation to disrupt the planned offence, a firearms officer shot dead a man in the car with the conspirators.

BBC news report here.

Operation Lenwade [C.C.C.] 2016

7-handed gang murder

Mark Heywood QC and Jonathan Polnay prosecuted this 7-handed gang-murder trial at the Central Criminal Court arising out of a feud between two notorious Hackney gangs. Following the convictions, YouTube was put under significant pressure to remove videos that glorified the gangs' activities.

Daily Mail report here.

R v. Vassell & ors [C.C.C.] 2016

6-handed kidnap, torture and blackmail

Jonathan Polnay successfully prosecuted this 6-handed kidnap, blackmail and torture case at the Central Criminal Court. Following a perceived drug debt, the Defendants kidnaped the victim and held him hostage. He was made the subejct of numerous sadistic assaults when the demanded ransom was not paid.

<http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/world-news/reservoir-dogs-inspired-gang-tortured-7313282>

R v. Paul [Blackfriars] 2015

Historic Sexual abuse in Lambeth Children's Home'

Jonathan Higgs QC leading Jonathan Polnay prosecuted this prolific paedophile. Paul was convicted by the jury of numerous counts of serious sexual abuse of boys in his care in a Lambeth children's home.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-35316685>

R v. H & anr [Southwark] 2015

International Cricket Match-Fixing

Jonathan Polnay, Led by Jonathan Laidlaw QC, successfully defended a practising criminal barrister, accused of perverting the course of justice. The case attracted national and international press attention as it centred around an International cricketer, whom was also cleared, of lying under oath in a 2012 Libel trial.

R v. Jones [C.C.C.] 2015

£1.8m racehorse fraud

Jonathan Polnay appeared for the Crown in this Prosecution of City Banker for defrauding friends and colleagues of £1.8m in a false racehorse investment scheme.

[Press report here.](#)

R v. Shaibu & Nelson [C.C.C.] 2015

Discharge of automatic weapons at PCSO

Jonathan Polnay prosecuted this two handed trial at the Old Bailey involving a proposed revenge attack to seek retribution on a group they believed was responsible for assaulting one of their gang associates armed with a submachine gun. A PCSO who heard the altercation intervened and was shot at but was unhurt. The defendants were jailed for 24 years & 12 years.

[News report here.](#)

R v. Dwayne Henry [Blackfriars] 2015

Double-jeopardy prosecution of serial rapist

Mark Heywood QC leading Jonathan Polnay prosecuted this Defendant, who described himself as the 'Hackney Ripper', who stood trial and was convicted of a series of rapes of prostitutes, receiving a sentence of life imprisonment. The Defendant had previously been acquitted of rape. A successful application was made to quash the acquittal under the double-jeopardy provisions of the Criminal Justice Act 2003, and join the re-trial to the new proceedings.

[Daily Mail report here.](#)

R v. A & ors [C.C.C] 2015

Standing Order Fraud

Jonathan Polnay led Ben Holt for the Crown in a nine-handed standing order fraud that was set up and orchestrated by an inside man working with Nationwide bank. Case involved a considerable amount of forensic and banking evidence. (Investigated by DCPCU, instructed by CPS SCU). Jury were unable to reach a verdict on defendant said to be "inside man". Prosecuted re-trial alone and the defendant was convicted. Mail Online news report.

R v. Iqbal & 18 ors [Southwark] 2014

Banking & Credit Fraud

Robert Ellison led Jonathan Polnay for the Prosecution in this 19 defendant Credit and banking fraud with many thousands of pages of served and unused evidence. A conspiracy to defraud creditors and 'Acquiring Companies' by abusing technical weaknesses in the 'chip and PIN' payment process. The fraud was so complex that the trial judge described the methodology and money laundering as an 'impenetrable scheme'.

R v. B & ors [Harrow] 2013

Bogus college immigration fraud

Jonathan Higgs QC led Jonathan Polnay and Senghin Kong prosecuting three defendants involved in running a bogus college for conspiracy to assist unlawful immigration. The defendants were convicted after a 3 month trial. The case involved complex legal argument in relation to Griffiths-type conspiracies and substantial disputed evidence from forensic accountants. Senghin Kong was instructed to prosecute the resulting 3 day confiscation hearing without a leader, against three QCs and juniors. Instructed by CPS Central Fraud Group.

Operation Goomburra [C.C.C.] 2013

Joint Enterprise Murder

Mark Heywood QC, Jonathan Polnay and Alison Wilkes Prosecuted this 3 month, 10-handed murder trial at the Central Criminal Court with extensive cell site, phone download and CCTV evidence, including the use of electronic presentation aids (360 mapping).

Notable Cases

R v. Long and ors [CCC] 2020

Prosecution of three men for killing a Thames Valley police officer

Jonathan Polnay was led by Brian Altman QC (first trial) and Jonathan Laidlaw QC (second trial) in the prosecution of three young men for killing PC Andrew Harper, whilst trying to escape with a stolen quad bike.

Wikipedia entry concerning the killing of PC Harper.

R v Robinson and ors [CCC] 2020

39 counts of manslaughter of Vietnamese migrants

Jonathan Polnay was led by Bill Emlyn Jones in this prosecution for the manslaughter of 39 Vietnamese migrants who suffocated to death in a shipping container whilst being smuggled in to the UK.

Wikipedia entry concerning the proceedings here.

R v. Theodore Johnson [C.C.C] 2018

Prosecution of man for third offence of homicide of his partners

Mark Heywood QC and Jonathan Polnay acted for the Crown in the case of Theodore Johnson whom was sentenced to life with a minimum tariff of 26 years, increased on appeal against Unduly Lenient Sentence, to 30

years in March 2018. Johnson had been convicted previously for the manslaughters of his partners in 1981 and 1993. His third victim, Angela Best, was murdered with a claw hammer in her flat in North London in December 2016.

BBC report here.

Operation Boldo [I.L.C.C.] 2017

Horsemeat Fraud

Jonathan Polnay was lead Counsel for the Crown in this multi-handed and much publicised conspiracy involving three prominent businessmen passing off horsemeat as 100% pure beef.

News report here.

R v. Patel [Southwark] 2014

First ever prosecution for Acquiring Biological Weapons

Jonathan Polnay prosecuted this young woman who was charged with the first ever prosecution under the Biological Weapons Act and attempted murder of her mother, after attempting to poison her, taking her inspiration from the series "Breaking Bad".

News report here.

Operation Cent [C.C.C.] 2013

Anti-corruption unit worldwide investigation re: bomb detection units

Jonathan Higgs QC leading Jonathan Polnay represented a defendant in the much publicised Old Bailey trial involving the worldwide sale of "fake" bomb detection devices. Instructed by Gary Bloxsome of Blackfords LLP.

BBC news report here.