

## Gary Bell KC

### Crime



Year of Call: 1989 | Year of Silk: 2012

Email Clerks: [crime@no5.com](mailto:crime@no5.com)

Gary Bell KC is instructed by solicitors from all over the country in the most high-profile, complex and serious criminal cases. His practice is 100% defence. His areas of specialism are:

### Fraud

He is ranked as a leading fraud barrister in The Legal 500's London list who describe him as a remarkable advocate with a very sharp brain. Many of his fraud cases involve over 100,000 pages of evidence, multi-millions of pounds of losses and are listed to last several months. They require exhaustive preparation, attention to detail, working as part of a team and courtroom advocacy. Over the last twenty years he has defended in the most high profile fraud cases. His cases range from allegations of money-laundering by notorious gang members to banking frauds involving over a billion pounds of losses.

### Recent Cases

#### **R v R - 2023**

R was one of a large number of defendants charged with conspiracy to defraud investors out of tens of millions of pounds by running a Ponzi fraud. R was the company accountant. After a trial lasting ten months R was found not guilty by the jury. All of the other defendants were found guilty.

#### **R v S - 2023**

S was one of several defendants charged with an £80 million fraud against the Post Office. In spite of S being the director of several companies used in the fraud the prosecution, after the jury had been sworn and having heard arguments from the defence, accepted S was innocent and the judge directed the jury to return not guilty verdicts.

## **R v M- 2019**

M was charged with several others with conspiracy to evade VAT on the importation of millions of pounds worth of alcohol and more serious fraud charged in creating an MTIC fraud to account for the VAT fraud. M was convicted (along with all other defendants) of the VAT fraud but, whilst all other defendants were convicted of the MTIC fraud, M was found not guilty.

## **Murder**

There can't be many, if any, barristers who have defended as many people accused of murder as Gary Bell has. He specialises in multi-handed cases, often involving allegations of gang related murders, and over his thirty one years as a barrister has defended in some of the most serious and high profile murder cases up and down the country. The Legal 500 said of him, prosecution barristers look nervous when Gary Bell walks into the robing room.

## **Drugs**

Gary Bell has vast experience in defending those accused of being involved in drugs conspiracies. After taking silk in 2012 he expected his drug work to dry up, as legal aid certificates for a silk are rarely given, but he has continued to be instructed on a private basis by old clients he has represented before and others who were recommended to him by those who had seen Gary Bell in action. For example, he recently successfully defended someone accused of conspiracy to supply class A drugs (his was the only defendant out of twelve to be acquitted) and two of the co-defendants have asked him to represent them in other matters.

## **General Crime**

Gary Bell will often represent those charged with less serious cases on a private fee basis. These include motoring matters, health and safety prosecutions and other general criminal allegations.

Gary Bell will always give honest and robust advice to the lay client about the strength of the case against them, and if a client wants to explore a potential guilty plea he will negotiate with the prosecution to secure the most favourable basis of plea possible. He is happiest, however, in the trial arena. If the client wants a trial Gary Bell will give the client a trial.

Gary Bell is happy to have a preliminary conversation with any prospective client with a view to seeing if they would be happy working together.

## **Recent Cases**

### **R v A - 2022**

A was charged with terrorism. Several weeks into the trial the jury had to be discharged.

### **R v K - 2022**

K was one of five defendants charged with conspiracy to supply class A and class B drugs. If convicted he faced spending over twenty years in prison. After protracted negotiations with the prosecution they agreed to drop the class A matters and accept a count to, acting alone and not in a

conspiracy, to supplying a relatively small amount of cannabis. K pleaded guilty to that count and received a suspended sentence.

#### **R v E - 2021**

E was alleged to be the leader of an organised crime gang responsible for the supply of millions of pounds of class A and B drugs throughout South Wales. After several weeks of a complex trial the prosecution accepted that E wasn't a leader but a broker who put people who wanted to buy drugs together with drug dealers. A guilty plea was entered on that basis and E not only received a prison sentence less than half he had been facing, he faced minimal confiscation proceedings instead of the several million the prosecution had originally claimed.

#### **R v R - 2021**

R was accused, along with two others, of murdering a man who, as part of a gang, attacked his premises on a raid on a cannabis grow. R shot two men dead with a crossbow. The incident was captured on R's own CCTV and, after a long trial, R and both of his accomplices were convicted of murder.

#### **R v G - 2020**

G was one of twenty men charged in relation to conspiracies to supply class A and class B drugs. After a long trial the jury either convicted every defendant or couldn't agree verdicts in relation to some counts. Except for G. He was found not guilty on all counts.

#### **R v R - 2020**

R was one of a number of defendants charged with shooting a drug dealer from a rival gang and chopping another up with a machete. He had been extradited from Spain on a European arrest warrant. After a long trial R was acquitted on all counts. Prior to his release he was arrested on other matters. I argued that the police had no authority to arrest him according to international law and prepared an advice for my solicitors. The net result was that R was released and the police were unable to charge him or remand him in custody.

#### **R v A - 2019**

A was accused of causing serious injury whilst driving dangerously. After trial he was found not guilty by the jury.

#### **R v E - 2018**

E was one of three defendants charged with a double murder of rival drug gang members in a county lines execution. After a long trial all defendants were convicted of murder.

#### **R v F - 2018**

F (who had a large number of previous convictions for football violence, was one of thirty defendants caught on CCTV fighting in a street around a pub in Cardiff. F was seen getting off an Aston Villa supporters' bus and charging along with a large gang of compatriots at Cardiff fans outside the pub. All were charged with violent disorder. Everyone was convicted except F. His defence was that he was a peacemaker and the jury found him not guilty.

#### **R v H - 2018**

H was charged with attempted murder after allegedly shooting a man in the face at point blank range. He accepted being part of an attack on a rival drug gang but denied the shooting. After a lengthy trial he was found not guilty.

## Recommendations

“Gary is an adept advocate. He is quick witted with a lovely style in court and juries quickly warm to him. One underestimates him at one's peril.” Tier 3: Fraud: Crime (London Bar) **Legal 500 2024**

Tier 3 Fraud: Crime (London Bar), **Legal 500 2023**



## Notable Cases

### **R v N**

N was tried along with six other defendants on a conspiracy to launder ten million pounds and send it to China. She had opened up two bank accounts and a foreign exchange account through which over two million pounds was laundered. After a six week trial she was found not guilty by the jury. Five of the other six defendants were convicted.

### **R v K**

Petrol was poured through a paedophile's letterbox and ignited. He escaped but left an underage girl tied to his bed to die. Her death was a terrible accident. No-one had known she was there. K was accused of attempted murder of the paedophile (who had abused his niece) and murder of the underage girl through transferred malice. He was found not guilty on both charges.

### **R v C 1**

C was alleged to be the head of an organised crime group involved in supplying class A drugs and running a protection racket in Birmingham. C stood trial along with ten co-defendants. All but C were found guilty.

### **R v C 2**

The same C was the focus of an undercover investigation into a county lines drugs conspiracy. He was allegedly observed delivering a large amount of drugs by undercover police officers, but after an officer had been exposed as a liar in cross-examination, the jury acquitted C of all charges.

### **R v C 3**

A large scale drugs conspiracy where the same C was the first defendant of 11 alleged to have been involved in the wholesale supply of heroin across the country. C, again, was the main focus of the six

month investigation where two undercover police officers lived as a pretend man and wife in C's community. The operation resulted in twenty eight arrests. Most of the defendants pleaded guilty in the face of overwhelming evidence but six of them stood trial. After a three month trial the jury convicted all of the defendants but couldn't agree on a verdict for C so a re-trial was ordered.

#### **R v C 4**

C was tried again on his own and, after a two month trial, acquitted unanimously by the jury. Gary Bell has represented C in over a dozen trials, all resulting in not guilty verdicts.

#### **R v M**

M was the head of an OCG supplying class A drugs to large areas of Sheffield. A rival drug dealer kidnapped M's brother and took him to a park to kill him, but a message was sent to M who rushed to the park with an army of assistants. The rival drug dealer had a gun and shot and injured three of them, but M stabbed him 30 times and killed him. He was found not guilty of murder but guilty of violent disorder and sentenced to perform 80 hours of community service

#### **R v M**

D was a financial broker charged with masterminding and financing a conspiracy to commit mortgage fraud to the value of several million pounds. The case included a large number of buyers and sellers of property, but none of the large number of solicitors who had sanctioned and used the scheme had been charged. A legal submission was made that it would be an abuse of process to try D without also charging and putting on trial a large number of solicitors. The prosecution were ordered by the judge to draft a response justifying their approach and setting out in detail what their case was against D. They failed to lodge a response and not guilty verdicts were entered for D.

#### **R v H**

H's neighbour's son had been sent £5 in a card by his Auntie but it had been stolen by another neighbour (the empty card was found in his bin.) H gathered together a posse of women armed with pots and pans and they went to the thief's house and beat him to death. H and the rest were charged with murder but were all found not guilty.

#### **R v F**

F had arranged a trip to Cardiff for a group of Aston Villa hooligans. After the game he led them on an attack against a number of Cardiff City fans standing outside a pub. The whole incident was captured on CCTV. During the trial the prosecution made a successful application to reveal his previous convictions for football violence to the jury (he had dozens). His defence was that he was a peacemaker. Everyone except him was convicted.

#### **R v H**

H was charged as part of a large scale conspiracy to defraud the revenue. He was acquitted after a legal submission. He also stood trial with four other defendants for a related attempted murder. The other four defendants were found guilty by the jury but H was acquitted after an 8 week trial.

#### **R v F**

F was one of ten defendants charged with a conspiracy to supply class A drugs into prisons. After a ten week trial F was found not guilty by the jury, as were four other defendants.

### **R v W**

W was charged as being involved as part of a conspiracy to commit a Ponzi fraud, defrauding investors of a total of twenty six million pounds by marketing a scheme to turn rock into gold. There was compelling evidence of his guilt and he was advised to plead guilty. An extremely limited basis of plea was negotiated with the prosecution based upon W only knowing that the investment scheme was fraudulent very late in the day. Other defendants had a trial and were convicted by the jury. W was the only defendant of eight to receive a non-custodial sentence. His confiscation proceedings were limited to thirty thousand pounds.

### **R v M**

M was charged as being the head of an OCG responsible for supplying drugs into a number of prisons up and down the country. The allegation was that £25 million worth of drugs had been supplied. Twenty people were arrested and charged. Ten pleaded guilty and ten stood trial. M was the only defendant found not guilty.

### **R v G**

G was alleged to have been involved in an OCG county lines conspiracy to supply class A drugs. After a trial involving a large number of co-defendants, G was the only one found not guilty by the jury.

### **R v B**

Instructed privately by a solicitor charged with conspiracy to defraud a vulnerable woman out of her inheritance along with two police officers. After a four week trial the two police officers were convicted but the solicitor was found not guilty.

### **R v B**

B was a nightclub bouncer charged with GBH after biting the ear off a person in the club who had been causing trouble. He ran self-defence which was accepted by the jury who found him not guilty.

### **R v C**

C was alleged to have tried to murder a police officer, attacking him with two machetes. After a lengthy trial, with many police officers testifying they had witnessed the attack, the jury couldn't reach a verdict. A re-trial was ordered and, again, the jury couldn't reach a verdict. Thereafter not guilty verdicts were entered against C.

### **R v S**

S was accused of conspiring with a county council officer to rig a procurement process resulting in him obtaining a lucrative contract without facing competitive tenders and for a hugely inflated price. The co-defendant pleaded guilty to conspiring with S. S was tried on his own and found not guilty by the jury.

### **R v B**

B was a Doctor charged with causing serious injury by dangerous driving. His defence was automatism. After a week long trial he was acquitted by the jury.

### **R v K**

K was charged with murder of one man and attempted murder of another after returning to a party armed with a knife after an argument and stabbing them both. He was found not guilty of both charges by the jury.

#### **R v P**

A multi-million pound boiler room fraud involving over 100,000 pages of evidence and five defendants. Shortly before the trial the defendant absconded and was tried in his absence. P was alleged to have run a boiler room in Spain selling worthless shares to hapless investors for millions of pounds. Two other defendants in the trial were also alleged to have run boiler rooms in Spain. After a three month trial the other two defendants were convicted by the jury but P was found not guilty.

#### **R v H**

H was alleged to have led a small army of accomplices on an attack of a rival group of travellers camp. He was then alleged to have attempted to murder two of the rival travellers by shooting them, one in the face at point blank range. After a trial lasting eight weeks the jury found him not guilty of both counts.

#### **R v C**

C was at a party and bragged to other partygoers that he was going to murder X. Some of the partygoers reported the threats to the police. The following evening X was beaten to death at his home with a baseball bat. His body was wrapped in a section of his carpet and dumped in the Walsall Arboretum lake. The following morning C was captured on CCTV selling X's jewellery to a pawnbroker in Wolverhampton. He was then arrested and the remains of X's burned carpet was found in C's fireplace. In his garden police noticed fresh digging and found X's clothes buried three feet underground. C stood trial for the murder but was found not guilty

#### **R v M**

M was one of seven defendants charged with running a multi-million pound VAT fraud. After a two month trial all of the defendants were found guilty except M, the jury found him not guilty.

#### **R v R**

Successfully defended a company charged with a large number of trading standards offences and general fraud. After a two day trial in the magistrates the company and its directors were found not guilty by the magistrate who said he found the trading standards officer's evidence unreliable and dishonest.

#### **R v H**

Acted for a solicitor charged with a five million pound intellectual property fraud. T was alleged to have fraudulently set up shadow companies to transfer millions of pounds worth of assets belonging to an Australian businessman who was ignorant of the transfers. The Australian businessman was the prosecution's main witness. Served alongside the case papers were disks served as unused material and which contained tens of thousands of pages of material. After a thorough analysis of the unused material – none of which had been read by the prosecution, Gary Bell drafted a skeleton argument which, with attached exhibits, ran to over a hundred pages. In the skeleton it was alleged that the exhibits proved the Australian businessman knew full well about the transfers and had sanctioned them. It was therefore submitted that it would be an abuse of process to rely on his

evidence. The prosecution agreed with the submission shortly after they received it and offered no evidence against T. Not guilty verdicts were then returned.

#### **R v J**

J, a Pole, was charged, on the evidence of two other Polish men, with the murder of a fourth man by slitting his throat after an argument about drugs. Before the trial the other two men had absconded to Poland and it was successfully argued that it would be an abuse to try J in their absence. The judge ordered not guilty verdicts to be returned.

#### **R v E**

E was one of four men charged with the murder of rival drug dealers who were allegedly selling drugs on their county lines turf. It was alleged E and the others had travelled from London to Bristol to exterminate the rival gang with zombie knives. Mid-way through the trial all of the defendants started to blame each other, which resulted in all four of them being convicted.

#### **R v W**

W, the head of a notorious gang, was alleged to have assassinated a rival gang leader by shooting him in the head whilst he sat in his car. A total of five people stood trial for the murder. W had absconded so the other four were tried without him. All four were convicted of murder. W was found hiding in Holland, extradited and tried on his own. He was found not guilty.