Simon Ralph



Junior Counsel - Above 15 Years
CALLED 2009

An established practitioner and former military legal advisor with unique experience in a range of tribunals and jurisdictions.

Simon's practice focusses on prosecuting and defending serious crime in the Crown Court and Court of Appeal, including advising on strategic approaches to litigation at an early stage. His criminal practice encompasses defending in the Court Martial, and acting in a number of cases at the intersection of criminal and civil law.

In addition to his criminal work, he has advised at the highest level on matters of public international, international criminal and international humanitarian law, and provides advice and representation to major government departments on a range of matters as a member of the Attorney-General's Panel of civil counsel.

He has established a reputation as an astute and tenacious advocate, and a robust and client-focused advisor. Simon is comfortable advancing complex legal arguments in court, and advising on cases whose subject matter spans a range of jurisdictions, tribunals, or areas of law. His cases often involve sensitive material and require the provision of commercially

aware, common sense advice.

Background and Experience

Crime

Simon has acted for the defence as junior alone across the spectrum of offences, successfully representing individuals on multi-handed fraud, drugs importation, and rape – including historic allegations. As led junior he has prosecuted and defended the most serious allegations, including murder, and prolific sexual offending resulting in life sentences.

He is a Grade 4 CPS prosecutor, and routinely prosecutes at that level, with a particular emphasis on complex fraud and money-laundering trials. He is a member of the CPS specialist fraud and counter-terror panels.

Defending, he is regularly sought after in cases requiring skilled and sensitive cross-examination, such as RASSO trials and trials involving vulnerable witnesses. He is particularly adept at cross-examining experts, whether in relation to forensic science, cell-site data, or accountancy. The Court of Appeal described his advocacy as a 'credit to himself and his profession' when describing his 'obviously effective' cross-examination of a prosecution cell-site expert.

Simon takes a keen interest in 'quasi-criminal' cases, and in the past has appeared in committal for contempt proceedings in the High Court, represented a business and its owner in a large scale prosecution for breach of planning law (where he successfully argued abuse of process over two days), and represented an acquitted defendant in a civil claim against the police for malicious prosecution.

Military and Public Law

Following seven years at the defence Bar Simon joined the British Army as a legal advisor, promoting to Major shortly before re-entering private practice. In addition to prosecuting in the Court Martial he advised the chain of command and Whitehall on counter-terror and state-focussed operations in the UK and overseas. His primary expertise relates to international humanitarian law and the treatment of detainees, but extends to general public international law (e.g. prohibited interventions), international criminal law/war crimes, human rights, RIPA and IPA, and the extra-territorial application of the ECHR. He was deployed to the Middle East during his period of service where he operated in hostile environments, liaising with government departments, allied forces, and local overseas security forces. He provided advice on law, policy, and the overseas application of the state's Article 2 obligations.

His work in the Army encompassed the sorts of issues routinely litigated in public inquiries and high profile inquests, and his combination of insight, experience, and ability as an advocate, makes him ideally placed to act and advise in these most sensitive of cases.

When prosecuting in the Court Martial he focussed on fraud, serious violence and RASSO work. His cases included major firearms offences attracting mandatory five year sentences, routine prosecution of s.18 GBHs, offences committed on operations, and offences under RIPA. He understands the needs of the three services, as well as the particular requirements of service personnel, and continues to accept instructions in the Court Martial (defending) and civil cases involving service personnel or the wider military.

General Civil Law

Simon also accepts instructions in civil law cases on a private basis and on behalf of government departments. Such cases generally involve criminal/civil cross-jurisdictional elements, or a military context. His own period of military service, experience dealing with government departments and agencies, and trustworthiness in relation to sensitive cases, makes him an ideal fit for such matters.

Recent instructions include advice and representation for the MOD in relation to a multi-million pound claim involving concurrent criminal proceedings, advice on the DWP's criminal jurisdiction, a Ministry of Justice Art. 3 prison dispute, and advice on the Proceeds of Crime Act for HMRC.

In addition to his routine practice Simon also sits as a Recorder of the Crown Court and a Deputy District Judge (Magistrates' Court).

Notable Cases

Court Martial

R v P, 2025

Represented a Senior NCO in the Royal Air Force charged with offences of violence against a subordinate in the chain of command. After a three day trial, and extensive cross-examination of the complainant, acquitted.

Bulford Court Martial Centre

R v P, 2021

Prosecuted the first ever service case of breach of a s.49 notice under RIPA (a notice requiring access

to a suspect's phone). Provided training to Royal Military Police on subsequent cases, and the application of RIPA to military investigators.

Catterick Court Martial Centre

R v C, 2020

Prosecuted offences of dishonesty alleged to have been committed overseas in a sensitive location. PII and witness anonymity applications required and challenged by the defence throughout. Further challenges in relation to the police and unit-level investigation, culminating in an (unsuccessful) abuse argument. Three days of legal argument took place before the trial could commence.

Bulford Court Martial Centre

Military

Driving

R v M, 2014

20 month sentence for dangerous driving appealed to the Court of Appeal where it was argued that the judge's approach to sentencing such offences was flawed. Appeal allowed and case cited in Banks on Sentence and Wilkinson's as a guideline authority.

Isleworth Crown Court

Driving

Financial Crime

R v K, 2024

Prosecuted million-pound gold bullion fraud and money laundering case. Convictions resulted on four out of five counts, one of which was the subject of an application to dismiss at an early stage.

Financial Crime

Firearms

R v S, 2021

Secured guilty pleas to a charge sheet containing 17 charges related to the possession, acquisition,

storage or adaptation of thousands of illegal firearms. Some charges carried mandatory five year terms of imprisonment.

Catterick Court Martial Centre

Firearms

General Crime

R v B, 2025

Prosecuted a defendant who stalked her victim over the course of 30 years. Instructed as a Grade 4 advocate due to the complexities of the case. The defendant, who was mentally unwell, received a Hospital Order with a s.41 Restriction.

Isleworth Crown Court

R v C, 2025

Secured a Community Order for defendant charged with being part of a conspiracy to 'ram raid' ATMs on motorway service stations, stealing the cash. Argued that the time spent on remand, and the defendant's self-motivated rehabilitation in prison, made a further prison sentence (suspended or immediate) wrong in principle.

Reading Crown Court

R v W, 2018

Acted on a private basis for an individual and business being prosecuted alongside others for breach of a planning enforcement notice. The criminal proceedings had been preceded by years of civil litigation between the parties. Following two days of legal argument in the Crown Court the case was stopped as an abuse of process.

Reading Crown Court

R v O, 2016

Represented one of three defendants charged with a spree of distraction burglaries against vulnerable individuals. The vast majority of evidence was cell site. Following cross-examination of the prosecution expert the OIC was required to obtain extensive further evidence to shore up their case, the admission of which was opposed. Appeared pro bono in the Court of Appeal and described as 'a credit to the profession'. Cited by Prof Ormerod as a key case on disclosure.

St Albans Crown Court

R v R, 2016

Following the collapse of a criminal prosecution, and some remarkable disclosure in respect of the investigation, acted for the Claimant in a claim for malicious prosecution. Settled on favourable terms following exchange of pleadings and witness statements.

Cardiff County Court

Crime

Murder and Manslaughter

R v J, 2017

Murder, defending as led junior. The case involved a violent death inflicted on an elderly man with a golf club, following which a fire was set. The evidence involved eyewitnesses (including the defendant's own father), blood spatter analysis, autopsy reports, and expert opinion on shoeprints.

Central Criminal Court

Murder and Manslaughter

Rape and Sexual Offences

R v X, 2025

Led junior prosecuting one of the most prolific sexual offenders in recent history. Framed an indictment representing hundreds of offences against at least thirteen victims. The defendant received a life sentence with a minimum term of 14 years.

Woolwich Crown Court

R v H, 2024

Successful submission of no case to answer after five days on behalf of the second defendant in a case involving serious allegations of sexual offending against children.

R v M, 2021

Successful prosecution of a difficult rape case in a service context with numerous disclosure issues raised by the defence. Intoxication and post-incident communication between the defendant and

complainant were both in issue.

Bulford Court Martial Centre

R v , 2017

Represented lead defendant in two-handed alleged rape of a 15 year old. Exceptionally sensitive cross-examination of a vulnerable witness required. Acquitted.

Lewes Crown Court

Rape and Sexual Offences

Violence

R v C, 2015

Acted on a private basis for an individual accused of GBH. The defendant's partner had leapt from a window, causing serious injury, alleging that she had done so to avoid further torture being inflicted upon her. Acquitted.

St Albans Crown Court

Violence

Achievements

Memberships

- The Honourable Society of Gray's Inn
- Criminal Bar Association
- Association of Military Court Advocates

Appointments

- Recorder of the Crown Court
- AG's London B Panel of Counsel
- Deputy District Judge (Magistrates' Court)
- CPS Grade 4 Prosecutor

Education

- Royal Military Academy Sandhurst - 2018
- BVC - Inns of Court School of Law – 2009
- BA Law (Jurisprudence) – St Edmund Hall, University of Oxford - 2008

Activities and Interests

In the ever diminishing gaps between spending time with his children, Simon enjoys playing the piano, looking at paintings, hiking, and eating nice food in interesting places.