



James Wood QC

Call: 1975

Silk: 1999

Office: London

doughty street chambers



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Specialist Areas

Criminal Defence

Terrorism

Homicide and related Grave

Offences

International Criminal Law

Criminal Appeals

Protestor Cases

Regulatory and

Financial Crime

Extradition

Overview

Throughout his career James has appeared in many high profile and grave criminal cases. Many involve allegations of terrorism or the use of crime to achieve political ends. He specialises in criminal trial and appellate work, and he prioritises cases raising political, policing and human rights issues. Whilst frequently instructed in high profile criminal appeals, he concentrates on criminal defence work in all forms of major crime, including homicides, fraud, money laundering, serious drugs and terrorism.

His historic appellate work includes numerous celebrated miscarriage of justice cases, including the **Birmingham Six**, the **Carl Bridgewater case**, and cases arising from the West Midlands Serious Crime Squad. He has appeared in numerous reported cases. He appears in the Privy Council in death sentence cases from the Caribbean. Other areas of practice include extradition, international crime, SIAC control order work, actions against the police, inquests and prisoners rights. He is on the list of approved counsel for the International Criminal Court, and welcomes instruction abroad. He is authorised for direct access work. He is a founder member of Doughty Street Chambers, a joint deputy head of chambers, and the leader of its criminal team. He is a co-opted member of the Criminal Bar Association executive committee, and contributes regularly to their working parties. He feels his commitment to and understanding of the experience of his clients is enhanced, as a result of being one of the few barristers himself to have been prosecuted and to have appeared in the law reports (see **Meaden v Wood** [1985] Crim. L.R. 678).

What the directories say

James is consistently recognised by both [Chambers and Partners](#) and [Legal 500](#) for his work. "James Wood is a 'thorough brief and a clever man' who is 'more than solid'. 'Unstoppable on his day', he studies the details of a case and then 'produces fireworks in court'" (Chambers and Partners). He is also listed in Legal 500 for his crime and civil liberties work.



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Currently instructed in terrorist cases, a double homicide, and drugs work involving issues of religious freedoms.

Criminal Appeals

James is extremely experienced in appellate work, having appeared in historic and celebrated miscarriage of justice cases. He handles the most complex and difficult appeals for the most demanding of professional and lay clients.

In terrorism he has appeared in many of the leading appeals, raising many issues. In the past year he has appeared in the sentence appeal of **Rajib Karim [2011] EWCA Crim 2577**, (the BA bomber) under section 5 of the Terrorism Act; **R v Waheed Zaman (and others) [2011] EWCA Crim 1260.**, the **airline** bomb plot appeal on autrefois acquit, conspiracies and second re-trials and **R v Habib Ahmed [2011] EWCA Crim 184** concerning issues of complicity in torture by the UK, the admissibility of expert evidence on terrorism, and the meaning of membership under the Terrorism Acts. He also previously appeared in **R v Girma [2009] EWCA Crim 912**, the accomplices to the 21/7 bombers, reported on the wrongful admission of the conviction of co-accused, and on issues of sentence, and the appeal in the Fertilizer bomb plot case **R v Khyam [2008] EWCA Crim 1612**, where issues of complicity in torture were again raised.

In protest work, he appeared in **R v Avery [2010] EWCA Crim 622** for all appellant's in the appeal against the sentences and ASBO's imposed on the leaders of SHAC for an alleged blackmail campaign against employees and contractors with the animal experimentation company, Huntingdon Life Science,.

In grave general crime he recently appeared in **R v T [2010] EWCA Crim 2439**. A successful murder appeal involving a seminal judgment on the use of statistical evidence in footwear cases. The court ruled against the current practice of applying Bayesian techniques in the assessment of the strength of support for the prosecution case derived from underlying statistical material. The case has been the subject of widespread criticism and speculation within the science community (See <http://www.guardian.co.uk/law/2011/oct/02/formula-justice-bayes-theorem-miscarriage>). Other recent general criminal appellate work includes **R v Andrew Reeves [2010] EWCA Crim 2664**, a successful murder appeal involving expert evidence on the reliability of voluntary confessions and the impact of childhood ADHD, and **R v Evans [2009] EWCA Crim 2243**, a CCRC reference in murder concerning expert psychiatric evidence. A selection of more ancient cases includes **R v Firkins [2008] EWCA Crim 2981**, the Pool Farm murder case concerning fresh evidence and legal professions privilege; **R v Yilmaz [2007] EWCA Crim 2620 (Admin)** on custody time limits, and [2007] EWCA Crim 308 on the substantive PII appeal concerning non disclosure at the original trial in Turkish heroin, conspiracy; and **R v Choudhery [2005]**



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EWCA Crim 1788. Representing the lead appellant in the "Controlled Importation" heroin cases involving corrupt Customs Officials, non-disclosure and abuse of process, and in which mammoth costs were awarded against HMCR [2005] EWCA Crim 2598.

In International work, he appeared in the Privy Council in the Trinidad and Tobago death sentence case of **Benjamin and Ganga** [2012] UKPC 8, dealing with confession evidence, and the constitutionality of the mandatory death sentence in cases of the mentally impaired.

Extradition

When available James appears in the High Court on extradition cases, leading junior members of Doughty Street's extradition team. Example of his extradition cases can be found at **Kadre v France**[2005] EWHC 1712 (Admin), [2006] A.C.D. 26, and **Deya v Kenya** [2008] EWHC 733 (Admin) (the miracle babies case)

Homicide and Related Grave Offences

James has appeared in many major criminal trials over many years. A number have attracted significant publicity. Mostly homicides and serious drug cases, and illustration of his recent cases are listed below in reverse chronological order:-

R v Nicolaou (Old Bailey: Mar-May 2011). Acquittal of defendant alleged to be middleman in Turkish gangland assassination. **R v Saint** (Old Bailey: Nov 2010-Jan 2011) joint enterprise shooting by South London Gang. **R v Griffiths**(Birmingham CC: 2010) Successful defence in gyrocopter killing case, when a hunt monitor was charged with murder of a hunt supporter with rotor blades of his own Gyrocopter. **R v McCartney**(Southwark CC 2009-2010) Successful defence in IRA blackmail plot, for longest ever serving UK IRA life sentence prisoner and active service unit member. **R v Carty** (2009 Central CC) Murder allegation involving death from repeated stabbing on public highway by defendant acquitted after claiming self defence. **R v Yilmaz** (2008 CCC and 2004 Woolwich CC) - Major heroin importation for the leader of Turkish drug gang, allegedly involved in the importation of many tons of heroin. **R v Lee Firkins** (2006 Exeter C C) - The celebrated Bodmin Moors double murder, at the Perch Garage, near Wadebridge. **R v Stevenson** (2005 Winchester C C) - The Poole Masseuse murder. **R v Moran** (2005) - The Nottingham Jeweller's wife murder. Finally he has appeared in a number of drug related shootings [**R v Bennett** (London 2004); **R v Powell** (Sheffield 2004) **R v Edwards** (London 2003)], and the body on the DLR case (**R v Islam** 2003)and the body in the suitcase murder (**R v Mcknight** 2003-2004)



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International Criminal Law

James was appointed to the panel of counsel to the International Criminal Court in 2010. He appears in the Privy Council on death row cases from the Caribbean, and has been instrumental in the development of the participation of Doughty Street in all aspects of International Criminal Law.

Regulatory & Financial Crime

James is instructed in large scale fraud, particularly when this involves allegations of fabrication, or factual complexity. In 2007 he appeared in **R v Peries** (Southwark CC) - Serious corporate fraud, stayed on grounds of non disclosure. Over many years he has appeared in VAT and Carousel frauds, In 2003 he appeared in **R v Ayrey** the nursing home fraudster.

Terrorism

James was first instructed in major terrorists trials in the days when they primarily involved IRA active service units. Since the invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan and the passage of the Terrorism Acts of 2000 and 2005 James has been instructed in many of the recent terrorist trials. He is familiar with the philosophy, politics, writings and texts which often form a part of these prosecutions. He lists below a selection of the terrorist cases in which he has appeared at trial in recent years:-

He appeared for Mr Latif in Chowdhery and others (Woolwich CC Feb 2012), known as the stock exchange bomb plot. **R v Rajib Karim** (Woolwich Crown Court Feb-Mar 2011). British Airways employee charged with communication with Anwar Al Awlaki in Yemen, and with committing acts preparatory to terrorism in the UK and abroad. **R v Zaman** (Woolwich Crown Court 2008 original trial, 2009 re-trial and 2010 2nd retrial). This major terrorist plot was described as the most serious attempt at an attack on transatlantic airliners in peacetime. **R v Haji and others** (2008 Manchester CC) - The Manchester Al Qaeda directing and membership case. Defendant acquitted of funding terrorism. Appeared for convicted co-accused in the court of appeal. **R v Khyam and others** (2007 CCC) - The fertiliser bomb plot trial. Accused convicted after year long trial having been taped by security services making statements derogatory of "slags in nightclubs". **R v Barot and others** (2007 Woolwich CC) - the dirty bomb terrorist case, involving grave allegations of terrorists plotting to create a dirty bomb (for Barot's alleged assistant, Feroze)



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Protest Cases

Historically, James made his name appearing for protesters, and litigating the right to protest on the streets (See **Pedro v Diss (1981) 72 Cr. App. R. 193**). In the 1980's he appeared in the Orgreave riot trials, and other important cases arising from the Miner's strike. At that time he also appeared in the Newham 7 anti racism case, and represented many anti apartheid demonstrators. He has a long standing involvement in issues concerning animal rights, and has represented many ALF members and leaders. He appeared in the Sheffield Crown Court trial involving Ronnie Lee. He appeared in many of the direct action animal laboratory occupation and animal rescue trials, and has appeared for Greg Avery, the leader of SHAC on a number of matters.

He appeared for the principal defendant in the SHAC Huntingdon Life science trial at Winchester in 2008.

Other Serious Criminal Offences

His interest in cases raising unusual or political issues has seen James being instructed in cases concerning the religious use of drugs. Always prepared to turn his hand to defending those who find their religious or political beliefs have put them in conflict with the criminal law, James invites instruction in all forms of serious crime.

Lesser Criminal Offences

James is always prepared to be instructed (if available) in cases involving lesser criminal offences which raise issues of complexity, sensitivity or issues of principal, human rights or state oppression.

- Assistant Recorder 1998
- Silk 1999
- Recorder 2000
- List of Approved counsel for ICC 2010
- Licensed to accept Direct Public Access work.

Languages

James can communicate in French, although is by no means sufficiently proficient to read French materials.



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Publications

Over the years James has contributed to numerous publications for Liberty and other civil liberties organisations. He was consulted on new terrorism provisions by Justice, has contributed to the response of the CBA and the Bar Council on the new Terrorism Act, and more recently on the consultation on Quality Assured Advocacy. He is on the CBA Committee charged with responding to the government's consultation on competition in the provision of legal services, and chairs the committee responding to the consultation on the implementation of Codes of Practice for the interview of terrorist suspects.

Memberships

- Criminal Bar Association (co-opted executive member)
- Liberty
- Justice
- Forensic Science Society
- South Eastern Circuit

Supporter and donor to the Koestler Foundation supporting art amongst prisoners