



## Michael Skelley

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Michael Skelley has established a reputation as an accomplished jury advocate. He specialises in a broad spectrum of criminal defence work. Michael brings commitment and careful analysis to all of his cases, seeking to develop the right tactical approach. His aim is always to bring a case to life for the jury, identifying the features which are most likely to lead to an acquittal. He believes in establishing a rapport with his client, and a bond of professional trust with his instructing solicitors. He also tries to bring sensitivity and support to the families of his clients. He offers a track record of hard work, meticulous preparation, perceptive analysis and high quality, thoughtful advocacy. Over recent years Michael has increasingly been asked to represent clients on a private basis.

Michael is ranked in the The Legal 500 (2019): 'Seriously good: a conscientious, diligent, measured and persuasive advocate'.

### Crime

### Fraud

Michael's relish for detail and his desire to distil complex evidence into a jury-friendly form have under-pinned his success in defending fraud trials. He has regularly been instructed as a leading junior and led junior, and has been involved in larger scale cases (including VHCC work).

- R v PY (2018)

Appeared as a leading junior defending PY, who was charged with eleven counts of fraud (involving multiple fraudulent claims for benefit) and identity theft (relating to obtaining false UK passports). During the nine week trial, the client was said to have established several false identities and to have obtained more than £750,000 in benefit over the course of a decade.

- R v PR (2016) Defending a single mother in a large scale conspiracy to facilitate unlawful immigration, involving a web of sham companies and complex financial transactions designed to manipulate the immigration system in favour of applicants.
- R v MS (2014) Successfully defending an accountant in a 3 week mortgage fraud.

- R v BR (2013) Represented an alleged key member of a multi-million pound 'boiler room' scam run from Spain, involving the telephone sales of different types of advance fee fraud, including escort agency and debt management businesses: acquitted of two charges of conspiracy to defraud after an 11 week trial.
- R v RG (2011) A series of conspiracy to defraud and false accounting charges, arising from a 5 year investigation into Vintage Hallmark PLC by the SFO. The allegations related to an investment programme in Scotch whisky and other alcohol products which brought in nearly £30m. RG was one of the three original partners of the business and became a Director of the PLC and was acquitted by of counts of false accounting. The SFO decided not to seek a re-trial, and RG was acquitted of all remaining counts.

## **Murder**

Michael's dedicated approach to his cases, and his passionate belief in representing his clients to the highest standard, has led to him being instructed to defend in several murder and manslaughter trials during recent years.

- R v CD (2016) Junior counsel for a successful entrepreneur charged with conspiracy to murder by hiring a gang of contract killers to execute his daughter's former partner. The trial involved a complex circumstantial case developed from mobile phone data, cell-site analysis and ANPR records.
- R v RE (2013) Acted on behalf of a property developer charged with murdering his wife. The Crown's case relied on circumstantial evidence, as the Defendant's wife had gone missing in 2006, and the police had found no trace of her since then. Press Link: [Daily Mail](#)
- R v HN (2012) Defending a youth charged with murder arising from a dispute at a party between two groups of young men, and the alleged use of multiple knives taken to the scene. Issues of joint enterprise, the admissibility of 'gang related' material, telephone traffic/cell-site and witness anonymity orders arose during the 10 week trial at the Central Criminal Court.
- R v EM (2012) Represented an 84 year old defendant charged with the murder of his nephew who appeared to have been mistaken for a burglar by the defendant while suffering from an episode of delirium. Advised on the instruction of a series of expert medical reports, dealing with dementia and the effect of urinary tract infections on the elderly. The prosecution accepted a guilty plea to manslaughter on the basis of diminished responsibility: the court imposed a suspended sentence.

## **General and Violent Crime**

Michael Skelley has acted in a wide variety of criminal defence work, including violent crime, drugs, and conspiracy cases.

- R v SG (2018) successfully represented an 18 year old defendant charged with wounding with

intent. His client had become involved in a knife fight on a London Underground train, after he was stabbed by the first defendant in an unprovoked attack. His brother and cousins came to his aid and were charged with violent disorder. The three week trial involved a cut-throat defence with the first defendant and resulted in an acquittal.

- R v LD (2018) Successfully defended a client facing allegations of conspiracy to rob and robbery arising from the alleged use of sprayed ammonia and a firearm, targeting vehicle passengers and a Mercedes car. Part of the incident was captured on CCTV. This client was acquitted after a two week trial.
- R v RM (2015) Successfully represented a Registered Nurse charged with neglecting a patient after she took her own life following admission to a Psychiatric Intensive Care Unit. The defence advanced in the 3 week trial was that the death had been caused by a series of institutional failures at the privately run hospital, rather than the nurse's neglect.
- R v TB (2013) Appeared on behalf of a Defendant facing allegations of conspiracy to facilitate the illegal entry of non-UK citizens, by means of smuggling migrants through Dover.
- R v PV (2012) Successfully represented a Defendant in a 6 week trial of a joint enterprise section 18 offence of causing GBH with intent, in which the alleged victim was left with permanent brain damage. There were substantial disputes with eye-witness evidence, and a number of legal arguments arising from CCTV footage.
- R v KG (2011) As sole counsel successfully represented Kevin Georgiou, better known as Stonebridge rapper 'K Koke', charged with attempted murder by shooting the victim in the back with a sawn-off shotgun. KG denied any involvement in the shooting from the outset. The identification evidence was attacked and a successful submission of no case to answer was made.

## **Sexual Offences**

Defending those accused of sexual offending is one of Michael Skelley's areas of specialism. He has frequently been instructed in respect of allegations of rape and many other sexual offences, including historic sexual allegations.

- R v T (2017) Successfully represented the housemaster of a boys' boarding school facing multiple historic indecent assault allegations. There were four individual complainants, but the difficulty of the case was enhanced by the fact that one of them had made a complaint to the police in the 1980's, when no further action had been taken. The three week trial resulted in acquittals on all counts.
- R v AP (2015) Historic sexual allegations made by three members of the client's family. An unusual aspect of this case was that two of the young girls had made allegations to their parents at the time, but the family had effectively decided to withhold the complaints from the police.
- R v JA (2013) represented one of the Defendants who admitted offences of sexual abuse

against pupils during the 1980's at Caldicott Preparatory School.

- R v CN (2013) Successful defence of allegations of the attempted rape of his 12 year old daughter.
- R v WD (2010) Represented one of three family members facing historic allegations of systematic rape and child abuse during the 1970's: acquitted after a two week trial.

## **Military Law**

Michael Skelley has appeared before the Courts Martial, representing service personnel charged with fraud, sexual assault and violence.

- R v B (2008) Client was an RAF officer charged with fraud and theft in the course of his duty and as Treasurer of the Officers' Mess.

## **Road Traffic**

Michael has regularly appeared on behalf of clients facing road traffic allegations. More recently, he has appeared in cases alleging causing death by dangerous driving.

- R v MF (2015) Successfully represented an elderly lady charged with causing death by careless driving when her car had crossed the central reservation. The issue was whether this had been a deliberate evasive manoeuvre or a lapse of concentration.
- R v RB (2010) Defended a farmer charged with manslaughter and causing death by dangerous driving - following an incident when a wheel detached from his agricultural trailer, killing an 86 year old pedestrian.

## **Inquiries & Appellate Work**

### **Appeals**

Michael Skelley has advised on and appeared in numerous appeals to the Court of Appeal, Criminal Division. These have included successful appeals against both conviction and sentence.

- **R v. Bradley Rogers (2014)** 2 Cr. App. R. 32 Leading junior in a case testing the jurisdiction of the Crown Court to try allegations of money laundering committed outside the United Kingdom.
- **R v. Akinyeme (Remi) (2008)** RTR 20 Successful appeal against a sentence of Imprisonment for Public Protection following conviction for causing death by dangerous driving. The client, who had been diagnosed with epilepsy and was not taking his recommended medication, had suffered a fit whilst driving and killed a cyclist.

## **Recommendations**

- *"His precise and effective questioning helps enormously."* - Legal 500 (2020)

## **Education**

MA Jurisprudence Trinity College, Oxford

## **Memberships**

Criminal Bar Association