



PARK
SQUARE

BARRISTERS

Lee Karu QC

Call: 1985 · Silk 2010 (Door tenant)

Crime

Lee is a highly experienced specialist criminal defence counsel. He has been practising for over 30 years and has built up a reputation and following amongst solicitors and lay clients alike such that he is instructed in serious criminal cases across the country. He is deeply passionate about his cases and is committed to achieving the best result for his clients. He has appeared in many serious and high profile cases from homicides and sexual cases to international financial crime.

Lee began his career as a barrister practising general common law being instructed in civil, family and criminal cases. Within a short period he was committed to an exclusively criminal practice. He built a reputation as a hardworking and talented junior barrister and was instructed in many high profile and serious cases, becoming a regular at the Old Bailey.

Lee took silk in 2010 and his reputation was further enhanced. He is now instructed in complex cases across the country. His wide ranging experience includes cases of murder and manslaughter, a variety of sexual cases, from indecent touching to the most recent high profile grooming cases, robberies ranging from domestic burglaries to sophisticated armed robberies of banks; international cases of drugs and human trafficking. A major part of his practice has also involved serious fraud cases, including large scale VAT cases featuring bonded warehouses, cheating the revenue and bribery.

Since 2005 (taking silk in 2010), Lee's practice has expanded from London to serious and high-profile cases in Leeds and elsewhere on the North Eastern Circuit.

Notable cases

Serious crime

Numerous cases of homicide (murder and manslaughter), both as junior and as leader, including a 25-handed trial of conspiracy to murder.

- R v S – Murder of wife.
- R v J & Others – 25-handed conspiracy to murder involving triads based in Soho.
- R v NK & Others – Multi-handed drugs-related execution following gang war and several



Education:

1979 - University of Westminster

1985 - College of Legal Education

Career:

1985 - Civil pupil at Verulam Buildings, London

1986 - Pupil & tenant at Goldsmith Buildings, London (common law practice)

1992 - Tenant at 2 Paper Buildings, London, chambers of Desmond de Silva (criminal defence)

2003 - Tenant at 9 Bedford Row, London (criminal defence)

2010 - Silk

2012 - Door tenant, No 6, Leeds

2015 - No 6 becomes Park Square Barristers

Lee began his career as a junior economist with Barclays De Zoete & Bevan, London Stock Exchange

Appointments:

1999 - Committee member, Funding of Independent Schools Committee

Memberships:

South Eastern Circuit Bar Mess

Criminal Bar Association

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shootings.

- R v S & Others – Four-handed murder of a youth whose body was set on fire. Charred remains found by passer-by in the morning, proving impossible to identify. Initially believed by the police to be a ritual killing.
- R v G & Others – Young man beaten and thrown into the River Thames following a party consisting of Gurkha soldiers and other Nepalese men.
- R v TM & Another – Killing following an attack on the family home by 2 drunken men; successful defence of provocation.
- R v O & Others – Security men charged with the manslaughter of drunken man whilst being ejected from a nightclub.

Sexual offences

Lee is experienced in a wide variety of sexual offence cases, from indecent touching to multiple rapes.

- R v V & Others (The Oxford Grooming Case) – Girls as young as 13. [BBC News](#)
- R v S & Others – Girls as young as 12 were groomed by a group of older men in West Yorkshire and systematically abused for years. This was a very high-profile case, reported in most of the national press.
- R v W & W – Parents raping and abusing their own children as young as 4 over many years.
- R v GG – Historic rape (30 years ago) of step-daughter. Successful abuse-of-process argument based on delay.
- R v C & Others – Rape of a law student by a group of youths aged between 15 and 20 years.

Robberies & burglaries

Lee has handled every aspect of robberies and burglaries, from domestic burglaries to street robberies, serious aggravated burglaries and armed robberies of banks, building societies and security vans by highly organised and sophisticated gangs.

- R v B – Highly publicised case of aggravated burglary labelled by the media as the first million-pound burglar who raided high-value houses.
- R v S & others – Charged with armed robberies of banks and building societies over a 5-year period.
- R v H & Others – 4 youths torturing and seriously injuring an elderly woman with a chisel in her own home before making off with her valuables.

Other cases of violence

Planning Bar Association

Vice-president, Association of Sri Lankan Lawyers, UK

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Lee has conducted many cases of GBH, assaults, and public-order offences of affray, violent disorder and a case of riot.

- R v O & Others – GBH of a young father who lost his sight as a result of the attack.
- R v B & Others – Murder of a young Pakistani bride by her husband and a follow-on trial of the family for neglect of a vulnerable adult (the first case of its kind under s.5 of the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004).

Drugs cases

Lee is experienced with conspiracy to import, supply and possess class A, B and C drugs, including high-value serious cases involving informants, covert observations and recordings.

- E R v A & Others (Operation Central, around Sheffield) – Involving the supply of large quantities of heroin.
- R v W & Others – High-level production of amphetamines (class B) with a £10-million confiscation.
- R v LP & Others – Series of cannabis factories around the country, money laundered through takeaway restaurants and nail bars across the country. Reported as the highest-value cannabis production in the UK.
- R v B & Others – Colombian gang smuggling vast quantities of cocaine.

Financial crime

A major part of Lee's practice has involved serious fraud cases, including large-scale VAT cases involving bonded warehouses, cigarette and alcohol smuggling, mortgage frauds, cheating HM Revenue & Customs, and bribery.

- The Abbey National Case – Lasted 9 months at the Old Bailey, involving a senior manager of the Abbey National awarding false contracts to those who produced advertising material for the bank.
- R v K & Others – Large-scale mortgage fraud and money laundering resulting from self-certification. successful defence based on banks knowingly accepting false self-certifications.
- R v A & Others – Fraudulently changing ownership details at the Land Registry, then re-mortgaging the houses without the knowledge of the householders, thereafter converting the proceeds into gold bullion (never recovered).
- R v D & Another – Large-scale counterfeit designer jewellery; brand names including Tiffany, Chanel, D&G, etc.
- R v O&O – Allegation of fraudulent VAT reclaim of £165 million. [BBC News](#).
- R v B & Others – Printing counterfeit currency, said to be one of the best-ever reproduction of

counterfeit sterling notes to flood the market.

- R v S – Fraud committed by an Olympic athlete who invented a sports drink used by the England cricket team and other athletes.

Confiscation

Lee is regularly instructed in cases involving confiscation.

- R v W & Others – Leading case on the subject of hidden assets.
- R v K – Recent case in which the Crown claimed £1.5 million resulting in a confiscation order of £1.

International crime

Many of Lee's serious drugs cases inevitably have a strong international element, requiring research into the laws of other countries (in particular, understanding the different methods of collation of evidence has proved vital in defending cross-border cases).

- R v B & Others – A massive drugs conspiracy spanning Columbia to the West Indies to Spain, through Europe and into UK. Covert surveillance was carried out in different parts of the world by different police forces. It was necessary to call expert evidence as to law and procedures relating to Swiss law.
- R v C – 200kgs of heroin were uplifted, connected to other imports of similar magnitude. The defendant was said to be a prominent political figure in the PKK and raising money through large-scale drugs trafficking. This case entailed research into the position of Kurds in the Middle East, in particular Turkey, and the political implications thereof.
- R v H & Others – The defendants were charged with hijacking a passenger airline (with 250 passengers) and landing at Stansted via Cyprus. High-publicity case which developed the law of necessity and duress of circumstances further. The case also established the principle that such a defence is for the jury to consider and not the trial judge.

Human trafficking/facilitation (international)

Lee has conducted a number of Snakehead cases, including R v L & others, R v W & others. The Snakeheads originated in the Fujian province of China, for centuries facilitating Chinese people to travel within various provinces of China. In the 1990s, they were responsible for many illegal entrants into the UK. People were brought over with false documentation or smuggled in lorries. They were then often kept hostage until a fee was paid in China. Travel agents with a nasty bite!

- R v P & Others – Facilitation of individuals from the Indian subcontinent to the UK via Africa and Europe and then facilitating their entry into the USA, in the main using false passports and other false documentation by an international gang.

- R v R & Others – Highly publicised case using a corrupt customs officer at Lunar House in Croydon to grant visas to overstayers. An international conspiracy involving both immigrants and gang members of different nationalities.

- R v B – Trafficking of Eastern Europe females for prostitution. Organised crime based in different countries.

International financial crime

- R v N & Others – International cyber credit-card fraud involving the 'dark market', investigated by the FBI. [Rochdale Online](#)

- R v K & Others – Bollywood film producers fraudulently claiming film tax relief and VAT. [HMRC news story](#)

- R v Y & Others – Pharmaceutical fraud whereby counterfeit drugs, including those routinely prescribed to heart patients, were produced in China, smuggled into Europe via the Indian sub-continent, re-packaged and distributed to European countries (including the UK) and sold in high-street pharmacies.

- R v K & Others – A 'boiler-room' fraud whereby worthless shares were sold from Spain to investors based all over Europe. The operation had been set up by fraudulent brokers from the USA and millions were siphoned to the USA via UK accounts.

- R v B & Others – First production of false cheque cards using skimming machines and encoders. Base material produced in China; card details obtained in the USA and European countries and primarily used in UK, causing high-value loss to customers. A sting operation initiated by the FBI and assisted by Interpol and Scotland Yard.

- R v NN & Others – Cyber-crime involving nationals from many countries, leading to 60 arrests across Europe and Turkey. The FBI set up an internet sting operation from the USA, trading in thousands of live cheque-card details. Loss calculated in millions. Criminals from all over the world joined in and traded, illustrating the lack of frontiers in cybercrime.

- R v L – Terrorism Act charge of possessing a computer with encoded material that was said by the Crown to be so complicated that it would take 100 years to decipher.

Contact Lee's clerks

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