



Luke Ponte

Call: 2003

Luke Ponte is a much sought after junior criminal barrister, who has appeared in some of the most high profile trials in recent years.

He was sole prosecution counsel in the successful prosecution of Arthur Collins – who threw acid in a packed nightclub causing serious injury to 14 victims.

He acted for Christian Bittar, a Deutsche Bank derivatives trader who was the first defendant in the Euribor rate manipulation trial.

He was instructed for the prosecution of Stephen Port- the Grindr serial killer who murdered four young men.

He was junior defence counsel for Constance Briscoe, a barrister accused of perverting the course of justice.

He was nominated as the Legal 500 Criminal Junior of the Year 2018.

Crime

Luke is instructed across the spectrum of serious crime including murder, organised crime, firearms offences and sexual offences.

Luke has particular expertise in cybercrime, having been instructed in a series of hacking/dark web trials, and is familiar with the challenges of presenting complex computer evidence at trial. He prosecuted LulzSec, the notorious group of computer hackers whose victims included the FBI, the NHS, News International and the Sony Corporation. Instructions last year included prosecution of the D33Ds.org dark web forum, and representing the Metropolitan Police concerning production of material relating to Bitcoin.

He was seconded to the Organised Crime Division of the CPS, which provided valuable insight into how such cases are investigated and prepared, and the particular issues that arise (SOCPA agreements; CHIS; PII).

Notable Crime cases

- **R v Bittar**

Junior defence counsel for the first defendant in the Euribor manipulation allegations; representing a world renowned Deutsche Bank trader accused of manipulating the benchmark rate.

- **R v Collins & Phoenix**

Sole prosecution advocate in the successful prosecution of the notorious acid attack when Arthur Collins threw acid in a packed nightclub causing very serious injury to 18 victims.

- **R v Campeanu**

Defence counsel in the murder of a heavily pregnant woman.

- **Operation Pulex**

Prosecution in a series of trials of a highly sophisticated conspiracy to import cocaine through the use of corrupt Heathrow baggage handlers.

Financial Crime

Luke specialises in white-collar and financial crime. He was instructed for the first defendant in the trial concerning the alleged manipulation of the Euribor benchmark rate. He has considerable experience defending and prosecuting in proceedings brought by the SFO and HMRC, including MTIC fraud, mortgage and commercial fraud.

He represented the sole defendant in Levene, an SFO prosecution in relation to a £250 million Ponzi scheme.

He has particular expertise in matters concerning alternative remittance systems such as hawallah and hundi banking, such as Pischevarz & Others – an NCA investigation into a money-laundering scheme conducted through Anglo-Iranian money exchange bureaux.

In respect of MTIC fraud Luke represents individuals and companies both in the criminal courts and before the Tax Tribunal.

Luke is instructed in matters of bribery and corruption.

Notable Financial Crime cases

- **R v Bittar**

Junior defence counsel for the first defendant in the Euribor manipulation allegations; representing a world

renowned Deutsche Bank trader accused of manipulating the benchmark rate.

Proceeds of Crime

Luke has expertise across the range of proceeds of crime, including: restraint, confiscation (and enforcement), cash forfeiture and civil recovery.

He has acted for the NCA/SOCA in a number of civil recovery claims and cash forfeiture claims.

Luke has considerable experience in post-confiscation proceedings, including applications for reconsideration in the High Court and the Crown Court.

He has been instructed in a number of challenges to confiscation enforcement proceedings as a breach of the reasonable time requirement under Art 6 ECtHR.

Notable Proceeds of Crime cases

- **Re NL**
Reconsideration of Ponzi scheme confiscation.
- **SOCA v Robb**
Civil recovery order in relation to North Cyprus property fraud.

Professional Discipline

Luke is regularly instructed in matters of police discipline. He has represented numerous police officers, both at criminal trial and at disciplinary proceedings.

Notable Professional Discipline cases

- **Re JP (2019)**
Unlawful police pursuit of moped.
- **Re DS (2019)**
Mistreatment of vulnerable detainee in custody.
- **Re BP (2019)**
Excessive use of force by custody sergeant.

Regulatory Crime & Inquests

Luke appears regularly in Coronial proceedings. He has particular experience representing prison officers and police officers in inquests concerning deaths in custody.

Luke prosecutes and defends in matters of health and safety, environmental health, consumer protection, product safety and trading standards.

Licensing

Luke appears regularly in matters under the Licensing Act 2003, both in front of local authorities and on appeal to the Magistrates' Court. He has lectured on the Licensing Act 2003 to the Directorate of Legal Services at the Metropolitan Police.

He is instructed in matters of taxi licensing.

Notable Cases

Inquest

(2019)

Death in police custody

Inquest re M1 expansion

(2019)

Death of construction worker

Inquest

(2019)

Police involvement in domestic violence victim

R v K & Others

(2019)

Prosecuted multi-handed Trident operation

R v EW

(2019)

Attempted murder – 80 year old defendant

R v DY

(2019)

Rape of 10 year old by school teacher

R v MC

(2019)

Fraud by company director

R v FP

(2019)

Large scale cocaine conspiracy

R v ZB

(2019)

Grime artist accused of county lines drug offending

Operation Minionship

(2019)

Heroin importation from Pakistan

R v C

(2018)

Murder of pregnant woman

R v TG

(2018)

HMRC officer accused of benefit fraud

R v KG

(2018)

GBH on 2 year old

R v D

(2018)

Large scale excise fraud

R v B

(2016-2018)

Manipulation of Euribor

Operation Pulex

(2016-2018)

Importation of 100kg cocaine through Heathrow

R v C & P

(2017)

Acid attack in nightclub

Inquest re YOI

(2017)

Represented Prison Governor

R v K-B

(2017)

Shooting at police officers

R v R

(2017)

Child sex offences – 14 complainants

Re B

(2017)

Inquest into death in YOI

R v O & Ors

(2017)

HMRC prosecution of multi-handed VAT fraud

R v W

(2016)

Historic (1982) murder of 17 year old girl

R v P

(2016)

Grindr multiple murderer

R v L

(2016)

Attempted contract killing

R v M

(2016)

Dark web forum which hacked Yahoo

Re B

(2016)

Production order concerning Bitcoin

R v B

(2016)

VT fraud

R v J & J

(2015)

Allegation of “honour” rape

R v D

(2015)

Multi-million pound conspiracy to supply cocaine

Operation Decrease

(2015)

ECHR challenge to bail brought by suspected members of proscribed terrorist organisation

R v B

(2014)

Barrister accused of perverting the course of justice

R v P & Ors

(2014)

Money service bureau money laundering

R v D

(2014)

Marine captain accused of corruption and money laundering

R v M

(2014)

Stabbing of pregnant 16 year old girl

R v B & S

(2014)

Prosecution of robbery of “Ashley Cole” jewellers

R v GC

(2014)

£750,000 multinational “Hundi” banking fraud

SOCA v R

(2014)

Civil recovery claim for £1.5m from an alleged fraudulent property empire in North Cyprus

R v C & Ors

(2013)

LulzSec computer hacking conspiracy

R v L

(2013)

Sole defendant in £250 million “Ponzi” scheme

CPS v M

(2013)

Multi-million pound confiscation proceedings before Divisional Court

R v B

(2013)

MTIC fraud/money laundering

CPS v L

(2012)

Stay of £2 million confiscation order as an abuse due to breach of Article 6 ECtHR

Education

- Jules Thorn Scholar, Middle Temple
- Campbell Foster Prize, Middle Temple
- Everard van Heyden Foundation Prize
- Bar Vocational Course
- Harvard University Special Student Programme
- BA (Hons) History – London School of Economics

Appointments

- SFO Prosecution Counsel (A Panel)
- CPS level 4 prosecutor
- CPS specialist panellist for serious crime, fraud and proceeds of crime
- RASSO panellist

Other Information

Luke is an award-winning screen writer. He has written two Bafta nominated short films. His debut feature film, Old Boys, was released in cinemas in 2019.

Accreditations

