

## Luke Ponte

Call: 2003



Luke Ponte is a pre-eminent junior criminal barrister. He is instructed in the most serious criminal cases, with a practice evenly split between prosecution and defence. Much more often than not, his opponents are King's Counsel.

He has been instructed in some of the most high-profile trials of the day (including Euribor manipulation, LulzSec computer hacking, Stephen Port murders, Arthur Collins acid throwing, Constance Briscoe and JL- the police officer who took a photograph of murdered sisters Nicole Smallman and Bibaa Henry).

He has particular expertise in financial crime, homicide, and defending police officers (whether in criminal trials, misconduct proceedings or at Inquests).

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

## Crime

Luke is instructed across the spectrum of serious crime including homicide, organised crime and cybercrime.

He is frequently instructed in murder cases (both prosecuting and defending).

He has particular expertise in "cold murder cases" that pre-date the application of CPIA 1996 and has drafted disclosure protocols in relation to such cases, including **R v Paul** (murder in 1980); **R v Warnock** (murder and rape in 1982)

He has been part of large prosecution teams in complex murder cases. He is well used to the challenges that arise in prosecuting such cases. He is able to present even the most complicated evidence with focus, clarity and concision.

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).

Such is his expertise in Organised Crime Cases that he was instructed by the CPS (together with William Emlyn Jones KC) to conduct an inquiry into why the Operation Orlando prosecution failed (this was a decade long investigation by the Devon and Cornwall Police into the highest organised criminals).

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. Recent instructions concerning cybercrime include prosecution of the D33Ds.org dark web forum, and representing the Metropolitan Police concerning production of material relating to Bitcoin.

## Notable Crime cases

- **R v T and another (2023)**  
Murder in connection with drug debt
- **R v H (2023)**  
Police officer accused of sexual assault
- **R v D and others (2023)**  
Seven handed murder prosecution
- **R v M**  
Police officer accused of rape
- **R v M (2023)**  
Inside man (Securicor van driver) in £1 million fake robbery
- **R v CM and another (2022)**  
Postcode murder as part of gang rivalry
- **R v JP (2022)**  
Cold case murder from 1980
- **R v TP (2022)**  
Police CHIS handler accused of computer misuse offences
- **Re JL (2022)**  
Police officer who took photograph of murdered sisters
- **R v TJS and others (2021)**  
Four handed gang murder

- **R v Campeanu (2019)**  
Defence counsel in the murder of a heavily pregnant woman
- **Operation Pulex (2019)**  
Prosecution in a series of trials of a highly sophisticated conspiracy to import cocaine through the use of corrupt Heathrow baggage handlers
- **R v AC (2018)**  
Notorious acid attack when AC threw acid in packed nightclub causing very serious injury to 18 victims

## Financial Crime

Luke specialises in white-collar and financial crime. He is on the A Panel of prosecuting counsel for the Serious Fraud Office. He was instructed on behalf of the first defendant (the star Deutsche Bank trader) 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, HMRC, and SFD including MTIC fraud, mortgage, commercial fraud and Ponzi schemes. He has great experience in ancillary matters: restraint, challenging investigative orders (warrants, production orders etc), LPP review; confiscation.

He was leading junior counsel in a six month trial at Birmingham Crown Court in 2022, in relation to the laundering of £7 million obtained through a high-yield investment fraud that has been promoted by a solicitor at Locke Lord. It was a cut-throat trial; with all other defendants and the prosecution represented by King's Counsel.

He advises both individuals and corporates in respect of bribery and corruption. In 2022 he prosecuted a complex corruption trial where the defendants were doctors and pharmacists who were alleged to have gamed the manner in which drugs were prescribed by GPs.

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 **Pishevarz & 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.

## Notable Financial Crime cases

- **R v SG (2020-2022)**  
Leading defence counsel in multi-million pound high yield investment fraud

- **Operation Buxted (2022)**

Prosecution of allegations of corruption and bribery through the NHS

- **R v ML (2021)**

Long term fraud by police officer concerning a deception as to his illness

- **R v CB (2018)**

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.

## Police Misconduct

A mainstay of Luke's practice is defending the actions of police officers. He has represented police officers in criminal proceedings, in judicial review, in misconduct hearings, and at Inquests.

He has very considerable experience representing officers in misconduct proceedings (from Special Constables to Inspectors) He is instructed in relation to officers from many forces all over the country, including the Metropolitan Police, GMP, Northumbria, TVP, Hampshire, Cleveland, Essex, Kent, Cambridgeshire, Cumbria, Leicestershire, Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, BTP.

He has dealt with cases across the spectrum, including: use of force, confidentiality, computer misuse, honesty and integrity, sexual allegations, harassment and discrimination.

He has been instructed in numerous accelerated hearings, and has had considerable success in persuading the Appropriate Authority to reconsider whether the conditions for such a hearing are met, or whether a matter should proceed before an ordinary panel.

He has represented police officers at several Inquests, and is used to the unusual (and occasionally hostile) environment of the Coroner's Court. He is familiar with many of the areas of expert evidence that recur in such Inquests, including restraint, Acute Behavioural Disturbance and deaths in custody.

He has acted as a legal advisor to in matters brought under Stage 3 Performance meeting.

## Notable Police Misconduct cases

- **Re NS (2023)**

Inspector alleged to have discriminated against colleague and given false evidence in Employment proceedings

- **Re B (2023)**

PC causing death by careless driving

- **Re HR (2023)**  
PS who falsified shooting training records
- **Re LOH (2023)**  
PC fraudulently obtaining travel discount
- **Re TP (2023)**  
CHIS handler – computer misuse
- **Re DH (2022)**  
PC – sexual assault in club
- **Re JOS (2022)**  
Indecent exposure
- **Re G (2022)**  
Inspector propositioning colleague
- **Re I (2022)**  
Inspector creating false evidence
- **Re ET (2022)**  
Sending obscene image
- **Re TI (2021)**  
Inspector in large scale cover investigation into “toxic” police culture
- **Re BP (2019)**  
Excessive use of force by custody sergeant
- **Re DS (2019)**  
Mistreatment of vulnerable detainee in custody

## Inquests

Luke appears regularly in Coronial proceedings (in both Article 2 Inquests and non-Article 2 Inquests). As indicated above, he frequently appears on behalf of police officers. Additionally, he has been instructed by other IPs, including the family of the deceased, and prison governors and officers.

## Notable Inquests cases

- **Re Z (2023)**  
Death of an intoxicated individual after restraint by police
- **Re Y (2023)**  
Death of pedestrian hit by police vehicle
- **Re KHB (2022)**  
Death of vulnerable individual in police custody
- **Re LM (2021)**  
Drowning of a young man in canal after police chase
- **Re MN (2019)**  
Death of vulnerable individual in police custody
- **Re RE (2019)**  
Drowning of worker on Smart Motorway project
- **Re DW (2019)**  
Domestic violence murder, following police failures to safeguard
- **Re HB (2017)**  
Death of detainee at YOI

## 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.

## Notable Cases

**R v T and another (2023)**

Murder in connection with drug debt

**R v H (2023)**

Police officer accused of sexual assault

**R v D and others (2023)**

Seven handed murder prosecution

**R v M (2023)**

Police officer accused of rape

**R v M (2023)**

Inside man (Securicor van driver) in £1 million fake robbery

**Inquest (2023)**

Death of an intoxicated individual after restraint by police

**Inquest (2023)**

Death of pedestrian hit by police vehicle

**R v SG (2020-2022)**

Leading defence counsel in multi-million pound high yield investment fraud

**R v CM and another (2022)**

Postcode murder as part of gang rivalry

**R v JP (2022)**

Cold case murder from 1980

**R v TP (2022)**

Police CHIS handler accused of computer misuse offences

**Re JL (2022)**

Police officer who took photograph of murdered sisters

**Inquest (2022)**

Death of vulnerable individual in police custody

**Operation Buxted (2022)**

Prosecution of allegations of corruption and bribery through the NHS

**R v ML (2021)**

Long term fraud by police officer concerning a deception as to his health

**R v TJS and others (2021)**

Four handed gang murder

**Inquest (2021)**

Drowning of a young man in canal after police chase

**Operation Orlando review (2020)**

Review of failed OGC prosecution

**R v JC (2020)**

Attempted murder of partner

**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)**

VAT fraud

## Directory Recommendations

“A barrister that people instantly like, he gives sensible, objective and well reasoned advice...” **Chambers UK 2023: Crime**

“He has a great reputation in the field.” **Chambers UK 2023: Financial Crime**

“Luke is fantastic in court: a brilliant barrister who has a wonderful manner.” **Chambers UK 2023: Professional Discipline**

“He is a joy to work with.” **Chambers UK 2023: Professional Discipline**

“His client interaction is second to none; he very much puts the client at ease.” **Chambers UK 2023: Professional Discipline**

“He prosecutes high-profile criminal cases.” **Legal 500 2020: Crime**

“An incisive advocate.” **Legal 500 2020: Fraud – Crime**

“Recommended for a wide range of POCA matters.” **Legal 500 2020: Proceeds of Crime & Asset Forfeiture**

“An elegant advocate – judges really like him.” **Legal 500 2019: Crime**

“As comfortable doing heavyweight fraud as he is dirty crime.” **Legal 500 2019: Fraud – Crime**

## 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

## 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



## Privacy Statement

I, Luke Ponte, am a data controller and can be contacted at 3 Raymond Buildings, Gray's Inn, London WC1R 5BH or by telephone on 020 7400 6400 or by email at [luke.ponte@3rblaw.com](mailto:luke.ponte@3rblaw.com). My Data Protection Policy can be found below.

All personal data that I process is for the purposes of providing legal services, conducting conflict-checks, marketing, defending potential complaints, legal proceedings or fee disputes, keeping anti-money laundering records, training other barristers and pupils and when providing work-shadowing opportunities, and/or exercising a right to a lien. The types of data that I process vary upon the nature of the legal matter in relation to which I am engaged to advise, but can include names, contact details, biographic details and 'special category personal data' (such as details of racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, health, sex life and criminal convictions and proceedings).

Depending upon the circumstances of the case, the legal bases upon which I process personal data are (i) the performance of a contract to which the data subject is a party or in order to take steps at the request of the data subject prior to entering into a contract, (ii) the processing is necessary to comply with legal obligations to which I am subject, or

(iii) the processing is necessary for the legitimate interests set out above, except where such interests are overridden by the interests or fundamental rights and freedoms of the data subjects which require protection of personal data, in particular where the data subject is a child. When I rely on (iii) legitimate interests, my 'Legitimate Interests Assessment' can be found [here](#). When I process data which has not been obtained directly from the data subject (e.g. personal data contained in evidential materials), it will have been supplied to me as part of my instructions in circumstances covered by legal professional privilege.

Depending upon the circumstances of the case, I may share the personal data with:

1. my Chambers, which supplies professional and administrative support to my practice;
2. Courts and other tribunals to whom documents are presented;
3. my lay and professional clients;
4. potential witnesses, in particular experts, and friends or family of the data subject;
5. solicitors, barristers, pupils, mini pupils and other legal representatives;
6. ombudsmen and regulatory authorities;
7. current, past or prospective employers;
8. education and examining bodies;
9. business associates, professional advisers and trade bodies.

I retain personal data for no longer than 7 years after the case has come to an end or as otherwise required by law.

I do not intend to transfer data to any country which is not either within the European Union, 'white listed' by the EU or otherwise permitted by EU law (e.g. to the USA under the provisions of the 'Privacy Shield').

Under the GDPR, data subjects whose personal data I process have the right to request from me access to, and rectification or erasure of, their personal data, the right to the restriction of processing concerning them, the right to object to processing as well as the right to data portability. Data subjects also have the right to lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner's Office ([ico.org.uk](http://ico.org.uk)).

In cases where there is a contract between me and the data subject, the provision of personal data is a contractual requirement and the data subject is obliged to provide the personal data in order that I can supply legal services. A failure to provide such data may mean that I will not be able to provide the legal services.

Rev 1.1 – 25.05.2018

[Data Protection Policy](#)

[Legitimate Interests Assessment](#)