



GARDEN COURT CHAMBERS

Michael House

YEAR OF CALL: 1972



Michael is a criminal defence advocate, and practises in most areas of Crown Court and Appellate Court crime. He has appeared in trials for murder, fraud, armed robbery, kidnapping, blackmail and most other areas of serious crime.

If you would like to get in touch with Michael please contact the clerking team:

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You can also contact Michael directly:

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CRIMINAL DEFENCE

Michael is a criminal defence advocate, and practises in most areas of Crown Court and Appellate Court crime. He has appeared in trials for murder, fraud, armed robbery, kidnapping, blackmail and most other areas of serious crime. He has a special interest in cases involving drugs, public order and the mistreatment of racial minorities, and those concerning animal rights and environmental protest.

Although Michael does not believe in pressuring clients into pleading guilty, he will give strong advice where appropriate. His experience is that clients respond well to having their situation explained to them clearly and simply, and then being allowed to decide their position for themselves.

He believes passionately that clients are entitled to have every aspect of the case against them tested to the full, and not to be convicted unless every aspect can be proved.

Michael is happy to travel to any part of England and Wales.

NOTABLE CASES

R v WS

WS was involved with an armed bank robbery at NatWest in Mitcham. He was the lead robber and entered the bank with a firearm, through a back door opened by his cousin, an employee at the bank. He threatened the staff, getting away with £100,000.

R v JM

JM was alleged to be a part of a gang of youths committing robberies, some of them armed, in the Tooting area, both shop robberies and street muggings.

R v MT

MT brought women from Portugal to marry Bangladeshi males in UK, for a fee, so that the latter could obtain right of abode in UK. In confiscation proceedings, the Crown alleged a "hidden asset" of £22,000. After cross-examination of the officer, the claim was dropped.

R v GW

12 months suspended sentence achieved for a 24-year-old convicted of selling ecstasy tablets at a pop festival. Normal tariff after trial is four-and-a-half years.

R v MK

MK was part of a gang that gained entry into a jeweller's in Bromely, with a firearm. The shopkeeper pressed the panic button and they fled.

R v JJ

JJ was part of a gang that targeted 3 branches of Thomas Cook in Kent and Sussex, brandishing firearms, manhandling the staff, threatening to shoot them and robbing the branches of over £50,000.

Recently, Michael represented the daughter of an Iranian minister who appropriated over £500,000 worth of antiques and jewellery from auction houses and upmarket shops in Paris.

Michael represented a bank employee who diverted hundreds of thousands of pounds out of "private wealth" accounts, including the account of the Chairman of Lloyds Bank.

Michael represented a young man who helped burn down the family taxi-firm, (the main arsonist being killed in the fire), to claim on the insurance.

In 2010, he was instructed in a case where a woman had been sentenced to 12 years' imprisonment for drug trafficking. Despite two counsel previously advising that there were no arguable grounds of appeal against conviction, Michael secured the quashing of the conviction and won a unanimous jury acquittal at the retrial. This is the level of tenacity that he brings to every case which he works on.

FINANCIAL CRIME AND CONFISCATION

R v RH

RH was allegedly involved in defrauding a local authority to the tune of around £150,000 through the 'right to buy' homes scheme. Michael persuaded the Crown to offer no evidence.

R v MH

MH allegedly plotted with others to defraud Newham Council of £700,000+ over credits falsely claimed for a charity so that it evaded landfill tax.

R v MT

MT brought women from Portugal to marry Bangladeshi males in UK, for a fee, so that the latter could obtain right of abode in UK. In confiscation proceedings, the Crown alleged a "hidden asset" of £22,000. After cross-examination of the officer, the claim was dropped.

BACKGROUND

Michael comes from Somerset. After reading law at Oxford, where he was President of the Oxford Union, he enjoyed an inspirational pupillage as Michael Mansfield's first pupil. He was one of the six founders of Chambers (7 Stone Buildings as it was then) in 1974 and the first Head of Chambers. He was a volunteer at North Kensington and Islington Law Centres for many years.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Michael is a passionate traveller who is particularly interested in the countries and peoples of Central Asia. He is a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society, and is actively involved in several societies that foster the endangered culture of Tibet and help refugees from the Chinese gulag. In a break from the Bar in the late 1980s he spent three years living in Greece and travelling round the world.

EDUCATION

BA (Oxon) Jurisprudence

MA (Oxon)

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIP

Criminal Bar Association (CBA)

Haldane Society - since pupillage

Liberty - since pupillage

Amnesty International - Urgent Action panel member

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