



# Robert Bryan

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## Robert Bryan covers the wide spectrum of serious crime including homicide, sex-offending, serious fraud and drug conspiracies.

As Junior alone Robert has successfully defended a number of attempted murder trials, and is sought after to prosecute and defend in motor vehicle death cases. He has built up an expertise in 'document', 'images' and 'computer' cases having received recognition in that field since 2014 as evidenced in both the Chambers and Partners and Legal 500 Directories. In 2022 the Directories noted, "He is phenomenal with technology-based cases" and "He has noteworthy expertise in cases involving document or computer related offending"; while in 2023 they commented, "Robert has an eye for detail and can navigate many complicated matters and areas of law" and "Robert is a very thorough and great advocate".

Robert is regularly briefed both to prosecute and defend in multi-complainant cases of sexual offending (including historic abuse cases and offences against children). He is on the Crown Prosecution Specialist Rape Panel.

In addition to his practice in civilian Criminal Courts, Robert receives instructions to appear before Military Tribunals defending servicemen and women against allegations of criminal conduct and service discipline offences.

Away from the Bar he is a keen cyclist and triathlete; he particularly enjoys cases that allow him to bring that acquired knowledge and experience to bear, for example cross-examining a cyclist whose Garmin GPS device was used by the Crown to try to prove a driver involved in a fatal crash had passed through a red light.

## Expertise

### Murder & Manslaughter

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As junior counsel Robert has been led in many murder cases both for the Defence and Prosecution Defence including R v Pencille & Mitchell [2019] (murder on a London-bound train) with weapons varying from knives and firearms to a motorcar.

He has defended alone in many attempted murder cases (the more recent examples are set out below). Previous cases also include the successful defence of an attempted murder allegedly committed during the course of a stranger rape.

He has experience of prosecuting and defending in tragic cases involving serious harm to children.

## Notable Murder & Manslaughter cases

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### **R v Fleming [2023] Portsmouth Crown Court**

Defence of son who attempted to murder his father.

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### **R v Standing [2022] Chelmsford Crown Court**

Defence of Subaru car driver alleged to have been 'racing' a motorcyclist on streets in a housing estate whilst resulted in the death of the bike rider. The Defendant was acquitted by the Jury of causing the death and dangerous driving. When the CPS sought to bring fresh charges in the Magistrates' Court, following those acquittals, the Crown was persuaded not to pursue those further offences.

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### **R v Eslick [2022] Bournemouth Crown Court**

Prosecuting son who strangled his mother as she lay in bed.

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### **R v Baker [2021] Winchester Crown Court**

Defending in 4-week assisting an offender/murder trial where the Defendant disposed of the murder weapon.

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### **R v Hanson [2020] Winchester Crown Court**

Defending attempted murder where victim stabbed 34 times by two males.

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### **R v Gower [2020] Guildford Crown Court**

Defence of a 17-year-old who carried out a hammer attack on his ex-girlfriend in broad daylight. Indicted with attempted murder this was mitigated down to s18

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## Modern Slavery

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Robert's experience covers not only the more "usual" modern slavery cases particularly those involving County Lines drug conspiracies, but also to defending in allegations of holding a person in slavery or servitude.

## Notable Modern Slavery cases

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### **R v Webb [2023] Portsmouth Crown Court**

Defending, leading Helen Easterbrook, in a 5-week 'landmark case' of a carer who was prosecuted for keeping his client in slavery or servitude contrary to section 1 of the Modern Slavery Act and Article 4 of the ECHR. It was the first time that the Act had been used to prosecute where the person being kept in slavery or servitude was not working or providing a service: the victim was wheelchair bound with cerebral palsy, rather it was alleged that the Defendant had benefited by his

employment. The Jury convicted by a majority and also convicted the Defendant of ill-treatment by a care worker for some of the indicted period; the Defendant was acquitted of fraud and theft at the close of the prosecution case. ITV.

## Sexual Offences

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Robert has been a CPS Rape Specialist since the Panel's inception; he is regularly instructed to prosecute and defend in cases of the utmost gravity including against Queen's Counsel. His expertise has led him to represent clients all over the Country from Liverpool to Bristol, Norwich and Kent.

He is known for his careful but incisive cross-examination of vulnerable witnesses.

Particularly given the expertise he has gained in relation to cases involving digital media and electronic devices he is sought after by both sides for sexual offence cases involving the internet, computers and mobile phones/tablets; he has a considerable weight of experience dealing with the intricacies of electronic data and the cross-examination of expert witnesses in this area. He has a good working relationship with a number of digital media expert witnesses.

Additionally, he has represented, and prosecuted Police Officers charged with sexual offending in courts across England.

Given the breadth of his experience during 2018 and 2019 cases he was involved in were featured in the Channel 4 Series "Crime and Punishment"; so, he had the fortune/misfortune of being filmed and interviewed for TV which has brought him to the attention of a wide audience.

## Notable Sexual Offences cases

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### **R v Head [2023/2024] Guildford Crown Court**

Defending, leading Helen Easterbrook, in highly unusual and extraordinary case of a teenage male who convinced his female friend, both were students at a prestigious dance/stage school, that he had a split personality (7 plus personalities). The Prosecution case was the persuaded her that she had to have sex/perform sexual acts with him/on him in order to prevent one of the different personalities killing him. She was further persuaded that he was a covert operative and member of the US group Blackwater. There were may thousands of text messages and communications between the two plus extensive evidence about his previous mental/psychiatric health. There were partial acquittals at trial.

### **R v Oxborrow [2022] Southampton Crown Court**

Prosecution of male originally found to be unfit in 2012. Following his release and a Victim's Right to Review the 2022 Trial brought together 3 complainants and prosecutions that had previously been ordered to lie on the file.

### **R v Brooke [2022] Southampton Crown Court**

Highly unusual prosecution of adult female for causing sexual a person to engage in sexual activity by forcing her partner to have sexual intercourse.

### **R v Aspinall [2021] Bournemouth Crown Court**

Prosecution of male for 67 offences relating to online sexual offending largely towards a young female in the Philippines

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### [R v Bangarh & Farooqy \[2021\] Southampton Crown Court](#)

Prosecution of 2 males who seriously sexually assaulted a unconscious female in a hotel room and filmed themselves doing so.

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### [R v Campbell \[2021\] Norwich Crown Court](#)

Defence of male who sought to arrange the rape of women and girls in online chatrooms. The case threw up novel arguments on the interpretation of section 14 of the Sexual Offence Act 2003 which have now been considered by the Court of Appeal in another case.

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### [R v H \[2020\] Newport Isle of Wight Crown Court](#)

Prosecution adult male who filmed his abuse of an infant. This case featured in the episode "To Catch an Offender" of the acclaimed Channel 4 Series "Crime and Punishment" in which Robert appears.

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### [R v West \[2020\] Winchester Crown Court](#)

Prosecution of stranger rape attack in a Bournemouth park.

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### [R v Aldridge \[2019\] Portsmouth Crown Court](#)

Prosecution of Assistant Headteacher for 24 counts of sexual offences committed towards 4 of his teenage pupils. This prosecution features in the Channel 4 Series "Crime and Punishment" in which Robert appears.

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### [R v H & H \[2019\] Winchester Crown Court](#)

Prosecution of a couple who filmed themselves abusing a 4-month old baby. The case included the successful arguing of the admissibility of the identification of abusers by the characteristics of their hands and a significant amount of information from mobile telephone downloads and social media apps.

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## Historic Sexual Offences

Whether the case is a handful of years old or ranges back decades, the oldest so far ranged back almost 60 years, Robert has been involved in cases covering every section of the 1956 Sexual Offences Act as well as its predecessor. Alongside current sexual offending this work provides much of the everyday workload of his practice. Robert is well-versed in the intricacies of changes of legislation (both in relation to the offences and sentencing), and the impact these have on prosecutions.

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### Notable Historic Sexual Offences cases

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#### [R v Brooks \[2024\] Southampton Crown Court](#)

Defence of former RAF Officer turned schoolteacher indicted with historic sex offending at a private school; there were

partial acquittals at trial.

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#### **R v P [2022] Portsmouth Crown Court**

Defence of male accused of repeatedly raping and sexually assaulting his niece and indecently exposing himself to her sister; the Jury brought back unanimous not guilty verdicts after an 8-day trial during which family members lined up to give evidence against him.

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#### **R v Deacon [2022] Portsmouth Crown Court**

Defence of male accused of assaulting a young child over an 8 year period from the late 1990s.

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#### **R v Austin [2021] Portsmouth Crown Court**

Defence of male friend and babysitter who sexually assaulted his charges in the mid-1980s.

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#### **R v Britton [2020] Liverpool Crown Court**

Defence of male prosecuted for historic offences committed towards the teenage daughter of his neighbour.

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#### **R v Aldridge [2019] Portsmouth Crown Court**

Prosecution of Assistant Headteacher for 24 counts of sexual offences committed towards 4 of his teenage pupils. This prosecution features in the Channel 4 Series "Crime and Punishment" in which Robert appears.

## **Cybercrime**

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Robert has been identified in the Leading Directories for his experience and ability in digital cases. This is also reflected in his involvement in cyber-crime cases whether that involves allegations of on-line fraud, dark web drug dealing or bitcoin money laundering.

### **Notable Cybercrime cases**

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#### **R. v. Emosivwe and others [2020] Portsmouth Crown Court**

Defending main conspirator in conspiracy to defraud on-line retailers.

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#### **R v Lai Lan [2017] Portsmouth Crown Court**

successful prosecution, on behalf of SEROCU, of drug dealer who used the 'Darknet' marketplace and bitcoin payment methods.

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### **R. v. Choudhry and others [2016] Reading Crown Court**

Prosecution of three conspirators for their part in a \$460,000 fraud on PayPal investigated by the Cyber Crime Unit of South East Regional Crime Unit as Operation Cobalt.

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### **R. v. Emosivwe and others [2012] Exeter Crown Court**

Defending alleged main conspirator in a conspiracy to defraud on-line retailers by a gang who used stolen credit card details to make purchases throughout the UK. The Prosecution dropped the case prior to a month-long trial listing.  
R. v. Jaafar and others [2012] Cardiff Crown Court –Defending in a conspiracy to defraud the Royal Mint. The Prosecution were persuaded not proceed at Trial as the Defendant had left the Country.

## **Gangs & Organised Crime Groups**

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Robert is one of the small team of instructed advocates dealing with Operation Venetic Encrochat cases on the Western Circuit.

### **Notable Gangs & Organised Crime Groups cases**

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#### **R v Bahrami & O'Brien [2023] Portsmouth Crown Court**

Prosecution, at trial, of £multi-million Class A drugs conspiracies arising from Encrochat (Operation Venetic) evidence.

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#### **R v Marsh and Others [2023] Southampton Crown Court**

Prosecution of 8 defendants in a 5-week trial for conspiracies to supply Class A drugs in Southampton.

## **Firearms**

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As well as experience in dealing with firearms being used as part and parcel of offending Robert has acquired expertise in the prosecution of thefts of firearms and their constituent parts from the MOD.

### **Notable Firearms cases**

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#### **R v Tongue [2024] Basingstoke Magistrates' Court**

Detailed pre-charge advisory work for Wessex CPS Complex Case Unit and MOD Police [Operation Berry] for an investigation into Army Staff-Sergeant who stole parts of firearms and key components for military L129 Sharpshooter Rifles.

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#### **R v Laidler and others [2019] Winchester Crown Court**

The prosecution of former military armourer and archivist at the Small Arms School Collection and his associates for the theft of current and historic weapons.

## Military Law

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From the start of his career Robert has appeared in Military Courts throughout the UK and abroad representing service personnel and civilians. In more recent years these have tended to be allegations of serious fraud and serious sexual offences. He brings to these cases the skills he has acquired in civilian courts while acknowledging that Military Courts are somewhat different to their civilian counterparts.

### Notable Military Law cases

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#### [R v Avery \[2021\] Bulford Military Court Centre](#)

Defence of Leading Seaman accused of raping a female acquaintance in her cabin.

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#### [R v Holt \[2021\] Bulford Military Court Centre](#)

Led by James Newton Price QC for the Defence of young serviceman prosecuted for multiple rapes and sexual assaults on multiple complainants. Acquitted after trial of 4 out of 7 allegations.

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#### [R v LS A \[2019\] Bulford Military Court Centre](#)

Successful defence at trial of Naval Leading Seaman who was charged with sexual assaults allegedly towards a female rating whilst the their ship was on deployment. The case included issues of consent and breach of the ships standing orders by the female.

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#### [R v Lieutenant M \[2018\] Bulford Military Court Centre](#)

Defence of Naval Lieutenant who misguidedly misused money he was entitled to claim for Continuing Education Allowance in order to meet debts he had accrued securing the immigration into the UK of his young daughter. On a Guilty plea whilst the Lieutenant was dismissed he was not otherwise sentenced and no financial penalty was imposed.

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#### [R v Musician Higginson \[2017\] HMS Nelson Military Court Centre](#)

Defence of Royal Marine Bandsman who stole more than a dozen musical instruments, valued at about £19,000 from the band and fellow band members over more than a year in order to pay off substantial debts. On a Guilty plea and using references and a psychiatric report whilst the bandsman was dismissed he received a short period of detention, rather than imprisonment, no financial penalty was imposed.

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#### [R v Sgt F-S \[2017\] HMS Nelson Military Court Centre](#)

Defence of a senior Royal Marine clerk for thefts of substantial quantities of cash destined for foreign operations.

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#### [R v Pte M \[2017\] Bulford Military Court Centre](#)

Defence of a Private charged in relation to barrack room 'banter' which went too far.

## **Driving fatalities/causing serious injury**

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Robert is widely recognised for his ability in Road Traffic fatality cases. He has a good track record for successfully defending this, or where that is not possible for mitigating the consequences for those involved. He has an excellent working relationship with a number of Road Traffic Expert witnesses.

Given his expertise in cases involving electronic evidence he is particularly at home when conducting cases when the examination of digital media impinges on road traffic incident.

## **Notable Driving fatalities/causing serious injury cases**

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### **R v Pymm [2024] King's Lynn Crown Court**

Defending motorcyclist who crashed into a mobility scooter being driven by a double-amputee causing a fractured hip. The motorcyclist, who was disqualified from driving at the time, fled the scene and was arrested later at his home.

### **R v Cielevicius [2023] Norwich Crown Court**

Defence of driver of a BMW X5 travelling at over 90 mph who crashed into on-coming vehicle killing its 3 occupants. ITV.

### **R v Standing [2022] Chelmsford Crown Court**

The successful defence of car driver on counts of causing death by dangerous driving and causing death by careless driving while unfit through drugs where the allegation was the car was racing a motorbike through a housing estate in Essex.

### **R v Horbury [2021] Southampton Crown Court**

Defence of lorry driver who pleaded guilty to causing the death by careless driving of an elderly lady on a pedestrian crossing. Expert evidence in this case involved the sight lines from the HGV's cab and the correct use/application of proximity mirrors.

### **R v Sykes [2019] Guildford Crown Court**

Successful defence of mother of two, charged with causing death by careless driving, over her involvement in a very serious road traffic accident when her car travelled into the path of an on-coming vehicle as she negotiated a bend on a country road.

### **R v Wheatle [2019] Central Criminal Court**

Defence of driver travelling in excess of 70 mph on the A3 at Kennington and who was 2.5 times over the limit for cannabis in his blood. Initially indicted for causing death by dangerous driving after negotiation the Prosecution accepted a plea to causing death by careless driving whilst over the prescribed limit; thereafter successfully arguing down the starting point



such that the Judge imposed a sentence of 3 years 8 months imprisonment.

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### **R v Dorey [2017] Portsmouth Crown Court**

Successfully defending at trial a case of causing death by careless driving. Expert evidence in the case involved not only accident reconstruction, but toxicology and pharmacology, traffic light sequencing, GPS and Garmin sports devices

## **Money Laundering**

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As a consequence of Robert's expertise in document and digital cases he is instructed in relation to money laundering and fraud cases.

### **Notable Money Laundering cases**

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#### **R v Ahmed [2022] Bournemouth Crown Court**

Prosecution of courier sent by fraudster to collect multiple packages of gold bullion from elderly couple.

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#### **R. v. LG [2018] Portsmouth Crown Court**

Defence of female defendant for alleged money laundering of proceeds of a drugs conspiracy. The prosecution offered no evidence against LG at the start of the 6th week of the trial.

## **Criminal Fraud**

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Going hand in hand with money laundering with sums ranging from small amounts to millions of £s Robert's expertise has been brought to bear in the past for frauds covering almost every way that they can be committed (e.g bogus building work, fraud on European Fisheries, cyber frauds, mortgage frauds, benefit frauds, money transfer frauds).

He prides himself on ensuring that the Jury understand the intricacies of the fraud and is adept at making the complex simple to understand. As a sidenote he has a strange fondness for spreadsheets

### **Notable Criminal Fraud cases**

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#### **R v Mfuka [2022] Portsmouth Crown Court**

Defence of asylum seeker who was alleged to have illegally received over £500,000 by way of NASS support.

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#### **R v Dexter [2022] Portsmouth Crown Court**

Prosecution of Tinder fraudster who conned a female out of £141,500 and was found in possession of financial paperwork purporting to show he was worth over £4 million.

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### R v Ajmal [2020] Bournemouth Crown Court

Prosecution of fraudster posing as a Police Officer who targeted a number of individuals. The most serious allegations involved taking nearly £1m from a couple leaving them with just £187.

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### R v Ashton [2018] Luton Crown Court

Prosecution of the in-house accountant for an Evangelical Church Charity who over many years defrauded the charity of sums in excess of £2.5 million pounds. The money was spent on the Defendant's "second-life" which he enjoyed with his mistress – it went on luxurious holidays, horses, helicopters and funding an extravagant lifestyle.

## Police Misconduct

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With his breadth and knowledge of criminal practice Robert is ideally suited to bring his expertise to prosecute and defend Police Officers before the Crown Court. Recent work has covered a wide spectrum of offences examples of which include successfully prosecuting and defending allegations of sexual offending; misconduct in public office; death by dangerous driving; fraud.

### Notable Police Misconduct cases

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#### R v Ferrow [2021] Winchester Crown Court

Prosecution of serving Detective Constable who forged a witness statement of a key witness in a murder enquiry.

## Memberships

- Middle Temple
- Western Circuit
- Criminal Bar Association
- Association of Military Courts Advocates

## Awards

