

"A personable barrister with a powerful intellect." - Legal 500, 2017

Neil has a busy criminal practice, divided fairly evenly between defending and prosecuting. He is a Category 4 Prosecutor.

As his practice has grown, instructing solicitors have commended his organisational skills, sensitivity with vulnerable witnesses and his effective manner with juries. He has developed a reputation for being particularly understanding with lay clients.

Neil concentrates his practice on serious and complex criminal cases.

Since 2012, Neil has focussed much of work on serious sexual offences. In 2012, he was junior prosecution counsel in the first Rochdale grooming case heard in Liverpool. Since then, he has continued to be regularly instructed by the CPS complex crime unit in Manchester prosecuting in a series of multi handed Rochdale grooming cases, together with other high profile sex cases. In 2015, Neil successfully prosecuted the former TV weatherman, Fred Talbot, for historic child sex offences. In 2016, he was instructed by the CPS, in Newcastle, to prosecute the former Sunderland FC footballer, Adilson Varela, for offences of rape.

He also regularly appears in the Medical Practitioners Tribunal instructed to act on behalf of the General Medical Council.

Criminal Law

R v Bennett – Ensured the acquittal following a trial of a restaurant customer accused of the manslaughter of a fellow customer by pushing him – causation of death being one of the issues in the case, involving the consideration of three neurosurgeons' reports.

Represented one of the Defendant's in a 15 handed conspiracy to import firearms and Class A drugs from the continent.

Successfully prosecuted Sarah Harding for glassing and partially blinding a former Hollyoaks and Coronation Street actress Charlotte Davies. Following the trial Harding was jailed for 27 months.

R v Baines & Others – Two-months Conspiracy to Import £6 million worth of Ecstasy tablets

R v Reid & Others – Six-week Conspiracy to Murder

R v Arden & Others – Four-month Conspiracy to Murder

R v Dooley – qualified solicitor passing Class A drugs into prison

R v Saxena – Strangeways doctor accused of perverting the course of justice

Gang Related Cases

R v Danson and Others – 3-month Conspiracy to Murder case in which the Crown allege his client was a member of a Salford gang intent on a revenge killing. Neil was also briefed in both of the "Pit Bull Crew" trials - representing different members of the same family in each trial. Pit Bull 1 was subsequently reported as the Attorney General appealed sentences passed as being unduly lenient. The importance of the case was such that the Attorney General himself acted for the Crown in the Court of Appeal. In Pit Bull 2, he acted for the lead defendant who was accused of murder and firearms offences.

R v Arden and Others – Represented one of the main defendants in a 4-month gangland execution trial

Neil also acted for Richard Solomon in another Manchester gangland murder trial. His client was said by the Crown to be a leading figure in one of the city's major gangs.

R v Danson and Others – 3-month Conspiracy to Murder - Salford gangs

R v G Day and Others – 3-month Conspiracy to Supply Drugs and Possession of firearms, Manchester Gang – "Pitt-Bull Trial"

R v P Day and Others – "Pitt-Bull 2" months Murder and Conspiracy



CONTACT DETAILS

Email:

neilusher@lincolnhousechambers.com

Telephone:

0161 832 5701

PRACTICE AREAS

Business Crime & Financial Regulation
Criminal Law
Professional Discipline
Regulatory

PROFESSIONAL

Category 4 Prosecutor

MEMBERSHIPS

Criminal Bar Association

LECTURES

The Criminal Justice and Immigration Act 2008

The Serious Crime Act 2007

The Criminal Evidence (Anonymous Witnesses) Act 2008

The Sexual Offences Act 2003

Dangerousness under the Criminal Justice Act 2003

EDUCATION

Derby Grammar School, Bury

Hull University B.A. Hons

City University (CPE)

Sexual Offences

R v PD and Another – Successfully defended his 17 year old client who was tried for the joint rape of a 14 year old family member. At the close of the prosecution case Neil submitted there was 'no case to answer' given weaknesses in the account of the Complainant during his cross-examination of her. Unusually where the issue was the credibility of the Complainant's account, the trial Judge agreed and directed Neil's client and his co-defendant be found not guilty. Earlier in the trial Neil had also successfully adduced evidence of a previous false allegation of rape, and made a successful application to adduce evidence of the Complainant's alleged sexual history (s.41).

Acted for one of a number of care workers charged with historic sexual offences in a Sussex children's home dating back to the early 1970s. The three week trial was heard at Lewes Crown Court.

Successfully prosecuted a historic rape case with the Defendant being represented by a leading QC.

Successfully prosecuted in *R v Macanda* – a knife-point rapist who broke into a young woman's home in the early hours and subjected her to a prolonged and repeated rape. Macanda was jailed indefinitely.

Instructed to represent the "Northern Quarter serial sex attacker" Abdoulaye Diallo. The defendant attempted to violently rape three women in Manchester City Centre in the early hours of the morning. The incidents led to the police issuing CCTV footage of the assailant in an attempt to identify him. Notwithstanding the gravity of the offences, Neil was able to secure a sentence which will allow the defendant to apply for parole in under four years.

Instructed by the Complex Case Unit at the CPS to act as second Prosecution Counsel (Lead Counsel Rachel Smith – also Lincoln House) to prosecute in the largest on street sex grooming case in England to date – the so-called Rochdale "Asian" grooming trial ("Operation Span"). The trial took place between February- May 2012 in Liverpool and attracted nationwide attention and provoking a national debate on issues raised by the case – the safety of young girls in Care homes; the ethnic make up of on street grooming and the alleged failures of the police to take seriously the complaints of vulnerable victims of this type of sexual abuse. The prosecution was successful with nine of the eleven defendants convicted with sentences of up to 19 years being handed down.

R v Logan & Others – 2-month Children's Home sexual abuse.

Neil has regularly trained doctors based at the St Mary's Sexual Assault Referral Centre in Manchester in all aspects of legal and evidential matters arising as of sexual offence trials.

"Operation Span", 2012 – Liverpool (the first "Rochdale grooming" trial) – junior prosecution counsel. This seven – week, eight defendant trial attracted national publicity and generated considerable political debate and was seen as the first major grooming case involving Asian defendants. Allegations involved trafficking, conspiracy to rape and multiple child rapes.

"Operation Routh", 2013 – Leading prosecution counsel. Op Routh was a series of linked multi-handed Rochdale child grooming cases. In total nine defendants were prosecuted in three separate trials lasting a total of four months. Allegations involved numerous child sex offences including multiple child rapes.

"Operation Infrared", 2014 – Leading prosecution counsel. Four - week multi-handed child exploitation case involving three children from a care home in Rochdale. Allegations included rape and trafficking.

R v Fred Talbot, 2015 – Sole prosecution counsel. The defendant was a well-known TV weatherman in the 1980's and 1990's. Neil successfully prosecuted the defendant for a series of historic sexual offences against children. Allegations dating back to the 1960's through to the 1980's. Defendant represented by a QC. Three - week trial.

R v Adilson Varela, 2016 – Hull crown court. Sole prosecution counsel. The defendant was a former Sunderland FC footballer who now plays for FC Zurich accused of offences of rape. Two- week trial which involved Neil cross examining a number of current and former Newcastle United and Sunderland footballers.

"Operation Doublet trials 1 - 4", 2015-16 – Leading prosecution counsel. Op Doublet is a series of multi-handed Rochdale child grooming cases. In total 22 defendants have been prosecuted in four separate trials lasting a total of seven months. A number of the defendants who were convicted were represented by senior QC's and juniors. Allegations involved trafficking, conspiracy to rape and multiple child rapes.

R v Noone, 2016 – Neil successfully prosecuted the defendant who was accused of sexually assaulting a three year old child who Neil called to give evidence in the trial. She is believed to be one of the youngest victims to have been cross examined in a criminal trial.



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Fraud

R v Grindley and Others – A case listed for 3 months, involving allegations of large scale conspiracy to defraud the Department of the Environment and the Land Registry. As a result of defence submissions, the Prosecution's case was thrown out by the trial Judge after several weeks of the trial.

R v Ray Nevitt and Others – A case which the Prosecution alleged involved the defendants duping a number of major financial institutions, including leading high street banks.

In R v Edwards-Sayer and Others – Acted for one of a number of defendants who were alleged by HMRC to have been responsible for a £30 million plus VAT fraud. The case attracted national media coverage when defence arguments in respect of disclosure led to the trial Judge ruling that there had been an abuse of process, with the result in collapse of the case against his client. The case was reported in Criminal Law Week.

R v Boardman & Others – £7 million factoring fraud

R v Grindley – 3-month Conspiracy to Defraud Department of Environment and Land Registry

R v Roden & Others – £50 million VAT fraud; 4 month trial in Nottingham

Professional Discipline

In addition to his busy criminal practice, Neil is also on both the General Medical Council (GMC) and Royal College of Nursing (RCN) list of preferred counsel and is regularly instructed to represent both bodies in their Fitness to Practice hearings in London and Manchester.



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