

# Christina Russell

Call: 1994

"She's an incredibly impressive and intelligent person."

Chambers UK 2024 (Extradition)



✉ christinarussell@2harecourt.com ☎ 020 7353 5324

Christina Russell has extensive experience spanning different roles within the criminal justice system.

During her early career, she was a junior barrister in one of London's leading criminal chambers and practised in crime – both prosecuting and defending, developing a specialism in white collar crime. Subsequently she worked within various public bodies – first in the Crown Prosecution Service Confiscation Unit, then in the United Kingdom Central Authority within the Home Office, vetting Mutual Legal Assistance requests from all over the world and lastly in the Enforcement Division of the Financial Conduct Authority where she dealt with debt management regulation. In 2017 she co-founded Boutique Law LLP and specialised in business crime, extradition, mutual legal assistance, corruption, INTERPOL and regulatory disciplinary cases. This varied experience allows her to take a holistic view when advising clients now that she has returned to practise as an advocate at 2 Hare Court.

Christina's general crime experience includes prosecuting and defending in all manner of criminal prosecutions. Christina's extradition experience includes requests from or to Greece, India, the Netherlands, Poland, Spain, Switzerland, Romania, and the USA and has included high-profile, complex and politically controversial cases. She has successfully defended in high level Serious Fraud Office prosecutions and in corruption and tax investigations. She has also represented clients in police disciplinary proceedings and in Solicitors Regulation Authority proceedings. She advised a client involved in a high-profile Public Inquiry.

Her international experience is extensive – extradition, INTERPOL, Mutual Legal Assistance. Christina is particularly interested in cases that involve considering the legal position in other countries and how that intersects with whatever the issue is in the United Kingdom and has worked with many foreign clients and lawyers.

## Expertise

### Business Crime & Financial Services

Christina developed a specialism in white collar crime as a young barrister, and this has endured throughout her career. She was on the prosecuting list for the Department of Trade and Industry (now the Department for Business and Trade – DBT) and prosecuted insolvency offences in the Crown and Magistrates' Courts. She has defended in several substantial SFO prosecutions (both as a barrister

and while a partner at Boutique Law LLP). Her time in-house at the Financial Conduct Authority has given her valuable insight into the prosecution side of an enforcement body. Many of the extradition cases in which Christina has been instructed involved underlying business crime allegations.

## Notable Cases:

### **R v S & Others**

Christina was junior counsel for the CEO who was first on the indictment in a Serious Fraud Office prosecution concerning an alleged £20 million accounting overstatement for a FTSE 100 company. Over 100 witnesses gave evidence and there was a vast amount of served prosecution evidence and unused material. There was extensive legal argument including on expert evidence and severance and the case inevitably involved a detailed understanding of the relevant accounting issues

Her client was acquitted of all counts after less than two days of deliberation following an eleven-month trial.

### **R v B & S**

Christina was junior counsel in a Serious Fraud Office prosecution for corruption related to £22m worth of financial favours in the form of loans from a well-known bank for building development. The client was convicted on several counts and acquitted of others. There were legal arguments on the issues of the independence of the expert evidence.

Christina advised a client employed at a plc subjected to an SFO investigation in 2018 and prepared him for interview. After a full interview the SFO took no further action against the client at the conclusion of their investigation although others were prosecuted.

Christina advised a client in a City of London police investigation into corruption in the building industry and prepared him for interview. The client was interviewed, and the investigation was eventually concluded with no further action taken against the client.

Christina advised a crypto currency business on the drafting and submission of a blackmail report in 2023.

## Tax

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Christina has represented individuals threatened with prosecution by HMRC. She has advised on overall strategy and preparation for interview. She has also been involved in drafting submissions to HMRC as to whether charges should be brought. Additionally, she has prosecuted VAT related matters on behalf of HMRC.

## Notable Cases:

Christina advised a client facing bankruptcy in the sum of around £35m, founded on a claim for unpaid tax. The client required substantive advice on strategy after HMRC indicated that they had opened a criminal investigation. There was a long and detailed history in the form of previous tax investigations under several different versions of HMRC's Code of Practice 9 (COP 9). Additionally, there was a Mutual Legal Assistance element to the case involving a European country, and the case was further complicated by the client being an ex-advisor to a high net worth and high-profile individual. The case involved mastering a complex series of transactions and documents, as well as holding meetings with the client to formalise a prepared statement to be read at interview.

Christina was involved in drafting written submissions on two separate HMRC cases in respect of whether criminal charges should be brought. The representations were successful.

## International, Sanctions & Extradition

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Christina has a keen interest in cases with a cross-border involvement – whether extradition, INTERPOL or Mutual Legal Assistance. She enjoys working with foreign clients, lawyers, and experts, as she is fascinated by the contrasts and interactions between different legal systems.

She has extensive defence extradition experience from her time as a partner at Boutique Law LLP, involving actual or potential extradition requests from many countries including Albania, France, Greece, India, Malaysia, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania, South Korea, Spain, Switzerland, and the USA. Many of the cases in which she has been involved have been high-profile, complex and /or politically sensitive cases. She has advised on strategy and carried out substantive case preparation, including assisting with the drafting of court submissions at both first instance and appeal levels. Her cases have included successful ECHR Article 8 claims. Her extradition work and research mean that she is also familiar with the intersection of extradition with asylum, and immigration law, and she has worked with immigration lawyers to ensure comprehensive case strategies.

Christina has also drafted submissions to INTERPOL requesting deletion and has advised on other INTERPOL matters, such as the effect of INTERPOL policies on refugee status.

Having spent time within the United Kingdom Central Authority, Christina has an excellent understanding of Mutual Legal Assistance. Her client in a civil restitution case benefitted from an argument about the lawfulness of the FCA's use of Mutual Legal Assistance obtained from a European country. This led to a walkaway settlement, including a discontinuation of the criminal prosecution.

She has also liaised extensively with foreign lawyers in many countries to obtain their advice on extradition and confiscation regimes in their countries, and the risks run by clients wishing to travel to those countries, either when an INTERPOL Red Notice might be in existence or where there is a risk of a politically-motivated extradition request.

## Notable Cases:

### **A state v P**

Christina was closely involved at the first instance and high court appeal stages of this extradition case which subsequently reached the Supreme Court on an ECHR Article 5 and 6 issue. The underlying offences were abuse of office. The case involved several experts, including foreign lawyers, and required gathering of factual evidence and an understanding and analysis of the local prosecution and law, prison issues and foreign law.

### **A state v M**

This was an extremely high- profile case in the requesting state. The case involved a complex commercial background following a business collapse. The defence case relied on experts in banking, aviation, prison conditions as well as a medical expert.

### **A state v V**

The client's extradition was successfully resisted on Article 8 grounds (principally ill health). The requesting state did not appeal.

Christina advised a client during witness preparation with the Department of Justice where the client had reached a non-prosecution agreement with the Department of Justice.

Christina advised high-profile clients who were caught up in a financial political scandal in an Asian country. Christina drafted submissions to INTERPOL in relation to potential Red Notices. She also liaised extensively with foreign lawyers so that the clients could risk assess whether or not to travel to particular countries they needed to visit. This involved ensuring that the effect of a Red Notice and

the extradition process in each country was well understood, and that local lawyers would be available in the event of any difficulties.

## Professional Discipline

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Christina has defended in a variety of police disciplinary cases. These included a hearing relating to attempted rape allegations and a hearing charging conduct unbecoming which raised human rights issues. Whilst a partner at Boutique Law LLP she acted for a law firm, a junior associate and a solicitor who had been struck off in their matters before the Solicitors Regulation Authority. She gained a good understanding of the processes of the Solicitors Regulation Authority and the Solicitors Disciplinary Tribunal. She also has experience relating to professional accountancy matters.

## Notable Cases:

Assisted a law firm in its disclosure to the Solicitors Regulation Authority regarding further wrongdoing by a former partner in the firm. Drafted submissions aimed at disclosing the conduct while also explaining how the discovery had come about and that no further action was needed against the law firm. No further action was taken.

Prepared fully for a hearing against a junior associate who had been working under extreme pressure to bill adequately and had made mistakes (alleged by the Solicitors Regulation Authority to be dishonest actions not mistakes) in relation to their expenses. At the last minute (after witness statements had been collected), a settlement was reached with the Solicitors Regulation Authority, which withdrew all allegations of dishonesty, following representations made on the client's behalf.

Advised a solicitor who had been struck off in relation to work which he wished to undertake – the client wanted to ensure that they did not cross the line of what they were and were not allowed to do in advising others.

Police disciplinary tribunal attempted rape – 5 day hearing.

Police disciplinary hearing in relation to conduct unbecoming – following legal submissions the client was exonerated.

## Public Inquiries

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Christina is available for Public Inquiry work. She has a strong understanding of the powers and procedures. Her work in business crime ensures that she is adept at handling vast quantities of material, while her work as a partner in a law firm has ensured that her client care and eye to overall strategy is well developed. She is well-versed in drafting complex factual and legal submissions.

## Notable Cases:

Assisting an adviser to a former Prime Minister in disclosure of their documents and finalisation of their witness statements to a Public Inquiry.

## Inquests

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Christina accepts instructions to act in inquests.

## Criminal Defence

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As a young barrister, Christina defended in a wide range of criminal offences, including driving matters, assaults and other violent crime, and sexual assault. She also defended extensively in significant white collar crime cases, drugs matters and theft.

In her role as a partner in a law firm she dealt with threatened prosecution for historic sexual offending, corruption, tax matters, and other business crime offences.

## Public Prosecution

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Christina has prosecuted for a wide variety of bodies including local authorities, the TV licensing authority, the RSPCA, the Post Office, and HMRC for offences including noise nuisance, animal cruelty, street trading, trading standards offences, obscene publications and theft. Additionally, she spent time within the Crown Prosecution Service's Serious Organised Crime Agency (SOCA) division dealing with confiscation matters.