



## Szilvia Booker

*'Deceptively good at cross-examination'*

Legal 500 (2020)

YEAR OF CALL 2005

### Education

University of Toronto 9T0  
(Bachelor of Arts)  
University of East Anglia  
(PgDip Law)  
BPP Professional Education  
(Postgraduate BVC)

### Appointments

Prosecution Advisor to  
UNODC on Controlled  
Deliveries  
CPS Serious Crime Group  
specialist panel  
Appointed to the CPS  
Advocate Panel at Level 3  
Appointed as a CPS specialist  
rape prosecutor  
NCA and FCO Subject Matter  
Expert (SME) in Security &  
Justice Reform  
Former Attorney General's  
List C Prosecuting Counsel

### Memberships

Criminal Bar Association  
South Eastern Circuit

### Overview of Practice

Szilvia is a valuable member of the Criminal Bar Association fraternity, belonging to a handful of independent barristers who undertake the defence and prosecution of criminal cases in equal measures. She appears in complex cases, specialising in serious violent and organised crime, including human trafficking, modern slavery and sexual exploitation offences, and proceedings involving vulnerable witnesses, high profile defendants and joint international investigations and cross-jurisdictional prosecutions.

Szilvia is a specialist rape and serious sex offences prosecutor, and has defended clients facing allegations of historic and child sexual offending and prohibited image offences, and has a wealth of experience in the deployment of, and challenging expert forensic evidence including: digital and cell site analysis, facial recognition and identification evidence, psychiatry & pathology, architecture, and accountancy.

Szilvia is a specialist Human Trafficking and Slavery prosecutor, and leading defence counsel in Modern Slavery Act offences, appearing in cases involving large-scale trafficking of prostitutes into and within the United Kingdom, child grooming offences, commercial and domestic slavery operations, and exploitation offences

committed by organised criminal trafficking networks, including money laundering and corruption offences.

Szilvia has been appointed by the UNODC and the national prosecution authority of Kenya, as part of a team instructed by Shamini Jayanathan and lead by Anu Mohindru Q.C. to advise on the considerations and legal framework for controlled deliveries and the use of informants in East Africa, devising policy and legal protocols to trace the flow of illicit goods such as drugs, wildlife specimen, counterfeit products or falsified medical products, and enable successful prosecution of organised groups involved in such enterprises in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda for seniors members of the respective DPP, CID, and transnational crime police units.

## Practice Areas

### – Criminal Defence & Prosecution

As a criminal barrister with an international perspective, she has been briefed to consider appeals to the Privy Council, to take evidence for parliamentary committees on investigations into international human rights violations, and lecture on comparative legal jurisdictional issues. As a former Canadian police officer, Szilvia has invaluable insight into police investigative practices and procedures and an exceptional working knowledge of the forensic examination of evidence relating to firearms, narcotics, sexual offences and bio-data identification. She has operational understanding of covert and intelligence-led law enforcement operations, which has proved extremely useful both in defending and prosecuting cases involving firearms and drugs, large-scale police operations and informant-based evidence.

Corporate crime cases often overlap with Szilvia's general criminal practice, as many of her clients act as, or represent the interests of, corporations, and are white-collar professionals. This can also be said about Szilvia's cases involving organised crime. Szilvia has defended a

number of people accused of setting up corporations either for the purposes of crime, or, as vehicles for laundering the proceeds of crime.

Szilvia is regularly asked for pre-charge advice by the CPS and by the Hertfordshire police in cases involving corporate manslaughter.

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- **Fraud & Financial Misconduct**

Szilvia is routinely instructed to prosecute and defend cases involving allegations of fraud and financial misconduct, including: bank fraud conspiracies, high value systemic defrauding of the benefit system, VAT frauds and income tax evasion, and related money laundering offences.

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- **Asset Recovery, Restraint and Confiscation**

Many of the cases in which Szilvia appears, involve organized criminal networks, whose assets are restrained by the police at the earliest stages of proceedings. Challenging such restraints, or responding to challenges against restraint, are common legal applications undertaken by her in such cases. Asset recovery, and in particular, recovering the proceeds of crime through confiscation proceedings form part of cases concerning human trafficking, drug importation, high-value frauds, and arms dealing. Szilvia is well versed with the applicability, reach and limitations of the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002.

Szilvia has been involved in the pursuit of the hidden assets of international criminals, utilising the assistance of forensic accountants, joint international investigation partners, and the deployment of foreign jurisprudence to refute claims for, or to asserts rights over, assets held outside the United Kingdom

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## - [Extradition and Mutual Legal Assistance](#)

Szilvia has drafted requests for assistance under the provisions of the European Convention on Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters (1959) and (2000), in obtaining certain information, statements and exhibits in relation to a criminal investigation being conducted by officers of the Metropolitan Police Service, and advises other police forces and regional prosecution authorities.

Similarly, she has been involved in cases requiring legal mutual assistance from the Federal Bureau of Investigations in the United States, and requests for disclosure and assistance from private digital data and social media companies.

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## [Notable Cases](#)

### - [View All](#)

(some articles removed under data protection laws)

*R v I* (2020) – Junior counsel to William Hughes Q.C. defending a young man accused of murder in which the primary issue will be the reinterpretation of the R. Joojee principles of secondary participation.

#### [View media report](#)

*R v G* (2020) – Leading junior defending in a conspiracy investigated by the Met's Specialist Trident unit looking into the activities of a North East London gang that the prosecution allege is responsible for the large scale class A county lines drugs operation and a number of linked firearms incidents in the Enfield area of London.

#### [View media report](#)

*R v C* (2020) – Advising CPS on charges, drafting indictment for and directing ongoing police investigation into the activities of a serial child sex offender, employed by the armed forces, with over 90 child victims.

[View media report](#)

*R v B* (2020) – Prosecuting one of a series of Grenfell Tower frauds.

[View media report](#)

*R v* (2020 /2019) – Defending and prosecuting a number of County lines drug distribution cases, in which criminal networks funnel Class A drugs from cities to towns and rural regions across the country, and occupy the premises of vulnerable drug users, and exploit young children as part of the supply chain.

*R v Barnaby and others* (2019) – Prosecution junior in a Flying Squad investigation into the armed robbery (gun and knifepoint) of the HG Wells Public House in Cheam on 1 October 2017, captured on CCTV and dramatized in a rap music video by members of the organised gang involved in the heist.

[View media report](#)

*Operation Sparkle* (2019) – Prosecution junior into the affairs of an organised criminal network supplying Class A drugs and counterfeit currency from a makeshift compound of shipping containers and port-a-cabins in west London, importing pill press machinery capable of producing 20,000 MDMA an hour.

*R v D* (2017) – Defending a client accused of downloading and erasing IIOC and IVOC using file sharing & erasing software, by calling a defence expert to challenge the prosecution assertion that files recovered from unallocated space on the hard drive is capable of amounting to an attempt to possess such images and an act intending to pervert the course of justice.

*R v A et al* (2016) – Successfully defended a father accused by his daughter of honour-based abuse, requiring the instruction of an expert social media analyst.

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### **Notable human trafficking cases include:**

*Operation Reconverge* (2020) – Leading junior defending in a human trafficking case in which an organised crime group is alleged to have flown the proceeds of a drug and migrant-smuggling operation out of the UK to Dubai in suitcases over a three-year period before being intercepted trying to smuggle 17 people into the UK earlier this year.

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*Operation Lokrum* (2017) – The first case resulting in conviction for child sex trafficking under the new Modern Slavery Act 2015, arising out of joint investigation with the Romanian authorities into the organised trafficking of Romanian females from the Roma community into the London street prostitution industry, including some who were under the age of 16, and some who were deceived into entering prostitution with promise of paid work in the UK, leading to a peripatetic existence for these vulnerable females.

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*Operation Woodgate* (2017) – Successfully defended in a case involving the grooming and trafficking of teenaged girls to Travelodge hotels around west London for the purpose of sexually exploiting them after supplying them with drugs and alcohol.

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*Operation Rakuyou* (2016) – The operation of a sophisticated online brothel enterprise servicing clients who booked sex workers from a succession of rented

properties in the Kilburn area of London, using money transfer services to launder and transfer the proceeds of this lucrative enterprise.

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*Operation Flandrau2* (2016) – The recruitment of Thai masseurs into the West End sex industry, using false travel and visa documents, and enforced debt bondages in order to exploit those prostitutes who have overstayed visa permits in the UK, and recruit them into drug supply and the provision of extreme sexual services. Addiction to crystal meth was a common affliction for those coping with this lifestyle.

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