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If it is true that the only certainty is uncertainty, then we ought by now to have perfected the art of expecting the unexpected. Recent months demonstrate just how unpredictable the world of criminal law can be.

The cyber-attack on the Legal Aid Agency (LAA), the full story of which is still unfolding, was a remarkable and unprecedented event.

Its immediate disruption threatened firms nationwide and the longer-term impact, particularly the consequences of the information theft, remains unknown.

It did, however, bring out the best in the LCCSA committee and President Casey Jenkins, whose efforts in liaising with the LAA and communicating with practitioners was exemplary. Their work ensured that, amid uncertainty, solicitors felt informed and supported.

Published in July, the Sir Brian Leveson chaired report (Part 1) into the criminal courts system was predictable in that it identified familiar fault lines such as severe back logs in the Crown Court, rising complexity of cases and long term under investment in the justice system.

Yet it was also alarming in making bold structural proposals, such as limiting jury trials for certain

offences, creating a new bench division of the Crown Court and raising the discount for early guilty pleas to 40%.

Its recommendations were a mix of the expected and the audacious, combining cautious pragmatism with flashes of radical reform. And so we now wait for the Efficiency Review, leaving us to discuss whether these recommendations would have a positive impact or whether any change will descend into peripheral tinkering.

In this issue, we have David Hardstaff's report from what was clearly a highly entertaining LCCSA Conference in Malaga and Quinn Hawkins takes a look at *Shvidler v Secretary of State for Foreign, Common-wealth and Development Affairs* [2025].

Matt Foot at APPEAL brings an important issue to our attention in the campaign for compensation of miscarriage of justice victims, from the forensic expert camp, while Dan Sutton speaks to us about the effects of mandatory accreditation and Nigel Porter talks telematics. Finally, DJ (MC) Denis Brennan remembers his good friend Jon P Steingold.

Piers Desser, Editor

LCCSA Conference considers the Mysterious Case of Lucy Cypher

By David Hardstaff

Over the years, the LCCSA's European Conference has traversed the continent, exploring cities from Ghent to Porto. Coastal Spain, however, occupies a special place in the hearts of those who make the annual pilgrimage.

This year, the conference on the weekend of September 26 to 28 was back on the Costa del Crime. Not south Essex, but equally beautiful Malaga on the southern coast of Spain.

It was another sold-out conference which is testament to the huge effort that goes into its organisation year on year by Sara Boxer and the committee. The event would also not be possible without the generous support provided by the association's friends, 5 St Andrews Hill and Tower Forensics.

The weekend's itinerary formally kicked off with a

sumptuous dinner overlooking The Med at La Pergola. The food was excellent and there was lots of mingling, new friends made, and catching up with some old ones not seen since the last conference.

Mindful of the packed itinerary for Saturday, and wary of being led astray (as before), the author got an early-ish night after dinner. Reports were received of cocktails and chatter on the roof of the conference hotel late into the night.

The conference on Saturday was well attended. Proceedings started with an address by the association's president, Casey Jenkins, and moved on to what might fairly be described as criminal law performance art, in the form of a case study examining freezing and forfeiture of cryptoassets.

The Mysterious Case of Lucy Cypher was a white



knuckle thriller, directed and narrated by 5SAH's own Scorsese, Andrew Bird KC, and starred James Fletcher as Kroaken, a "UK-connected cryptoasset service provider", Gary Pons as T/DC Pons of the Met, Barnaby Hone as Lucy Cypher, a holder of cryptocurrency, and Sarah Wood, as Maria Sanchez, the sad victim of Malaga.

An opening presentation on account freezing orders might ordinarily have turned some delegates back to drink, but honestly, it was really entertaining and informative, examining the life and times of a DAML SAR and options available to law enforcement in the form of cryptowallet freezing orders.

The performances were sublime and all agreed several starring counsel are wasted in law.

Next up was a thoroughly comprehensive criminal law update presented by Sophia Kerridge, Meeno Kaur Chawla, and Elisenda Mitchell, of 5SAH.

Sophie explored developments in justice v protest, and progress made by the Crime and Policing Bill 2025, which will shortly have its second reading in the House of Lords.

Malaga's most famous son, Picasso, once said, "Every act of creation is first an act of destruction." Meeno's review of some of the Leveson Review proposals, and particularly those suggesting the curtailment of jury trials, might have channelled that sentiment for some members, not without a hint of irony.

Elisenda's piece on non-fatal strangulation and challenges to cell site analysis was clear and practical (note

to the organisers – hotel staff should be briefed in advance of slides with titles such as 'Intentional Strangulation / Suffocation' being displayed for such long periods of time).

Kate Gould of Hickman & Rose spoke about the current state of disclosure in sex cases, the topic most pervasive for those in the room. EuroCon stalwart Mark Cotter KC rounded the session off with a fascinating and challenging (in a good way) piece on consent and sleep. Feedback on each of the sessions was excellent.

After the presentations, we were released into the labyrinth that is Malaga old town, in search of art history, tapas, and the unofficial partner of the conference, Victoria Malaga lager. Not all were consumed in equal measures.

A lovely drinks reception took place at the conference hotel that evening. Whilst overlooking Malaga cathedral and enjoying a cold glass of Victoria Malaga lager, I was reminded of Casey's reflections at the beginning of the last TLA: "We can only be effective if we know when it is time to take a step back and look after ourselves."

Looking after ourselves can take several forms. Seeing some more of the world and breaking bread with our colleagues must surely be one of them. A brilliant conference all round.

David Hardstaff is a partner in BCL's serious and general crime department.

Truss, Shvidler and the legacy of Leggatt

By Quinn Hawkins

On 24 March 2022 Eugene Shvidler, a British national, was designated by the then Foreign Secretary Liz Truss pursuant to the Russia (Sanctions) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 (SI 2019/855) [the Regulations].

His assets were frozen worldwide (such broad scope applicable only to a UK citizen) and it made it a criminal offence for others to deal with him in either a private or commercial capacity, thereby engaging his Article 8 and Article 1 First Protocol rights.

Quick to inform the public, the Foreign Secretary issued a press release: *“These oligarchs, businesses and hired thugs are complicit in the murder of innocent civilians and it is right that they pay the price.”*

Shvidler was neither an oligarch nor a hired thug complicit in murdering anyone. He had been associated with an “involved person”, namely, Roman Abramovich (Regulations s.6(2)(d), 6(2)(a)(ii) and 6(3)(b)) as Vice President for Finance of the Sibneft Oil Company (1998–2005) and as a board member of Evraz plc (mining and steel) from which, he had resigned on 10 March 2022, the date Abramovich himself was designated.

In deciding whether to set aside the decision to designate, the court must apply the principles applicable on an application for judicial review.

Whether any decision by the former Foreign Secretary should raise the red flags of procedural competence and irrationality is beyond the scope of this article but Shvidler did challenge the decision, all the way to the Supreme Court.

In *Shvidler v Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs* [2025] UKSC 30 the majority upheld the decision (Lord Leggatt dissenting) to designate Shvidler¹.

On the question as to the proper approach to proportionality and proportionality review by the appellate courts their Lordships were unanimous.

The court confirmed that the assessment of proportionality of a measure which interferes with a Convention right involves the application of the four-stage test recently affirmed in *Re JR123* [2025] UKSC 8; [2025] 2 WLR 435.

At first instance, the court’s task was to make its own assessment of whether a measure is proportionate to a legitimate aim, and its function was not merely one of review in determining whether the primary decision maker misdirected itself².

However, this did not make the court the primary decision maker, as the level of review varied according to the

right in issue and the context in which the question arose⁴. Thus, the public authority makes the decision, but the court makes its own assessment whether such action is proportionate and therefore lawful.

When considering whether a fair balance has been struck between the rights of the individual and the general interest of the community (Stage iv), the court was not to treat itself as bound by the decision of the public authority, subject only to review according to the rationality standard⁵.

The context relevant to determining the measure of respect to the balance of rights and interests struck by a public authority will include the importance of the right, the degree of interference, and the extent to which the courts are more or less well placed to adjudicate, on grounds of relative institutional expertise and democratic accountability⁶.

Applying this in the context of sanctions, the Supreme Court majority afforded the Minister a wide margin of appreciation, as the FCO had special constitutional responsibilities and superior institutional competence to assess whether the sanctions imposed serve some useful purpose in responding to and containing Russia’s actions⁷.

In considering the correct approach of an appellate court, the question was whether the first instance court’s assessment of proportionality was “wrong”⁸.

In making that assessment, the appellate court had two choices, whether the first instance court directed itself properly as to the test and whether the decision was reasonable (the “review approach”), or make its own fresh assessment of the measure in question (the “fresh determination approach”). For the purposes of Shvidler’s appeal, the latter was adopted.

While the Supreme Court left itself room for future manoeuvre with the familiar “*difficult and potentially misleading to lay down hard and fast categories*”⁹ line, it did offer some guidance on which approach would be appropriate in a particular case, favouring fresh determination which included where it was a case involving the first consideration at appellate level of a new legislative regime of general application, especially one with considerable significance for society¹⁰.

To what extent this two-option approach will impact future cases of judicial review remains to be seen.

Which brings us to Lord Leggatt’s strident dissenting judgement¹¹, described by Shvidler’s solicitor¹² as “extraordinary”, adding that “Everyone interested in individual rights should read his judgment, as it is for

the ages”.

In his decision to allow the appeal, he described the connections between the Shvidler and the Russian government cited on behalf of the Foreign Secretary as “tenuous”, “all baseless”, “on their face no more than armchair theories” and “not even plausible”.

In his Lordships’ view, the court was ceding too much of its power of review to the Government by allowing far too wide a margin of appreciation by accepting the “institutional competence” of the relevant government department.

Footnotes

¹In a separate but joined appeal the Court unanimously upheld the decision to designate a company, Dalston Projects Ltd.

²(i) is the aim sufficiently important to justify interference with a fundamental right? (ii) is there a rational connection between the means chosen and the aim in view? (iii) was there a less intrusive measure which could have been used without compromising the achievement of that aim? (iv) has a fair balance been struck between the rights of the individual and the general interest of the community?

Whether Lord Leggatt had in mind the institutional competence of the then Foreign Secretary when, as Prime Minister, certain economic decisions were made is something we will never know.

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³ para 120

⁴ The Court (at para 121) confirmed Lords Reed and Sumption in *Bank Mellat v HM Treasury (No 2)* [2013] UKSC 39; [2014] AC 700

⁵ Para 122

⁶ paras 120–125

⁷ paras 126–130

⁸ para 146

⁹ para 159

¹⁰ para 160

¹¹ paras 245–324

¹² Michael O’Kane of Peters and Peters

When standards collide: Tensions between the Forensic Science Regulator, ISO 17025 and expert witness duties

By Dan Sutton

The pursuit of justice depends on forensic science that is scientifically robust, independently verifiable, and presented impartially in court. This system is governed by three key pillars:

1. **The Forensic Science Regulator (FSR)** – responsible for setting and enforcing forensic quality standards;
2. **ISO/IEC 17025** – the international standard for laboratory competence, mandated by the FSR;
3. **Expert witnesses** – individuals who interpret and present scientific findings in legal proceedings under a duty to the court.

While each component aims to enhance the credibility and reliability of forensic evidence, tensions have emerged.

Critics argue that the mandatory push for ISO 17025 accreditation, driven by the FSR, may compromise the independence of expert witnesses, suppress minority scientific opinions, or prioritise administrative compliance over forensic truth. This article explores these areas of conflict and considers their implications for the criminal justice system.

1. ISO 17025 and the Expert Witness: Conflicting Roles and Responsibilities

ISO/IEC 17025 is a technical standard focused on laboratory process validation, record-keeping, and method standardisation.

It is well-suited for high-throughput forensic labs conducting repetitive, automated tasks like DNA profiling or toxicology screening.

However, many expert witnesses operate outside of laboratory settings or conduct case-by-case analyses using specialist knowledge or bespoke methods.

Conflict:

- ISO 17025 requires that only “validated” and “standardised” methods be used, but expert witnesses may need to rely on novel techniques, emerging science, or one-off reconstructions to answer legal questions.
- Rigid adherence to ISO 17025 can exclude credible expert testimony simply because the method is not accredited, not because it lacks scientific merit.

2. Regulatory Control vs. Expert Independence

The Forensic Science Regulator's Code of Practice, now enforceable under statute, requires all forensic service providers (including individual experts) to comply with standards like ISO 17025.

However, expert witnesses are also bound by the Criminal Procedure Rules and civil/criminal case law, which state that their primary duty is to the court, not to any regulator, client, or employer.

Conflict:

- Experts may feel pressured to prioritise FSR or ISO compliance over their duty to tell the truth in court.
- Non-compliance with ISO 17025 may be used to discredit expert testimony, even if the science is valid and well-explained.
- The FSR, a regulatory body, is not accountable to the courts in the same way as the expert is.

Example:

An expert in digital forensics might use a new investigative method to uncover tampered data but fail to meet ISO's strict documentation requirements.

If the method is excluded on that basis, crucial evidence may be lost, despite the expert acting ethically and competently.

3. Suppression of Minority or Emerging Scientific Views

ISO 17025 and the FSR Code require strict adherence to validated methodologies. However, science advances through debate, innovation, and the presentation of conflicting views.

Courtrooms are often the venue where frontier science meets real-world application, yet under FSR/ISO rules, only standardised and pre-approved methods are permitted.

Conflict:

- The courtroom becomes closed to dissenting or minority scientific views, potentially silencing valid perspectives.
- This risks miscarriages of justice if the "official science" is later found to be flawed (e.g. hair microscopy, bite mark analysis).

4. Administrative Burden and Access to Justice

ISO 17025 accreditation is costly, time consuming, and designed for organisations, not individual practitioners.

As a result, many independent or defence side experts are unable or unwilling to obtain accreditation, effectively excluding them from court.

Conflict:

- Reduces the pool of available experts, particularly for defence teams.
- Creates a monopoly of large, often prosecution aligned laboratories.
- Weakens the adversarial nature of justice, where both sides should have equal access to expertise.

This creates an imbalance where only prosecution accredited labs can offer "compliant" evidence, raising serious concerns about fairness, especially in criminal trials.

5. Legal vs. Scientific Standards of Evidence

Courts assess evidence based on relevance, reliability, and probative value, not regulatory compliance. In contrast, ISO/FSR frameworks apply technical and bureaucratic filters. The two standards can diverge significantly.

Conflict:

- An expert can meet the legal threshold for admissibility under the Criminal Procedure Rules and still be deemed non-compliant by the FSR.
- Courts may wrongly conflate non-accreditation with unreliability, leading to exclusion of valid expert evidence.

Conclusion

Whilst it is widely accepted amongst experts that there needs to be a framework to ensure accuracy, quality and impartiality of evidence presented in the courts it is a concern that the power to prohibit FSPs from operating, places the Regulator in a position to decide upon the admissibility of forensic science evidence in court.

This decision should remain the sole decision of the courts. There is a "fine line" between the remit of the Regulator in setting quality standards and deciding who can operate as a forensic provider and ruling what evidence will be admitted as evidence at court.

Dan Sutton is managing director of Tower Forensics, a leading UK-based provider of digital forensics services specialising in delivering comprehensive and professional forensic analysis tailored for legal practitioners and corporate entities.

Compensate miscarriage of justice victims: A winnable campaign

By Matt Foot, co-director of APPEAL

You can measure the integrity of a criminal justice system by how it treats the wrongfully convicted and there is no integrity in the system that denies the vast majority of the wrongfully convicted any compensation at all. Criminal defence lawyers will know only too well the enormous hurdles involved in seeking to overturn wrongful convictions.

The paltry funding, the inability to get disclosure, the lack of resources or time. That's before you get to the moribund CCRC, or an unsympathetic, bureaucratic Court of Appeal.

If somehow you manage over years to get beyond these obstacles there is one final ignominy – the scrooge like test that stops all but a handful getting compensation, despite many having spent years in prison for something of which they are now innocent.

In 2014 the coalition government snuck into one of the Criminal Justice Act Section 113(1ZA) which declares that compensation is only available if the new or newly discovered fact that led to the conviction being quashed shows “beyond reasonable doubt” that the person did not commit the offence.

There was opposition at the time. [the late Jack Dromey MP](#) said:

“I stress again that the essence of our argument, and that supported by all parties and crossbenchers in the other place, is that an individual is innocent until proved guilty. We see no good reason why a victim of a miscarriage of justice should suffer a ‘beyond reasonable doubt’ test.”

There were already problems with the compensation scheme but the result of ignoring the parliamentarians with experience of miscarriage of justice issues, in that short debate, was that now hardly anyone of those wrongly convicted are getting compensation – **less than 7% of applications are successful**. The rest are left destitute.

In June this year, APPEAL and JUSTICE held a meeting in the House of Commons calling for the scrapping of the 2014 test. The meeting heard from miscarriage of justice victims of how the 2014 test had added to their misery.

[Sam Hallam](#) spoke for the first time since his release for murder in 2012. His release came after 14 witnesses told an independent police review Sam was not at the scene, including the intended victim.

Sam had never been to court before his murder trial at the Old Bailey in 2005, in seeking redress he has now been to every court possible, even to the ECHR. The ECHR refused his appeal but the judgement was not endorsement of the compensation scheme, including five dissenting judges stating it is ‘*virtually insurmountable*’.

Sam was supported at the meeting in the Commons by Patrick Maguire of the Maguire 7, who was 13 when he was arrested with other members of his family and later convicted for the 1974 Guildford pub bombings.

The more recent cases present included [Brian Buckle](#), who spent five and a half years in jail for sexual offences he did not commit and DNA proved he was not guilty. He

said: “*I spent my life savings and inheritance money to prove what the police should have done ... What more do you have to do to prove you’re innocent?*”.

[Seema Misra](#) OBE, the former sub postmaster, spoke of the emotional impact of a wrongful conviction following her appalling ordeal caught up in the nightmare of the ‘Horizon’ scandal,

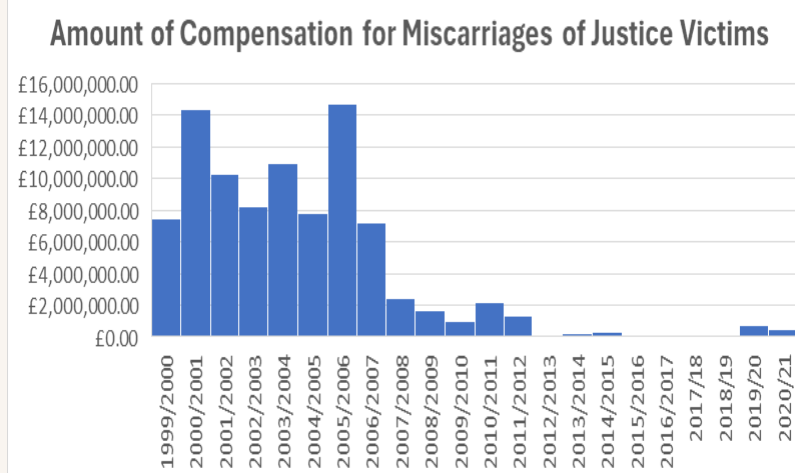
which meant she gave birth with an electronic tag.

There was impressive cross-party support. Former Lord Chancellor, Lord Falconer chairing the event, called the current process ‘horrific’.

Baroness Helena Kennedy and Kim Johnson MP, chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Miscarriages of Justice, spoke alongside David Davis MP, who called the campaign to reform the legislation ‘*eminently winnable*’.

The day after the launch, Davis raised the issue in parliamentary questions. He waved a copy of the 1999 book *Miscarriages of Justice* that Keir Starmer co-edited with Clive Walker.

The PM responded that this was ‘a really important issue which I am, of course, aware of’. ‘It is right that the victims of miscarriages of justice can apply for compensation,’ Starmer said and added that he would look into the matter.





Campaign supporters (from left) . . . Ian Hislop, Sir Charlie Falconer and Ben Lake MP

Ben Lake, Brian Buckle's MP, has followed up at later parliamentary questions, on behalf of his constituent to call for resolution of the injustice of the 2014 test.

How can you support?

1. Sign up to the campaign [here](#), where you can also watch the campaign video which includes the cases of Victor Nealon, Oliver Campbell and Ahmed Adnan.
2. Contact your MP, to ask them to take a photo of them holding the campaign sign and send it in to mail@appeal.org.uk, so we can add them to the growing gallery. The image of the sign is [here](#).
3. Post about this need for change on your social channels, tagging @we_are_APPEAL and the #PayUp4TimeSpent

Barcode

It may be of interest that the core image of the campaign, **Barcode**, was originally created by Patrick Maguire in support of Sam Hallam, themselves both victims of miscarriages of justice. Patrick has said of the painting:

"Bars and numbers – that's all prison really is. The numbers in the painting have a special connection to the person I've done it for. With Sam, the barcode sequence is his date of birth, the next six is the date he was arrested, then his prison number, then I think it's the date when the case was approved for review. And the last one, 22, is his age at the time."

Telematics Data Evidence: Answering the where and when

By Nigel Porter

In today's location-dependent world, telematics, location-dependent information and vehicle status are with us at all times. We carry smartphones with Global Positioning Systems (GPS) built in, use health and activity tracking apps, have satellite navigation in our cars, install dashcams and vehicle tracking systems for safety and insurance requirements.

And modern vehicles include Automotive Telematics. One aspect of this is that vehicles have several ECUs, Electronic Control Units, which record GPS latitude and longitude, time and vehicle status such as ignition on and off, speed, acceleration and braking, door opening and closing and even call lists and calls made.

Almost all companies with commercial vehicles utilise

GPS vehicle tracking for operational management, and vehicle tracking is particularly high in rental and leased vehicles for asset management.

Add to this the use of vehicle tracking for insurance and customer self-installations for theft protection, as well as the number of smartphones in use and the availability of Telematics data is to some degree, ubiquitous.

The list keeps on expanding.

The "raw" data available, the data stored on the device, varies in terms of the level of detail and the ease of extracting the data from the device, whether it is a vehicle tracking system, smartphone, or data recorded in a vehicle's ECUs.

Access to specific devices, such as vehicle ECU data,

may require the physical removal of hardware from the vehicle and the retrieval of data in a workshop/laboratory setting.

Some smartphone data can be easily exported to Excel file formats, but forensic software may be required for complete data extraction and conversion into usable formats.

Telematics data from aftermarket fitment vehicle tracking units, used for stolen vehicle tracking or insurance purposes, can be exported from the customer application; however, it may be limited in detail or require additional requests to the Telematics Service Provider. Most will hold detailed historical data for over a year.

Not all devices and Telematics Service Providers use a standard file format for the data; however, all will contain the basic latitude and longitude, as well as timestamp values, as a starting point.

The accuracy of the location data and speed values needs to be explained, along with potential errors due to the loss of a GPS signal or adverse environmental conditions. GPS timestamps are highly accurate, but they must be correctly offset for GMT, and the GPS location and speed accuracy tolerances must be taken into account.

Access to data as early as possible, to ensure no data has been deleted due to storage constraints or similar, is vital, and the role of the Telematics Data Analyst is to initially validate the data, ensure its completeness and format the data so it is suitable for analysis and display on a mapping platform.

With access to this location-dependent data, analysis can be performed to answer specific questions, compare with witness statements, determine where an event occurred using the GPS latitude and longitude values, as well as when, based on the accurate GPS timestamps.

The objectives in the analysis are many.

Taking a Death by Dangerous Driving case, the data can show the speed of the vehicle up to the accident locus, deceleration and, within the tolerance of GPS, the position on the road. This data can be plotted in graphs and also onto satellite maps, allowing a visual interpretation of the events.

This can assist in answering questions such as when the vehicle started to brake, its speed, how far away from the accident locus the vehicle was before initiating avoidance action, if any, and support or contradict wit-

ness statements.

In criminal cases involving vehicles, whether used in a shooting incident, drug offences, or robberies, telematics data has been used as evidence in many such cases.

The data can be used to create a timeline of events, place a vehicle at specific locations and for a certain period, determine if multiple vehicles were in similar locations at the same time, and again allow events to be visualised on satellite maps, supporting or contradicting witness statements.

Even if no vehicles are involved, the location and activity data from a smartphone can be used to determine a sequence of events in addition to GPS records. Activity and health monitoring apps record steps taken and when, as well as stairs climbed, with accurate timestamps. All of this is very useful in validating a person's movements.

It must be noted that the location and event data only indicate the activity of the device from which the data

was extracted, and not who was in a vehicle at a specific time or who was holding a smartphone. The data needs to be compared with other evidence, such as witness statements or CCTV footage, to confirm who was in a vehicle or using a phone.

One such area for comparison is against Cell Site records. For example, the location of a vehicle, as recorded by

Telematics GPS, may not match the Cell Site records of a phone associated with individuals in the vehicle.

The visual representation of events on maps and charts provides context to the data, enabling legal teams and juries to gain a deeper understanding of written statements and evidence presented.

An experienced Telematics Data Analyst can ensure that the "raw" data is presented in a format that answers questions from legal teams, provides context, supports or contradicts witness statements, supports timelines of events and allows juries a greater understanding through visual representation of the data.

Nigel Porter is a Telematics Expert Witness at Telematics Consultancy Services. He has held senior development and operations positions in the telematics industry for over 30 years. He has provided telematics analysis and expert witness reports in several high-profile criminal and civil cases.



Flower of Scotland

Jon P Steingold 1952–2025

By DJ (MC) Denis Brennan

My good friend, former colleague and business partner, and my mentor, Jon P Steingold, passed away, of a heart attack, whilst on holiday with his wife Jean in Oslo in August this year. I would like to pay tribute to him and, without wishing to be hyperbolic, to mark the passing of a great lawyer and man.

Jon was born in Giffnock, outside Glasgow. He was the son of a doctor. He had a brother, Mark (who predeceased him). He did a law degree at Glasgow University but, inexplicably, decided initially on a career in accountancy. Nothing against accountants, he used to say, but what a boring job.

So, down in London, he (slowly) cross qualified, doing his Articles at David Howard and Co, a small firm in Kilburn. There he worked with the likes of Bob Dwek, Andrew Wyman and Stephen Walters. On admission, he largely practised in crime, eventually specialising in that area.

The measured and eloquent advocate he was to become was not always evident (as is often the case) in the early days. As was so often the case with Jon, whilst he enjoyed a tale in which he was the hero, he could also be very self effacing.

So it was with his tale of being newly qualified, waiting in the well of the court at the old Marylebone MC in the early 1980s, sitting behind Bob Dwek, who was addressing the court, but was distracted by Jon pulling on his coat tail, demanding of Bob what he should respond if asked a particular question.

We all learn, is the lesson. And I certainly did, from Jon. I was admitted as a solicitor in October 1984. I had done my Articles with Babbington Browne and Co and was to spend a further three years with that firm. During that time, I generally attended local courts such as Old Street, Clerkenwell and Highbury Corner.

I got to observe a variety of styles of advocacy, some good, some not so good. It was to the likes of John Zani, Chris McGrath, Ray Gardner, Sue Green and, of course, Jon, that I was drawn.

In particular, Jon. I listened to how he made his bail applications and pleas in mitigation. I watched how he related to the other advocates, in and out of the court buildings, for this was a generation who learnt as much in the café before court as they did in court (most notably The Trevi across the road from Highbury).

I saw how he could extract, in cross examination of the officer in the case, positive points in favour of his client,

and not just “putting” his client’s case.

I watched at how he treated, negotiated, neutralised the CPS lawyer/agent pre-court, so that the some of the ostensibly unfair material (suggested by the police) was not put forward in Court. Most of all, I learnt what not to say in court.

In 1987, at Jon’s invitation, I joined his practice at (then) George J Dowse and Co on Dalston Lane in Hackney. I became a partner there, and Jon and I worked together (joined in crime by Ted Sarkis in due course) until the partnership amicably dissolved in 2008.

Ted went to work for a local authority and Jon and I joined Sonn Macmillan Walker (SMW). I left in 2011 to take up a position as a DJMC. Jon carried on until retiring in 2016 (to a life as a part-time radio DJ playing his beloved Americana).

Jon was acerbic, funny, inspiring, a decent man. He was a brilliant lawyer because he cared about his clients. We built a great client base on a business model that if you look after them, they will come back.

They did. Jon represented some notorious defendants like John Duffy (the so called Railway Murderer) and Peter Tobin but really his forte was the ordinary man or woman accused of a crime.

Jon suffered with Parkinson’s for the last 15 years of his life, That debilitating disease curtailed his career but never dimmed his personality; self pity was not in his dictionary.

I know Jon loved it at Dowse and Co. The laughter at lunchtime in my room at work, the pub on a Friday night (The George in Parkholme Road), tennis and football games played (for a big man, he was twinkle toed !)

We worked hard and played hard. But really the flowering of Jon took place at SMW. Shorn of partnership managerial responsibilities, Jon was free just to do what he did best; advocacy, mentoring and laughter. Oh, and those anecdotes, particularly about Lowell George. Ok, so he was nearly perfect... I do want to pay tribute to the partners and colleagues at SMW; they really knew how to get the best from him whilst looking after him properly.

Jon loved being in court. He had the admiration of his colleagues and business rivals alike. The Bench, professional and lay, always looked forward to his presence (I know this from my own time on the Bench).

I miss that presence but in the (amended) words of the great Stipendiary Magistrate David Barr: “ He’s had a lawyer, Mr Steingold, he’s had a lawyer!”