

Colleagues,

I came to the Bar in 2007 and like many did so despite the concerns expressed by many that the publically funded Bar was dead and there was no future to be found in criminal law.

I did wonder however, how so many people who had been at the Bar for so long could complain because surely they had been present during each change and they, being professionals trained in the art of persuasion, should have done more. I promised myself that if I were ever fortunate enough to become a barrister I would be different. That no matter what the pressures I would act.

It is what led me during the most recent fight with the Ministry of Justice to organise others, speak outside Leeds Crown Court, give interviews on local radio and television and to debate openly, under my own name (which not everybody was willing to do), with friends and colleagues on the internet. I also ensured that I attended the local meetings held by solicitors who, like many of us, felt they could not sit back and do nothing. I made sure that at each day of action solicitors were asked to stand with us and on the second day encouraged the first speech to be given by a local solicitor who continues to strive passionately for more to be done in the face of the devastating cuts.

When all was going well involving myself to that degree made me feel proud that I was doing all I could to stand up for myself, my profession and the wider CJS. However when the debate turned difficult I found myself in the unenviable position of disagreeing with some friends and colleagues on key issues and being torn as to the best course of action. Each and every one of you had similar feelings at the time.

For that reason I had to think long and hard about whether I should put myself forward for the Executive and allow myself to be placed personally in the 'firing line' when difficult and

potentially controversial CBA decisions were taken. I decided to so for the following reasons:

- 1) I came to the Bar because I am not afraid to argue, debate and when called upon to pick a fight;
- 2) A strong personal belief that in life someone should either 'put up or shut up';
- 3) I want to be someone who acts out of courage rather than fear; and
- 4) The promise I made to myself as to the kind of barrister I would be when the government of the day again came to damage the Bar.

I began my professional life in London and fought for a reputation, like many others, in the Magistrates' Courts covering every type of hearing across the city. Quite often the stated fee was simply a number that was never intended to be honoured. I had to fight for every brief and I remember all too well the unique pressures upon those at the very junior end of the Criminal Bar in London. Equally, since moving from being "proper London Counsel" four years ago to a member of "the provinces" I have experienced the pressures here and the differences in culture and viewpoint. I believe that helps me achieve a perspective, and hopefully judgment, that has been formed by two very important influences.

If you vote for me I promise the following:

- 1) I will make no decision nor argue passionately for any position without having fully considered what others have to say;
- 2) I will only argue for a particular action if I believe it is in the best interests of not only the Bar but the wider CJS;
- 3) I will work hard; and
- 4) I will act with honesty, integrity and try in difficult times to ensure the CBA always upholds the very best traditions of the Bar.

Thank you.

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