

Linda Mulligan

Ann Mulligan is a high profile barrister who practices in London. She recently prosecuted the case of Apolostos Nastos, who was sentenced to 4 years in jail for organising a pick pocketing spree on the London Underground that saw him net over £100,000 a year.

Ann Mulligan studied Politics, Philosophy and Economics in Balliol College, Oxford University and was called to the Bar in 1989.

What initially attracted you to joining the bar?

I decided at university when I was studying Philosophy, Politics and Economics that I really ought to find out more about law. I approached a law tutor and he organised work experience for me with both a solicitor and then a barrister. I spent a week with each and immediately decided that a career at the Bar would be far more exciting! I had always rather liked the sound of my own voice and so the advocacy particularly before a jury very much attracted me.

What do you enjoy the most about being a barrister?

Most of all I enjoy the constant variety. This applies to the individual cases themselves, the individuals with whom I come into contact each day and the intellectual challenges that day-to-day practice in crime presents.

What do you least enjoy about your job?

Waiting around! My job involves lots and lots of that.

You recently had a successful decision in the Nastos case, how does it feel to have worked on such high profile cases?

It adds another level of excitement to the job! It's wonderful to actually be able to email your family and friends and show them what you have been up to by reference to the daily newspapers.

What is the most difficult case you have

worked on?

That's a tricky one. In truth I think it was a case in which a young man was charged with a section 18 offence (grievous bodily harm with intent). It was alleged that he had assaulted someone with a glass in a nightclub causing a deep wound to the victim. If convicted the young man of hitherto good character would have gone to prison for a number of years.

His defence was one of mistaken identity. In short, I became convinced as I prepared the case and spent time with the Defendant that I was in fact representing an innocent man. I was surprised just how stressful it was professionally to find myself in that situation and I now always recall it vividly. Fortunately I succeeded in getting the case stopped at half time following legal submissions. I was hugely relieved.

Have you worked on a case you are particularly proud of?

I once represented a man accused of indecently assaulting his babysitter. Part of her evidence referred to her having taken out the film "Ten Things I Hate About Men." Before embarking upon the trial I actually got the video out and watched it. I discovered that a scene in it was peculiarly relevant to the allegation being made. I ensured that the jury were shown the relevant section of the film during the trial. I then addressed them in my speech about the incredible similarities between the allegation being made and the film that the babysitter had just watched that very night. The jury thereafter had no difficulty in acquitting the Defendant.

What are your career highlights and lows so far?

A recent low for me was the conviction of a 77-year-old disabled grandmother accused of cocaine smuggling with her daughter. The daughter had pleaded guilty and in my view it was rather harsh of the jury to convict the mother. I managed to get the sentence reduced on appeal and so that was a recent highlight.

(Reference: R v Heron (Ambrozine) [2009] EWCA Crim 94).

What advice would you give to aspiring barristers?

If you are sufficiently determined to succeed at the Bar then you will however, that level of determination needs to be all the greater in the current climate of cuts and constant change. It may be worth considering becoming an in house advocate given that they now have rights of audience.

Linda Mulligan, 1st Year Law

