

Cross on Evidence

Fifth edition

Butterworths

EVIDENCE

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FIFTH EDITION

LONDON
BUTTERWORTHS

1979

ENGLAND: BUTTERWORTH & CO. (PUBLISHERS) LTD.
LONDON: 88 KINGSWAY, WC2B 6AB

AUSTRALIA: BUTTERWORTHS PTY. LTD.
SYDNEY: 586 PACIFIC HIGHWAY, CHATSWOOD,
NSW 2067
ALSO AT MELBOURNE, BRISBANE ADELAIDE AND PERTH

CANADA: BUTTERWORTH & CO. (CANADA) LTD.
TORONTO: 2265 MIDLAND AVENUE, SCARBOROUGH
M1P 4S1

NEW ZEALAND: BUTTERWORTHS OF NEW ZEALAND LTD.
WELLINGTON: 77-85 CUSTOMHOUSE QUAY

SOUTH AFRICA: BUTTERWORTH & CO. (SOUTH AFRICA) (PTY.)
LTD. DURBAN: 152-154 GALE STREET

U.S.A. BUTTERWORTH & CO. (PUBLISHERS) INC.
BOSTON: 10 TOWER OFFICE PARK, WOBURN, MASS.
01801

First Edition	January 1958
Second Edition	June 1963
Third Edition	March 1967
Reprinted	October 1969
Second Reprint	December 1970
Third Reprint	December 1972
Fourth Reprint	August 1973
Fourth Edition	October 1974
Reprinted	November 1975
Reprinted	March 1977
Fifth Edition	October 1979



BUTTERWORTH AND CO. (PUBLISHERS) LTD.

1979

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ISBN—Casebound: 0 406 57005 1

Limp: 0 406 57004 3

Printed in Great Britain by Thomson Litho Ltd., East Kilbride, Scotland.

PREFACE TO THE FIFTH EDITION

Since the publication of the fourth edition there has been comparatively little relevant statute law and a great deal of case-law. The latter accounts to a large extent for the alterations which have been made in this edition. The following list only mentions those of the greatest importance:

1. section 6 of chapter I has been rewritten in the light of the judgment of the Court of Appeal in *R. v. Sang and Mangan*;¹

2. there has been much rewriting in chapter IV due in part to the judgment of the Court of Appeal in *R. v. Edwards*;²

3. the account of the competence and compellability of the accused's spouse in chapter VIII has been reorganised partly in order to allow for the decision of the House of Lords in *Hoskyn v. Metropolitan Police Commissioner*;³

4. there has been a good deal of rewriting in chapter X, notably the enlargement of the section on refreshing memory due to some recent decisions of the Court of Appeal;

5. chapter XII has been enlarged in order to cater for the decision of the House of Lords in *D. v. N.S.P.C.C.*;⁴

6. chapter XIV has been extensively rewritten on account of the speeches in the House of Lords in *Director of Public Prosecutions v. Boardman*,⁵ and subsequent decisions of the Court of Appeal; and

7. the account of the rule against hearsay and its exceptions, now contained in chapters XVII–XXI, has been reorganised, though not revolutionised to the extent that might at first sight appear to be the case.

My one deep regret is the increase in the size of the book. This must be due in part to the prolixity which comes with old age. I can at least allay the fears of those who might be worried about a repetition of my offence in subsequent editions. I am happy to say that my friend and former pupil, Colin Tapper, All Souls Reader in Law and Fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford, has undertaken to bear responsibility for what I hope will be many such editions. We have conducted more seminars in evidence together than either of us would care to remember and I hope that we shall remain in close touch for many years to come. It is therefore *possible* that I shall play a *small* part in the preparation of the sixth edition, but I must emphasise that the emphases have been added after very careful deliberation. This edition owes a lot to Colin for, quite apart

¹ [1979] 2 All E. R. 46. See addendum (pp. viii–ix) for comment on the speeches in the House of Lords.

² [1975] Q.B. 27.

³ [1978] 2 All E.R. 136.

⁴ [1978] A.C. 171.

⁵ [1975] A.C. 421.

from what I learnt from him at those seminars, he has read the proofs, a repulsive task for which I am most grateful.

In gross breach of my undertakings to my publishers, for whose tolerance my admiration knows no bounds, the manuscript was delivered piecemeal between early January and early June 1979. I have found it possible to refer to some decisions reported during and after that period in the text or footnotes, but it has been necessary to have an addendum (see pp. viii-x) for others. Piecemeal delivery has great advantages, but it can lead to the finished product's containing passages in the earlier parts of the book in which the author would have expressed himself differently had he known what he knew by the time his manuscript was completed. The major instances in the present work are the outcome of the speeches in the House of Lords in *R. v. Sang* and *Waugh v. British Railways Board*. If allowance is made for the addendum in which these and a few other decisions are noted, it is hoped that this book contains a reasonably accurate account of the English law as it stood on the day when the preface was written.

31st July 1979

RUPERT CROSS

EXTRACT FROM THE PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

IN the preface to the first edition of his Law of Evidence, the late S. L. Phipson said that he had endeavoured to supply students and practitioners with a work which would take a middle place between "the admirable but extremely condensed Digest of Sir James Stephen, and that great repository of evidentiary law, Taylor on Evidence". Those words were written as long ago as 1892, and Phipson's book now has claims to be regarded as *the* great English repository of evidentiary law. I realise therefore that I am flying high when I say that I hope to have supplied students and practitioners with a work which will take a middle place between those of Stephen and Phipson. The needs of students and practitioners are not, of course, identical; but I have catered for the students by including a good deal more theoretical discussion in the text than is customary in the case of a book designed solely for the practitioner, and I have catered for the latter by including many more cases in the footnotes than any student could conceivably wish to consult. Nearly all the decisions that are really important from the student's point of view are mentioned in the text. Though I have primarily borne in mind the requirements of those who are working for a law degree, I trust that the book may not prove too long for those working for the professional examinations. The long book may often be tedious, but it is sometimes more digestible than the shorter one.

I have adopted the growing practice of citing a number of decisions of the courts of the Commonwealth. My citations are not intended to be exhaustive. I have, in the main, chosen those Commonwealth decisions in which English cases have been discussed or which provide a neat illustration of what is pretty clearly English law. Should a further edition be called for, it will not be difficult to keep the Commonwealth material up to date, but I am painfully conscious of the fact that I may have omitted important matter, and I would be most grateful to any reader who draws my attention to what he considers to be a serious omission.

I have laid myself open to the charge of having quoted at too great length from English judges and American writers. My answer is that I have endeavoured to meet the undoubted need of an up-to-date account of the theory of the subject—a need that is made plain by the fact that, in nine cases out of ten, any advocate can say whether evidence is admissible or inadmissible, but he is frequently at a loss to explain why this should be so. It is impossible to give a satisfactory account of the theory of our law of evidence without frequent reference to the *ipsissima verba* of the judges and the work of such great American exponents of the subject as Thayer, Wigmore, Morgan and Maguire.

RUPERT CROSS.

ADDENDUM¹

The House of Lords has dismissed the appeal in *R. v. Sang and Mangan*² being unanimously of the opinion that, whatever be the ambit of judicial discretion to exclude admissible evidence, it does not extend to excluding evidence of a crime because it was instigated by an *agent provocateur*. The general question certified by the Court of Appeal as fit for consideration by the House of Lords was: "does a trial judge have a discretion to refuse to allow evidence—being evidence other than evidence of admissions—to be given in any circumstances in which such evidence is relevant and of more than minimal probative value?" The following answer was given by four out of the five members of the House:

"(1) A trial judge at a criminal trial has always a discretion to refuse to admit evidence if in his opinion its prejudicial effect outweighs its probative value.

(2) Save with regard to admissions and confessions and *generally with regard to evidence obtained from the accused after his commission of the offence*, he has no discretion to refuse to admit relevant admissible evidence on the ground that it was obtained by improper or unfair means. The court is not concerned with how it was obtained."³ (Italics supplied).

The House was also unanimously of the opinion that there is only one type of exclusionary discretion, viz. that which is based on fairness to the accused. No reference was made to public policy as the basis of a discretion to exclude illegally obtained evidence such as that envisaged by Lord HODSON in *King v. R.*,⁴ and the Australian law as stated by BARWICK, C.J., in *R. v. Ireland* (No. 2)⁵ was not mentioned.

The broad *dicta* of Lord PARKER and Lord WIDGERY, C.JJ., in *Callis v. Gunn* and *Jeffery v. Black* respectively⁶ were regarded as incorrect by Viscount DILHORNE and cited without much sympathy by Lord DIPLOCK, but Lords FRASER and SCARMAN considered that they should be followed while Lord SALMON expressed no opinion on the subject.

The terms of the certified question are sufficient to rob anything said in the speeches of authority with regard to the discretion to exclude legally admissible confessions, but the

¹ The comments on the first two cases are based on the prints of the speeches in the House of Lords received by the courtesy of Lord EDMUND DAVIES.

² P. 35, *infra*; see now [1979] 2 All E. R. 1222.

³ Lord SALMON formulated his conclusions in different terms but without disagreeing with the rest of the House.

⁴ P. 34, *infra*.

⁵ P. 326, *infra*.

⁶ P. 34, *infra*.

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following two points are of considerable interest. (1) Lords DIPLOCK and DILHORNE considered that Lord GODDARD's remarks in *Kuruma v. R.*⁷ concerning the discretion to exclude evidence obtained by a trick must have been made with reference to *R. v. Barker*⁸ (a decision which had been thought to turn on admissibility as a matter of law) and to mean no more than that there is a discretion to exclude, not merely confessions, but also evidence tantamount to a confession, obtained from the accused by a trick. (2) Speaking of confessions, Lord DIPLOCK said:

"The underlying rationale of this branch of the criminal law, though it may originally have been based upon ensuring the reliability of confessions, is, in my view, now to be found in the maxim *nemo debet prodere se ipsum*, no one can be required to be his own betrayer or in its popular English mistranslation 'the right to silence'."

Having regard to the differences between Viscount DILHORNE and, probably, Lord DIPLOCK on the one hand, and Lords FRASER and SCARMAN on the other, the implications of the words in the answer to the general question I have italicised may have to be drawn out by subsequent case-law on the subject of the exclusionary discretion in criminal cases.

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The House of Lords has allowed the plaintiff's appeal in *Waught v. British Railways Board*⁹. The speeches were unanimously in favour of "the dominant purpose" as the right test by which the existence of legal professional privilege should be determined in "dual" or "multiple" purpose cases. The judgment of BARWICK, C.J., in *Grant v. Downes*^{9a} is thus preferred to those of the other members of the High Court of Australia. In so far as they could count as decisions to the contrary, *Birmingham and Midland Motor Omnibus Co. Ltd. v. London and North Western Rail. Co.* and *Ogden v. London Electric Rail. Co.* are respectively overruled.¹⁰

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*Burmah Oil Co. Ltd. v. Bank of England*¹¹ shows that clarification of the law concerning the exclusion of evidence on the ground of state interest is required in cases in which the government participates in what is essentially a commercial transaction. The Burmah Oil Company brought an action to set aside the sale of its shareholding in British Petroleum Co. Ltd. to the Bank on the ground that it was unconscionable, having been made for less than the current market price at a time when, owing to financial obligations which, due to pressure from the Bank it had been unable to relieve in any

⁷ P. 33, *infra*.

⁸ P. 322, *infra*.

⁹ P. 285, *infra*. See now [1979] 2 All E. R. 1196; [1979] 3 W. L. R. 150.

^{9a} P. 286, *infra*.

¹⁰ P. 285, *infra*.

¹¹ [1979] 2 All E.R. 461.

other way, the Company had no alternative. The Bank had acted in cooperation with the government at all material times. Its list of documents referred to three categories in respect of which there was an objection to disclosure taken in an affidavit sworn by the Chief Secretary to the Treasury. They were (a) memoranda relating to meetings at which ministers were present, (b) memoranda relating to meetings at which government officials were present and (c) documents containing commercial or financial information communicated to the government of the Bank by business men in their capacities as government advisers. The objection in relation to categories (a) and (b) was that the documents related to the formulation of government policy on important economic matters. In the case of category (c) the objection was based on the importance of maintaining the free flow of such information.

By a majority the Court of Appeal affirmed the judge's dismissal of the Company's application for production of the documents. It was in the public interest that the Company should be kept afloat and no distinction could be drawn between the question of principle whether the government should provide financial assistance, plainly a matter of policy, and the terms on which it should be given with which the meetings were concerned. As to category (c), the information had been supplied in confidence and the public interest involved outweighed the public interest in the administration of justice.

Lord DENNING, M.R., discussed the possibility of a waiver of Crown privilege in the course of his dissenting judgment. He said that, by consciously and consistently failing to claim it, the Crown could waive the privilege, and he considered that there should be such a waiver when the government participates in a commercial transaction. The Bank's appeal has been heard by the House of Lords but, at the time of writing (31st July 1979), no decision has been announced.

31st July 1979

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