

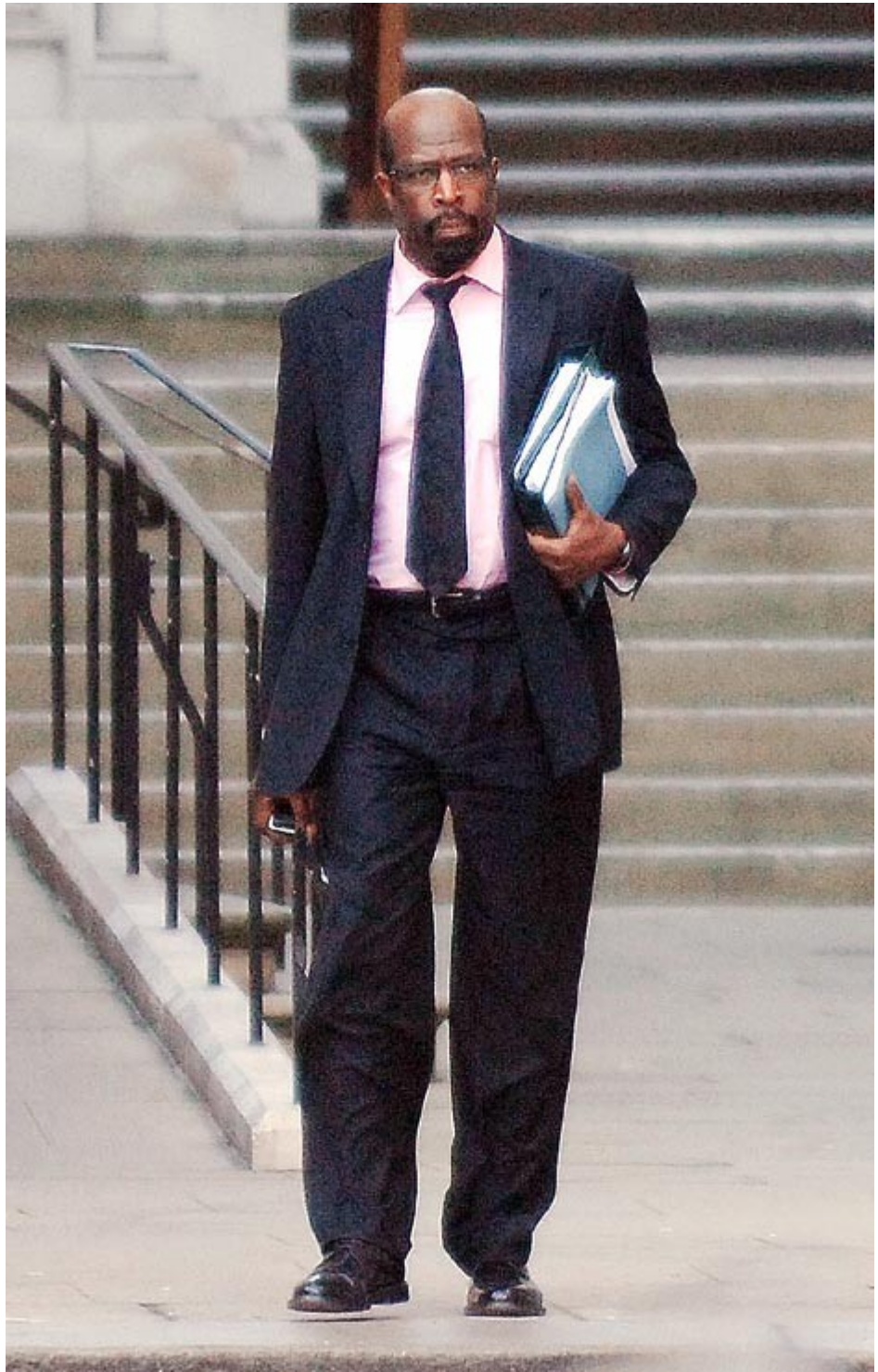
Top judge named and shamed for harassing ex-wife after losing battle for secrecy

By SAM GREENHILL and COLIN FERNANDEZ -Daily Mail

A judge who persuaded courts to hush up his own criminal convictions was yesterday named and shamed.

His Honour Lincoln Crawford OBE was unmasked by the High Court as the man found guilty of a campaign of harassment against his ex-wife.

For three years he has hidden behind a cloak of anonymity thanks to a draconian gagging order. Yet Crawford, 61, a part-time judge and distinguished barrister, continued to sit in judgment of others



weeks after being charged.

Not above the law: Lincoln Crawford outside court yesterday

He is still a practising barrister, advertising his services as a Government adviser on race relations. He fought to remain anonymous, arguing that making his name public would harm his children - and a succession of courts agreed.

But yesterday, in a victory for the principle of open justice, the High Court lifted all reporting restrictions after an application by members of the Press, including the Daily Mail.

Lord Justice Thomas said that just because he is a public figure, Crawford does not have any special right to privacy.

"We are talking about conduct which deserves to be stigma-tised as criminal," he said to Crawford's counsel. "Your client is in no special position. Otherwise, you're saying a public figure is not equal

before the law.

"The case is indistinguishable from any other case arising out of a family dispute of this kind where the CPS decides to prosecute."

Crawford waged a campaign of harassment against his estranged wife Bronwen Jenkins - daughter of the late trade union firebrand Clive Jenkins - and her new boyfriend Dominic Buttimore.

He stalked them in the street, spied on their home and even burst into their house at 4am to take pictures.

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Harassed: Bronwen Jenkins (right) and her boyfriend Dominic Buttimore (left)

Police charged him on September 27, 2005, but he continued working as a Recorder, paid £500 a day and sitting at Middlesex Guildhall Crown Court and Wood Green Crown Court, until February 2006.

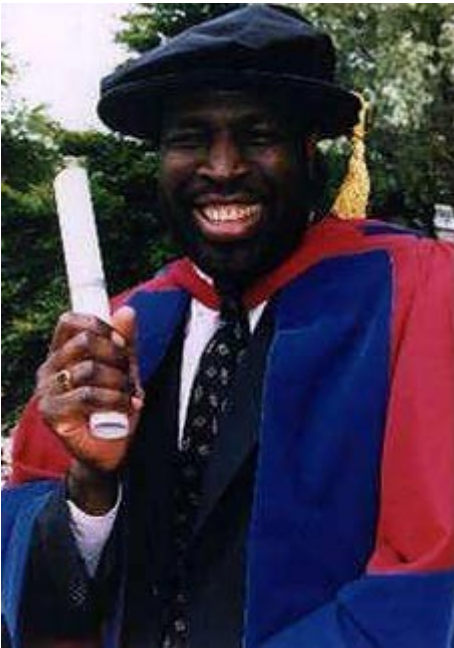
He was convicted at Highbury magistrates' court in north London in May of that year, and given a conditional discharge for 18 months.

But he managed to persuade magistrates to impose an order banning the Press from disclosing anything that would identify him.

Crawford came to Britain a penniless immigrant from Trinidad aged 18, and worked nights as a security guard to fund his studies before qualifying as a lawyer and being called to the Bar in 1977.

He was awarded the OBE in 1998 and earned a string of public appointments including at the Parole Board, the Prince's Trust, the Independent Adoption Service and Commission for Racial Equality.

He was promoted to Recorder - a part-time judge - and dreamed of becoming Britain's first black High Court judge. But it was Lord Justice Thomas and Mrs Justice Dobbs - who ironically beat Crawford to the title of first black High Court judge - who sat in judgment of him as torrid details of his divorce battle was aired to the court.



Harassment: Top judge and barrister Lincoln Crawford was convicted in 2005 but can only now be named

Previously-wed Crawford married Miss Jenkins, who is head of employment law at Irwin Mitchell, on June 5, 1999, in north London and they had two children together.

But within four years the marriage foundered when Miss Jenkins began an affair and launched divorce proceedings.

They became 'highly acrimonious' over the £1.7million marital home in Regent's Park and custody of their children, then aged four and two.

Miss Jenkins, 44, won custody but, in one ugly episode, ordered a security guard at her office to intervene when she suspected Crawford had come to 'snatch' them back.

Embittered Crawford complained to the guard that his wife was 'shagging up with a white man' - ironically falling foul of the Race Relations Act and worsening the harassment charge against him.

One evening in June 2005, when Miss Jenkins arrived home with her new boyfriend, 44-year-old movie animator Mr Buttimore, Crawford was waiting outside and warned the startled Mr Buttimore: "You'll be having breakfast with my kids in the morning."

A few weeks after that, the couple were at home at 4am when Crawford burst through the front door brandishing a mobile phone camera, started taking pictures and yelled it was "a disgrace that they were having sex in front of the children", the court heard.

After his convictions for harassing Miss Jenkins and Mr Buttimore - who are engaged - Crawford appealed twice, losing both times.

The Judicial Communications Office said Crawford had been suspended in February 2006 pending an inquiry to consider his fitness to be a judge.

The Bar Council, which regulates barristers, refused to comment on whether action had, or would, be taken against Crawford.

Don't be too hasty with gagging orders, courts told

Magistrates and judges should not impose gagging orders on the press 'as a matter of routine', Lord

Justice Thomas warned yesterday.

Ruling in favour of the Daily Mail and others in lifting the restrictions in the Crawford case, he agreed that too many lower courts make anonymity orders without consulting the media, which has a right to be heard.

Crawford's gagging order was granted during his divorce proceedings in 2005, and continued in the guise of a Section 39 order under the Children and Young Persons Act when he was convicted in May 2006, then continued again during his two appeals. Yesterday it was successfully argued that these orders were made without foundation.

Anthony Hudson, for the Mail, told the High Court: "Mr Crawford is a distinguished member of the Bar, a judge and, in a phrase often used, a member of the great and good.

"The public may struggle to understand how it can be that a man enjoying Mr Crawford's position can enjoy the anonymity that no other adult defendant in criminal proceedings would enjoy."

Miles Bennett, for the Crown Prosecution Service said: "If the law was used to shield Mr Crawford, it could be used to shield politicians from similar embarrassing-court proceedings."

Lord Justice Thomas agreed, ruling: "The appellant has been convicted of two criminal offences. It's self-evident he should be treated no differently from others convicted of a criminal offence.

"There is no evidence of any particular harm to these children, other than the considerable embarrassment that may be felt in the playground and elsewhere over the fact that their father has been convicted of a criminal offence.

"It seems to me that the public profile of a person is not a material consideration, because it is fundamental all persons are equal under the law."