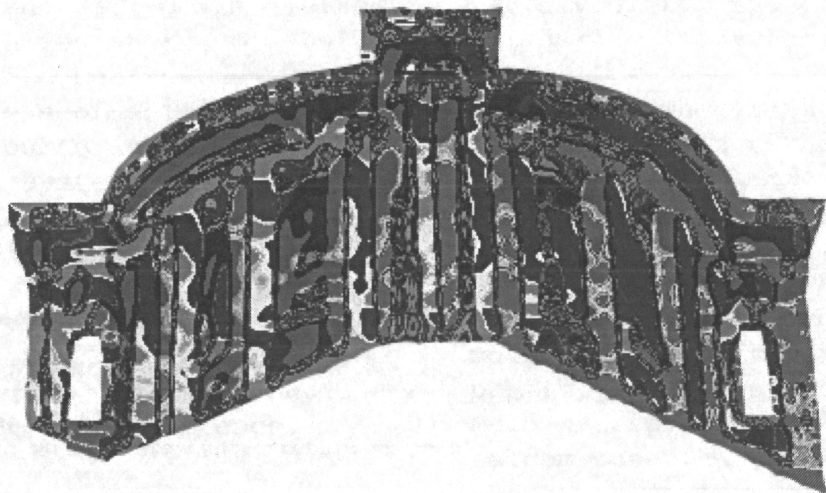


THE DOCK IS FULL BUT YOUR BOX  
IS EMPTY

A guide to witness and solidarity amidst the grain of law



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## TO GO TO COURT

This booklet was published for an event marking the end of a research project between London's Central Criminal Court (Old Bailey) and the Mayday Rooms Archive.

For six months Wail Qasim visited public galleries at the Old Bailey in an effort to bear witness to the hidden process of criminal justice. Daily the courts in English and other legal systems deal with huge numbers of accused people as criminal defendants. For those accused there is a space reserved in the court: the dock - a box, typically constructed of wood and glass that will cage them until their acquittal or sentence.

There is another box in most

courtrooms: the public gallery. Often made of wood and sometimes glass too, these spaces share an architectural affinity with the dock and yet, while the dock remains full and the public galleries largely empty, the possibility of solidarity is far off.

Defendants who stand accused of crimes are said to have committed harm against all of society and so the law prosecutes them on behalf of the public, that is to say in our name. We ought to know then who it is we prosecute and the means by which it takes place. The public gallery is a concession to such transparency but it is so seldom used that we know little about the reality of courtroom

dealings and often confuse them for their stage and screen counterparts.

In our time when so much is hidden about the daily execution of criminal justice we can see stepping into the public gallery as a vital work of witness. In so many ways the courts themselves dissuade us from doing that work but it remains possible and in our hands to take up.

It is hoped that this booklet can serve as a tool and guide for those attending the Old Bailey at the culmination of Wail's residency, but it may go further. Each of us lives near a court. Whether it is the highest in the land or the

local magistrates, the seats are more often than not empty. The judge more often than not expects that they will remain empty. Defendants fill the docks and the possibility for new forms of solidarity between accused and accuser open up if we sit like them, for an hour or two, and begin to know what justice and injustice look like today.

We won't pretend that courtrooms aren't deadening places. Anyone who attends will see how they deploy an architecture and security protocol (with legal threat and tedium mixed in) to deter visitors and strip through humanity. Our task will be to witness to that. To truly say I have seen it.

## TO PROTEST THE COURT



Protesters gathered in 1986 outside the Old Bailey in support of defendants accused of PC Keith Blakelock's murder at the Broadwater Farm estate.

When the public takes its seat in the gallery that too becomes a site of contested public order, where protest and witness have come together.

# TO READ THE COURT LIST

Each afternoon courts finalize their cause list for the following day. For the Crown Courts and higher courts these are published online and at all courts they're available to read in a public lobby. These lists are mostly administrative and tell you little.

The Court  
The Room  
The Time  
The Judge  
The Defendant

## The Crown Court at Central Criminal Court

Daily List for Friday 4 May 2018 at Old Bailey London EC4M 7EH

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**Court 9** - sitting at 10:00 am

HIS HONOUR JUDGE COOKE QC

**Trial (Part Heard)**  
T20177046 HURLEY Oliver

## TO ENTER AND TO WITNESS

At all courts you will be subjected to searches by security each time you enter. Many places will let you keep your belongings, having confiscated anything they deign inappropriate. But at the Old Bailey most things are banned and you are expected to not bring a bag at all.

If you pass security this is when the waiting begins. Before, during and after trials you become accustomed most of all with corridors. The courts produce in you a broken sense of time as their rhythm is alien to the rest of life.

Once inside a public gallery the court expects your only task to be

quiet and emotionless watching. No doubt security or an usher will make this clear to you with mundane and officious rubric, always backed by a contempt of court threat.

Your seat in the public gallery will not be the only vantage in the court. The dock, the jury box, the judge's bench, the barristers' lecterns, press box, usher's seat and clerk's desk all offer their own vantage. But this, the gallery, is yours.

It is a position which shares most with the dock. In both you are expected to remain silent. But you could remember what you see and smuggle out that experience to tell another.





# NOTES

## TODAY

Court 2 - Complex Fraud (Mention)

Court 5 - Double Murder

Court 6 - Murder

Court 7 - Murder

Court 8 - Manslaughter

Court 10 - Grievous Bodily Harm  
(Sentencing, 3pm)

Court 11 - Murder (Sentencing, 2pm)

Court 12 - Murder

Court 13 - Murder

Court 16 - Murder

