

Robert Elliott AEFP. MITAI. MIDiagE. LCGI. MCSFS

Senior Forensic Collision Investigator and Vehicle Examiner

Forensic Scientist since: 1991

Summary

With over 25 years' experience, including 14 years practical experience attending live serious and fatal crash scenes, Robert Elliott is a highly respected, highly trained and highly qualified scientist. A leading authority in all matters Road traffic related, Robert specialises in the analysis, investigation and reconstruction of road traffic collisions, component failures, seat belts, secondary restraint systems (airbags), tyres, automotive light bulbs (on or off at impact), the consistency of collision damage on vehicles (insurance fraud and staged collisions), determining speed from vehicle crush analysis, tachograph analysis and route tracing, vehicle examinations, the download of data from event data recorders (EDR), the forensic analysis of such data, 3D animations, examination and surveying (collision and of serious crime scenes) and CCTV analysis.

Robert is a retired Police Officer with a Certificate of Exemplary Service and a Police Commendation for his work in the field. Before joining Forensic Equity, Robert spent over 11 years in the Police Road Traffic Department as an Advanced Driver and Forensic Collision Investigator. This included spending over five years in the specialised Accident Investigation Unit as a full-time dedicated Collision Investigator, where his primary role was the investigation and reconstruction of fatal collisions for HM Coroner.

A senior court reporting scientist and head of our Road Traffic division, Robert is retained by a large proportion of the defence solicitors and barristers whom we work with.

Robert is a trained Single Joint Expert and has provided expert witness evidence during Court proceedings at all levels, both criminal and civil, and on behalf of both the Crown and Defence. During his career Robert has dealt with many hundreds of cases including charges of Murder, GBH and Causing Death by Dangerous/Careless Driving as well as a vast number of high profile 'Cash for Crash' fraud cases.

Experience

- Leading Forensic Collision Investigator, vehicle examiner and senior court reporting scientist with over 25 years' experience.
- Highly trained and exceptionally qualified in the use of all accredited advanced accident investigation and reconstruction techniques.
- Vastly experienced forensic investigator having attended numerous fatal and serious accidents; utilising his expertise in the fundamental principles of physics and mathematics to investigate and reconstruct many hundreds of locus'.
- Highly adept in the examination of motor vehicles including tyre, seat-belt and light bulb examinations.
- Holds significant expertise in car body control systems, shock absorber technology and airbag and supplementary restraint systems.
- A leading authority in vehicle crush analysis, together with profiling and measurement.

Areas of expertise

Road traffic

Accident investigation
Insurance fraud
Quantitative RTA scene analysis
Speeding offences
Vehicle examination

Digital forensics

CCTV and imagery analysis



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- Leading expert in the electronic surveying of accident / serious crime scenes, computer aided design, Tachograph installation, testing, calibration and chart analysis.
- Highly experienced in the preparation of detailed computer generated scale plan drawings, photographs and video footage, in addition to carrying out detailed vehicle and component examinations.
- Expert in the use of hand held Radar, Pilot, Vascar and Laser speed enforcement meters.
- Expert in alcohol related matters
- Verified first tier expert for the association of personal injury lawyers.

Committee memberships

- Registered road transport investigation expert and specialist assessor for the CRFP (council for the registration of forensic practitioners) prior to it being disbanded in 2009.
- Member of Council for the Institute of Traffic Accident Investigators and Membership Grades Assessor
- Member of the Chartered Society of Forensic Sciences
- Member of the Institute of Diagnostic Engineers
- Member of the European Association for Accident Research and Analysis (EVU).
- Holder of a senior Licentiate Diploma in motor vehicle inspection.

Notable work

- Awarded a Police Commendation in 1997 for his investigation and reconstruction of a serious road traffic collision involving four fatalities where a tipper lorry had collided with a number of vehicles including driving over and crushing two cars. The scene was extensive and extremely complex and Robert reconstructed the events forensically from the physical evidence. The forensic evidence Robert presented was such that it was not challenged in court and the Defendant was sentenced to eight years imprisonment.
- Robert is currently engaged in ongoing live crash test research projects involving low velocity collisions.

Notable cases

- *R v NANSON - Causing death by dangerous driving*

This concerned a collision involving four fatalities whereby a small passenger car carrying four local teenagers was struck whilst pulling out of a minor side road onto a major country A road by a large 4 x 4 vehicle. Robert was able to explain to the court and jury why the Crown's Expert's reconstruction was incorrect by addressing human factors, such that the Defendant was unable to do anything in the time available to him to avoid the collision. The Crown's Expert accepted Robert's evidence and the Judge directed the Prosecution to stop the trial and offer no further evidence.

- *R v FIROUZIAN - Causing death by careless driving*

A foreign student was run over and killed by a bus turning into a junction late at night. Robert and his team were able to show that the pedestrian would have always been within the driver's blind spot, that she would have been inconspicuous against the unlit dark background and that the imagery evidence provided by the Crown's Expert was seriously flawed. The Jury found the Defendant not guilty by unanimous decision.

- *R v ALLINGTON – Murder*

A murder case where the Defendant was attacked whilst in his vehicle by a group of youths. As he attempted to escape the locus, one of the attackers was inadvertently run over by the Defendant's car. The Crown's Expert alleged that the Defendant deliberately drove at and then over the pedestrian. Robert's forensic evidence was able to show to the jury how the Crown's proposition was flawed and that there was no evidence of a deliberate act. The Jury took very little time in finding the Defendant not guilty of murder, or of any other offence, by unanimous verdict.

- *R v BAYLIS - Causing death by dangerous driving*

The Defendant's car was struck head on by another car which was overtaking in the opposite direction. The Crown alleged that because of the Defendant's standard of driving witnessed about five minutes previously, they sought to link the two events and placed liability on him for the collision where the driver of the overtaking car died. During his investigation, Robert closed the

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dual carriageway at the locus for reconstruction tests and was able to show that the collision was not the fault of the Defendant. On the morning of the trial at the Crown Court, the Crown's Expert accepted Robert's evidence and the charge was dropped.

- *R v LAWRENCE – Murder*

Robert's investigation of the forensic evidence on behalf of the prosecution was able to show the Defendant had deliberately disengaged the passenger airbag prior to crashing his car and that he had unclipped his passenger's seat belt in the instant before impact. The Defendant was found guilty of murder by a unanimous verdict and sentenced to life in prison.

- *4 x 4 Fatal Crash in Egypt*

This case involved a 4 x 4 vehicle where the occupants were being chauffeured on the desert road between Cairo and Alexandra. The driver lost control of the vehicle and drove over a ravine killing his passengers. The Egyptian Police determined the 4 x 4 had suffered a tyre blow out and deemed that the driver was not responsible. Robert examined the locus and the vehicle and was able to show that the tyre had not suffered a blow out and that instead, the driver had fallen asleep at the wheel whilst driving at between 92 to 110mph.

Recommendations

"Your assistance proved pivotal in determining the outcome of the case"

Barrister, Furnival Chambers