



LAWYER OF THE WEEK

Charles Geekie, QC, who acts for Princess Haya bint al-Hussein, the former wife of the ruler of Dubai

Linda Tsang | Thursday March 12 2020, 12.01am, The Times

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Charles Geekie, QC, at IGC Family Law chambers, acts for Princess Haya bint al-Hussein, the former wife of Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid al-Maktoum, the ruler of Dubai. Following an unsuccessful appeal to the Supreme Court by Sheikh Mohammed, the High Court has published a fact-finding judgment that said [he had kidnapped two of his daughters](#).



Charles Geekie, QC

What were the main issues in the case?

Sheikh Mohammed applied to the High Court for the return of the two children of the couple to Dubai. Princess Haya resisted the application, alleging not only a campaign of harassment and intimidation of herself, but also a history of abducting two other daughters. Sheikh Mohammed argued that it was not necessary for the court to investigate the allegations. The court disagreed and a fact-finding trial took place.

What is the best decision you have taken?

Agreeing, without a moment's hesitation, to Baroness Shackleton of Belgravia's [Princess Haya's solicitor] suggestion that Sharon Segal should be my junior in this case. Sharon has an unparalleled command of detail and a superb tactical sense.

Who has inspired you?

My father for his commitment that, before all else, do the right thing.

What is the oddest thing that has happened in your career?

Sitting down to eat pizza with a teenage client who a few months before had been bed-bound and unable to take any solids — all the result of appalling parental abuse. As a legal team we had managed to help him see that there was a future.

What is the best advice you have received?

Watching the example of Alison Ball, QC, preparing for trial; don't turn over a page until you understand everything on it. And from a fine criminal advocate, John Coffey, QC: aim carefully — keep it short.

Which three qualities should a lawyer have?

As a family lawyer, three senses: perspective, humour and good.

What law would you enact?

The Domestic Abuse Act. The bill fell victim to parliamentary timetabling. It is back now and must be passed. Among many important measures, it will prevent alleged perpetrators from cross-examining their victims in the family court, with public funds for an advocate to be appointed.

How would you like to be remembered?

For having at least some sense — see above.