

## Lawyer of the week Raj Chada

Raj Chada, a partner at the London firm Hodge Jones & Allen, successfully represented Trudi Warner, a retired social worker. A decision to prosecute Warner for contempt of court for holding a placard outside a court was dropped by the solicitor-general, Sarah Sackman. Her Conservative predecessor had pressed ahead with the case, despite a High Court judge ruling that there was no basis for prosecuting Warner, whose sign informed jurors hearing the trial of climate change protesters that they had a right to acquit a defendant based on their conscience.

**What were the biggest hurdles you had to overcome in this case?**  
The absurdity of the prosecution.

**What is the best decision you have taken as a lawyer?** Not charging for a protest case I acted in 15 years ago — my practice has flowed from that one decision.

### Who do you most admire in the law?

Albie Sachs, a lawyer with the African National Congress and judge on the first Constitutional Court in South Africa. After being attacked by apartheid forces and losing his right arm and sight in one eye, he said his “soft vengeance” would take the form of getting freedom in a

nonracial and democratic South Africa based on human rights and the rule of law.



**What is the best advice you have received?** My first supervisor, David Gray, told me to never start with the legal framework when approaching a case — begin with the client’s problem and how the law can be used to assist.

**What is the funniest thing that has happened in your job?** After two hours in a police station at 2am, a client asked if I had an Irish accent.

When I confirmed, he shouted that he had never met an Italian-Irishman before. I asked him how many Italians he thought were called Raj. I advised no comment after that.

**What are the best and worst elements of being a lawyer?** The best is meeting amazing clients and working with committed colleagues. The worst is watching a client being sentenced to prison — I still cannot get used to it.

**What law would you enact?** One requiring Mo Salah, Virgil van Dijk and Trent Alexander-Arnold to sign new contracts with Liverpool FC.

**Catherine Baksi**  
catherinebaksi@hotmail.com