FRAIL PROFESSIONALISM?

Bad lawyering has come under increasing focus though NDAs, SLAPPs, the banking crisis, and latterly the UK's Post Office scandal, an extraordinary legal scandal spanning more than 20 years that ruined thousands of lives. This book examines the commercial, cultural, legal, and psychological drivers of ethical failure weaving them together with case studies in a compelling account of what is wrong with lawyers' ethics. Rather than concentrating on a few bad apples, it shows how deep-seated traditions, psychological frailties, the complacency and aggression of well-paid lawyers, and the pragmatism, cynicism, and hubris of organisations combines to pollute decision-making and weaken the rule of law. Be it through awful orthodoxies or legality illusions, it shows how a lawyer's naturally uncomfortable relationship with truth and justice can become improper or even criminal. This title is also available as Open Access on Cambridge Core.

RICHARD MOORHEAD is Professor of Law and Professional Ethics at the University of Exeter and Professor of Law at Monash University. He sits on the UK Government's Horizon Compensation Advisory Board advising on Post Office compensation schemes. In 2024, he led the Post Office Project Team to the ESRC's Outstanding Societal Impact Prize for work on the Post Office scandal. He was awarded an OBE for services to legal ethics in the Birthday Honours list 2026.

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 17 Nov 2026 at 02:22:29, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009695190

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 17 Nov 2026 at 02:22:29, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009695190

FRAIL PROFESSIONALISM?

Lawyers' Ethics after the Post Office and Other Cases

RICHARD MOORHEAD

University of Exeter and Monash University

CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 17 Nov 2026 at 02:22:29, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009695190

CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Shaftesbury Road, Cambridge CB2 8EA, United Kingdom

One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA

477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia

314–321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre,
New Delhi – 110025, India

Cambridge University Press is part of Cambridge University Press & Assessment,
a department of the University of Cambridge.

We share the University's mission to contribute to society through the pursuit of
education, learning and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781009695220

DOI: 10.1017/9781009695190

© Richard Moorhead 2026

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions
of relevant collective licensing agreements, with the exception of the Creative Commons
version the link for which is provided below, no reproduction of any part may take place
without the written permission of Cambridge University Press & Assessment.

An online version of this work is published at doi.org/10.1017/9781009695190 under
a Creative Commons Open Access license CC-BY-NC 4.0 which permits re-use,
distribution and reproduction in any medium for non-commercial purposes providing
appropriate credit to the original work is given and any changes made are indicated.
To view a copy of this license visit https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0

When citing this work, please include a reference to the DOI 10.1017/9781009695190

First published 2026

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
NAMES: Moorhead, Richard author
TITLE: Frail professionalism? : lawyers ethics after the post office and other cases / Richard Moorhead.
DESCRIPTION: Cambridge, United Kingdom ; New York, NY : Cambridge University Press, 2026. | Series: The Hamlyn Lectures (HAML)
IDENTIFIERS: LCCN 2025052174 | ISBN 9781009695220 hardback | ISBN 9781009695176 paperback | ISBN 9781009695190 ebook
SUBJECTS: LCSH: Judicial error – Great Britain | Great Britain. Post Office | Scandals – Great Britain – History | Legal ethics – Great Britain
CLASSIFICATION: LCC KD8464 .M66 2026
LC record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2025052174

ISBN 978-1-009-69522-0 Hardback
ISBN 978-1-009-69517-6 Paperback

Cambridge University Press & Assessment has no responsibility for the persistence
or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this
publication and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will
remain, accurate or appropriate.

For EU product safety concerns, contact us at Calle de José Abascal, 56, 1°, 28003 Madrid,
Spain, or email eugpsr@cambridge.org

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 17 Nov 2026 at 02:22:29, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009695190