



R v CALLUM ULYSSES PARSLow

SENTENCING REMARKS

- I. On 2nd April 2024 you, Callum Parslow, committed a vicious and unprovoked assault on a complete stranger, Nahom Hagos, who suffered devastating injuries as a result of your violence. Whilst there were no doubt many things which could be claimed to have caused your behaviour in this episode, there are three things of which I am sure. Firstly, you were motivated to make your plans to attack Mr Hagos by your arrest for the offences which you had committed by sending grossly offensive messages to a television presenter and knowing, in the light of your previous convictions for offences of this character, that you would inevitably be going to prison for them. Secondly, you were also motivated by your adoption of a extreme right neo-Nazi mindset, which fuelled your warped violent and racist views to the point at which you became willing to use and glorify violence against people in this country seeking international protection. Thirdly, for the reasons I shall give shortly, I have no doubt that this offence has a terrorist connection.

2. You come before the court for sentence not only for the offence of attempted murder of which the jury found you guilty, but also the earlier malicious communications offences as well as the offence of having a bladed article in a public place to which you have pleaded guilty. The communications offences, two charges of sending electronic communications with intent to cause distress or anxiety and one offence of exposure, date from the summer of 2023. You contacted a prominent television journalist and through false social media accounts that you had created, you sent her messages which were graphically sexist, racist and deeply offensive. The messages were frightening and insulting, not simply in relation to the victim but they also included the victim's daughter in their threatening vitriolic abuse. You then sent the victim a few days later two videos of you masturbating whilst looking at images of her, followed by a further video showing a young female adult being dragged along the floor by men with guns whilst her lower body was exposed and she was beaten with sticks causing her evident pain and distress. Police investigations of the social media accounts led them to arrest you. You accepted in interview that you were the creator of these communications.
3. It is clear from the evidence before the court, and entirely understandable, that these offences have had a profound effect upon the victim. They caused her to be in fear for herself and her daughter, and they have had a significant impact upon her activities as a professional journalist and her ability to promote her work. These are highly damaging and long lasting effects caused by your offences against her. There are sentencing guidelines in relation to the offence of exposure which I have to apply in your case. I agree with the prosecution assessment that this offence was in category 1 for which there is a starting point of 6 months with a category range of 12 weeks to 1 year. There are no guidelines for the offences of malicious

communications albeit the statutory maximum sentence is 2 years imprisonment. The sentence which I arrive at needs to reflect the totality of all three of these offences.

4. The communications offences were motivated by your extreme right wing mindset and the racist and misogynist attitudes which you have adopted, and which you deployed in your use of social media. When the police searched your home at the time of your arrest for the communications offences they found a range of literature and items which established beyond doubt your corrosive obsession with the Nazis, antisemitism, white supremacists and the glorification of violence used in the pursuit of these extreme right wing causes. They found devices at your home evidencing the extreme right wing messages you had been posting on social media.
5. As I have already observed as a result of your arrest you knew that you would be imprisoned upon conviction for these communications offences. Shortly before the 2nd April you had also been told that you were to be evicted from your flat and would be potentially homeless. You borrowed substantial sums of money and embarked upon travelling around the UK sightseeing. You also spent a significant amount of money purchasing a knife with an especially hard and sharp blade on the internet. It was around this time that you formed your plan to seek out a hotel hosting people seeking asylum and make your way there to undertake an attack using the weapon you had purchased intending, as the jury found, to kill one of the people seeking asylum housed there before being arrested and imprisoned.
6. One of the chilling features of your case is that after the event on the 2nd April the police found copies of the notorious extreme right wing manifestos written by terrorists who committed terrorist atrocities in Norway and New Zealand, undertaking multiple murders of entirely innocent strangers to promote their extreme views and beliefs. Those terrorists wrote these texts not just to draw

attention to their willingness to use violence but also to inspire others to emulate them. I have no doubt that this literature formed part of the backdrop to your plans. Alongside the catalogue of extreme right wing literature and memorabilia this paints a consistent picture of the terrorist motivation for your attack.

7. The attack which occurred on the 2nd April was planned and premeditated. You researched the use of a hotel near your home for housing people seeking asylum and you targeted it. You armed yourself for the attack and were prepared for your inevitable arrest and incarceration. In parallel with the terrorists whose books you owned you prepared a “manifesto” seeking to justify the horrifying violence which you intended to perpetrate. The text of the “manifesto” made plain your intentions: you perceived yourself as exterminating “the harmful invasive species”. The document amounted to a lengthy and florid diatribe of extreme right wing racist invective clearly again establishing the motivational role that your mindset played in these offences.
8. You travelled to the hotel which was undergoing repairs and encountered Nahom Hagos who had returned to the hotel to borrow a bicycle. He treated you with courtesy, showing you to the toilets, and after you had established he was from Eritrea you returned his courtesy with cruel violence, brutally stabbing him in the chest and then continuing the ferocious assault upon him when he tried to defend himself. You pursued Nahom Hagos into the car park and then returned to scout around the inside of the hotel for others before leaving the scene. You were discovered by the police attempting to distribute your “manifesto” through social media to a number of prominent individuals and organisations, including the victim of your communications offences. The preplanned nature of your attack, the way in which it was conducted targeting a individual because of his position as someone

seeking asylum, and its accompaniment by your “manifesto”, make clear that this attack was intended to intimidate a section of the public, people seeking asylum and those providing them with support, and that the attack was intended to further the interests of the violent extreme right wing ideology which you had adopted. This was undoubtedly a terrorist attack and this is an aggravating feature of this case.

9. As a result of the attack upon him Nahom Hagos sustained a penetrating wound to his left chest and a defensive injury to the back of his left hand which severed the tendons to all four fingers and nicked the bone of his middle finger. Surgery under general anaesthetic was required to repair the tendons. There have been long term physical and psychological consequences of your attack on Mr Hagos. Mr Hagos continues to suffer pain and loss of function in his left hand, including an inability to lift objects, bend his fingers or carry out many day to day activities such as showering or dressing himself, or cycling or going to the gym. In his recent statement he explains that he continues to suffer from pain from his injuries. He has recently been assessed by a Clinical Psychologist who found that he is suffering from PTSD and severe depression as a result of your assault upon him. The treatment for these conditions has yet to be arranged. Your cruel and violent attack on Nahom Hagos has had a devastating and lasting impact upon his quality of life.
10. You have previous convictions. On 23rd February 2018 you were imprisoned for 30 months for 10 offences of stalking and sending offensive communications along with a 10 year Restraining Order. These offences involved you targeting 13 different women and sending them sexually graphic and extremely violent images over social media. They contained personal characteristics leading the recipients to believe they had been sent by someone they knew. This led some of the recipients to suffer mental ill-

health as a result of the messages. You knew from these offences the damage sending offensive communications of this kind can cause.

11. I accept that there is some mitigation to be brought into account in your case. In particular I have read and take account of the reports of Dr Egan and Professor Allely which explain your diagnosis of ASD and ADHD and the impacts that these diagnoses have had upon your life and their involvement in your offences. The report of Professor Allely carefully and coherently explains how the characteristics of your ASD will have made impacted upon you and provide context and some explanation for how these offences occurred. In particular, but not exclusively, by causing you to have difficulties in social situations leading to isolation, by leading to you being vulnerable to becoming embroiled in extreme right wing ideology and also attracting you to social media and other forms of electronic communication. This evidence is reinforced by the evidence of Dr Egan who also addresses your diagnosis of ADHD which he concludes makes you more prone to irritability and impulsive behaviour. I have applied the sentencing guidelines in relation to offenders with mental disorders, developmental disorders, or neurological impairments when considering this evidence. In my view the impact of these conditions does require some reduction in the assessment of your culpability for these offences and I have taken this evidence into account when making my evaluation of the appropriate sentence in your case.
12. There are aggravating factors which must also be brought into account in the form of your previous convictions and also the fact that the attempted murder was committed following your release under investigation for the communications offences.
13. I have been assisted in this sentencing exercise by the preparation of a pre-sentence report in your case. The report is careful and comprehensive and supports the

conclusion that this attack was premeditated and motivated by your extreme right wing white supremacist ideology. The author considers that you pose a high risk of serious harm to members of the public as a result of further violent offences. I have no doubt that the evidence in this case, along with the assessment of the author of the Pre-Sentence Report, clearly support the judgment that I have reached that you satisfy the statutory definition of dangerousness for the purpose of sentencing. I have carefully considered the criteria set out in the case of *Burinskas* [2014] EWCA Crim 334 and have formed the view that an extended sentence would not be sufficient in your case: this is a case in which a life sentence must be imposed. In particular the seriousness of the offence of attempted murder, set as it was in the context of its motivation by your extreme right wing racist ideology, is a weighty consideration. Although you have no previous convictions for violence there are previous convictions and the communications offences to be brought into account, which in the case of the most recent of those offences have obvious racist and misogynist characteristics. Most significantly in terms of the justification for a life sentence in your case is that it is not possible for me to assess, in the light of the ideological mindset and attitudes to which it appears you are vulnerable as a result of your diagnoses, and which caused these offences, when you will cease to be dangerous within the terms of the statute. Having considered the position carefully I do not consider that there is any suitable alternative sentence in your case.

14. Having concluded that I must impose a life sentence in your case my task is to fix the minimum term. This is the term you will have to serve before you are even allowed to make an application to the Parole Board to be considered to be released. The minimum term is fixed as two-thirds of the determinate sentence that I would notionally have passed to represent all of your offending. Obviously in doing so I shall

take the attempted murder as the lead offence and reflect the communications offences in the length of the minimum term bearing in mind that, as offences against a separate victim, I would have imposed consecutive sentences for those offences if I were imposing determinate sentences. I shall have regard to the principle of totality and seek to impose a sentence which is proportionate to all the circumstances of your case.

15. In determining the sentence for the offence of attempted murder I have had regard to the sentencing guidelines for this offence. There is no doubt that this is an offence within culpability category A on the basis of its racist and terrorist motivation. I shall be careful to avoid double counting and not included these features as further aggravating factors in arriving at the sentence. The injuries to Nahom Hagos have ongoing effects which are impacting on his day to day activities and have an uncertain prognosis. Whilst I consider that bearing in mind all of the factors to be taken into account in respect of the offence of attempted murder this case lies within the overlap between category 1 and category 2 harm it is in my view very much towards at the top of the range provided for category 2A cases prior to taking account of the aggravating and mitigating features in the case including your diagnosis of ASD and ADHD. The starting point for a category 1A offence is 35 years and the category range is 30 to 40 years. The starting point for a category 2A offence is 30 years and the category range is 25 to 35 years.

16. I consider that the communications offences in this case were very serious and included a significant number of aggravating features. They were, as I have observed, committed in pursuit of your racist mindset and contained offensive misogynistic language. A further aggravating feature is you involving the victim's young daughter in your abusive language. You have previous convictions for offences of this kind against

women which further aggravates the offence. There is some limited credit to be given for your late plea of guilty. I have taken account of the fact that you would be eligible for release from these offences at the half way point (unlike the two thirds for the attempted murder offence) in setting the notional determinate sentence.

17. Taking account of all of the matters which have been set out I have concluded that were I not passing a life sentence the appropriate determinate sentence in your case would have been one of 34 years in total for all of your offending. It therefore follows that the sentence in your case for the offence of attempted murder should be one of life imprisonment with a minimum term of 22 years 8 months (being two thirds of the notional determinate sentence) less the 284 days that have been served on remand. I impose a sentence of 2 years for the offence of possession of a bladed article in a public place concurrent to the life sentence. For the offences of sending electronic communications with intent to cause distress and anxiety and also the offence of exposure I reflect the totality of that offending a sentence of 18 months concurrent on each count, themselves concurrent to the life sentence for attempted murder.