



JUDICIARY OF
ENGLAND AND WALES

MAIDSTONE CROWN COURT

THE QUEEN

V

GREGORY HAWLEY

LAMECH GORDON-CAREW

ALIZE SPENCE

DUSHANE MEIKLE

SENTENCING REMARKS

OF MR JUSTICE CAVANAGH

20 MAY 2022

1. On New Year's Eve 2019, Bill Henham was a 24 year-old University student. He was home for the Christmas holidays and had decided to go out for the night in central Brighton on his own. He had a bit too much to drink but he was friendly and amiable and entirely non-threatening. At about 4.30 am that night he was at a loose end and he saw that there was a party going on in a squat in a derelict office building at 30-31 North Street. He went in to join the party. Less than 3 hours after entering the building, he was dead, having been beaten to death, in a sustained and brutal attack, by a group of young men to whom he was a complete stranger.
2. Gregory Hawley, Lamech Gordon-Carew, Alize Spence, and Dushane Meikle have each been convicted of the murder of Bill Henham after a trial in this Court. This is the sentencing hearing. Two of the Defendants, Gregory Hawley and Dushane Meikle, refused to leave their cells this morning to come to Court to be sentenced. Having carefully considered the matter, I have decided to proceed to sentence these Defendants in their absence. I am satisfied that Hawley and Meikle have each voluntarily waived their right to attend today. To adjourn again would cause great inconvenience for the Court and other Court users, and, most importantly, it would exacerbate the distress of their victim's family. Their ordeal has gone on long enough. I have no confidence that Hawley or Meikle would attend if I adjourned sentence yet again. Moreover, both Hawley and Meikle have had ample opportunity to give instructions to their solicitors and counsel in advance of this sentencing hearing, and each have provided a Sentencing Note. Sensibly, counsel for Hawley and Meikle have not applied for an adjournment. I should add that it is not possible to provide a CVP link from the prison to the Court but, in any event, since they have refused to come out of their cells for sentencing, this would have made no difference.

3. I will direct that a written copy of my Sentencing Remarks to be given to Hawley and Meikle.
4. Accordingly, I will now proceed to pass sentence. I will address the Remarks to Hawley and Meikle, along with Gordon-Carew and Spence, even though Hawley and Meikle are not here.
5. I was the trial judge. Whilst each of you admitted to being present at the squat on New Year's Eve 2019, you all denied being present at, let alone participating in, the assault upon Bill Henham. There were no other eyewitnesses to the assault. Therefore, there was no direct witness evidence before the Court of the way in which the assault unfolded, apart from one witness who had a brief glimpse of part of the attack. Nevertheless, there was a great deal of forensic evidence, and this, together with the evidence of witnesses who were present at the squat or to whom one or more you disclosed details of the assault in the days that followed, means that I am in a position to be satisfied so that I am sure that what follows is an accurate description of the circumstances of the murder, and of the part in it that was played by each of you.
6. Gregory Hawley, you were an experienced squatter and were the leader of the squat at 30-31 North Street. Lamech Gordon-Carew and Alize Spence, you had travelled down together to Brighton from London to sell drugs, and you were staying at the squat. You, Dushane Meikle, were a well-known figure in the homeless community in Brighton and had visited the squat on New Year's Eve 2019 to attend the party and to provide security. Your street name was Flames. All of you had been taking drugs and drinking alcohol throughout the evening. You, Gregory Hawley and Dushane Meikle, were in your mid-twenties and were considerably older and more worldly-wise than Lamech Gordon-Carew and Alize Spence, who were 18 and 16 years old, respectively. I have no doubt that Gordon-Carew and Spence took the lead from you and followed your instructions in relation to the assault on Bill Henham, but they did so enthusiastically and without scruple.
7. The precise reason why you decided to beat up Bill Henham will remain a mystery. You, Gregory Hawley, told a friend that the boy who died had been acting in a lairy and mouthy manner at the party. I am fully satisfied that Bill Henham had done nothing that could possibly have justified the four of you taking offence against him. As I have said, he was intoxicated, but he was friendly and non-threatening. At most he may have said something that annoyed or upset your girlfriend, Gregory Hawley. There was nothing that comes anywhere close to provocation. The motive for the assault appears to have been to punish your victim for some trivial or imagined slight.
8. The assault on Bill Henham was prolonged, and took place in two locations. First, he was taken up to a room on the second floor of the building at 30-31 North Street and was savagely beaten. At this stage, the forensic evidence suggests that the main attackers were you, Lamech Gordon-Carew and Alize Spence. I am satisfied that you did not do this on your own volition but were acting on the instructions of Gregory Hawley and Dushane Meikle. You hit and kicked Bill Henham in the head and body, and he was left bleeding on the floor. You then dragged his body along the ground and took him down a staircase to the first floor. From there, the four of you were involved in taking him to a small room at the back of the first floor. Gregory Hawley and Dushane Meikle, you arranged for other party-goers to stand on the first floor landing to block the way so that you could continue the attack on Bill Henham without interruption, although in fact two people who were staying at the back of the squat insisted on pushing through, and one of them bravely gave evidence to the jury about what he saw when he arrived at the back of the building.

9. The four of you took Bill Henham into the small room and set about attacking him with sections of wooden spindles that had been torn from the staircase, and with your shod feet. You attacked him in the face, head and body. You Dushane Meikle, left the room at one stage to frighten the witnesses off from inquiring into what you were doing. One of the witnesses said that he could hear screaming coming from the room.
10. It is clear from the injuries that he sustained that the attack on Bill Henham lasted a very considerable time. The beating suffered by Bill Henham resulted in 67 areas of external injury on his face, torso and legs, each of which was consistent with blunt force trauma, and a total of some 80 injuries altogether, when internal bruising is taken into account. These injuries included 11 fractured ribs, a very large cut on his forehead, and very severe brain injuries which, on their own, were probably enough to have killed him. Very few, if any, of the injuries were caused by the placing of Bill's body in the recess.
11. I cannot be satisfied that, when the assault began, you intended to kill Bill Henham, but at some point during the course of the assault you took a collective decision to "finish him off", that is, to kill him. This was either because you realised that you had gone too far and decided to put him to death rather than leave him badly injured but able to give evidence against you, or because you realised that he had heard one or more of your names and would be able to identify you if you left him alive. Either way, I sentence you on the basis that, by the time the assault came to an end, each of you intended to kill Bill Henham.
12. As I have said, this was a prolonged assault, carried out in two locations. There can be no doubt that the pain and suffering that you put Bill Henham through was agonising and terrifying. The medical evidence showed that Bill became unconscious an hour or so before he died, but his last moments of consciousness must have been awful.
13. It is clear from the forensic evidence that each of you was involved in landing blows on Bill Henham with wooden spindles or shod feet (although there was no forensic evidence directly linking you, Hawley, to a spindle).
14. It is very likely that, when Bill Henham fell unconscious in the small room at the back of the squat, you thought that he was already dead. The four of you then carried Bill Henham's body some distance within the building and took it out onto a balcony surrounding an internal Courtyard. There, you tipped Bill's body into a small and dirty outdoor recess. You also removed Bill's clothing and wiped down his body with disinfectant in an attempt to hide evidence of your involvement. The medical evidence suggests that Bill may have been still alive, though unconscious, when he was placed in the recess. This was done in the hope that it would delay the point at which his body would be found. Indeed, you may even have hoped and believed that it would be a long time before his body was found and that it would not be linked to the New Year's Eve Party. You decided to clean up the scene with disinfectant in an attempt to remove potential evidence of your presence. You, Gregory Hawley, took the lead in this. At one point, Gregory Hawley, you talked to a witness about burning down the building to conceal your crime, though in the event you did not attempt to do this. As a final act of degradation, you, Dushane Meikle, took photographs of Bill's partially naked and then fully-naked body, which you then tried, unsuccessfully, to delete from your phone.
15. You then all left the scene. None of you attempted to provide first aid to Bill, and none of you took any steps to notify the authorities of Bill Henham's fate. As it happened,

the police found Bill's body after a tip-off some 36 hours after his death, but if it had been left to you, his family would have been left in limbo, wondering what had happened to him, for a long time.

16. The Court has heard a very moving Victim Impact Statement from Bill Henham's father, Ian, on behalf of his family, which was read to the Court by Ian, and by Bill's mother, Debbie. No-one who watched them can fail to appreciate the courage that this took, or the overwhelming love they feel towards Bill. They describe a gentle and loveable young man who had his whole adult life stretching out in front of him. He loved watching and making films. He was a young man who had intellect, a creative free spirit, and an ability to make those around him feel good. He was adored by his family, including his parents and his brother, but also by his wider family, including his grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins. Bill had many friends who loved him, his cheery ways, and his winning smile. A group of his friends have installed a bench on a hill overlooking Brighton as a tribute to him.
17. The effect of Bill Henham's murder on his family has been devastating. Their grief is relentless. Both of his parents have had to give up work. For the past two and a half years they have existed, not lived. Their emotions have ranged from horror and shock to absolute pain and then to total anger. Bill's family attended Court every day of the trial and followed the proceedings with immense dignity and restraint. As his father said, he will always be in their hearts.
18. In respect of each of you, there is only one sentence that the law allows me to pass for the offence of murder. It is a life sentence. For you, Gregory Hawley and Dushane Meikle, the form which that sentence takes is imprisonment for life. For you, Lamech Gordon-Carew, since you were under 21 years old at the time of conviction for this offence, the sentence is custody for life. For you, Alize Spence, since you were 16 years old at the time of the offence, the sentence is that you must be detained during Her Majesty's pleasure.
19. In each case, that is the sentence that I will pass, but I am also required by Schedule 21 to the Sentencing Act 2020 to specify a minimum term which must elapse before you can be considered for release on licence. It will then be for the Parole Board to consider whether, and, if so, when, you can be safely released.
20. It is important that you – and everyone concerned with this case or reading or reporting this sentence – understand what your sentences for murder in fact mean. The minimum term is not a fixed term after which you will automatically be released but is the minimum time that you will spend in custody before your case can be considered by the Parole Board. It will be for the Parole Board to say at that time whether or not you are fit to be released. There is no guarantee that you will be released at that time, or at any particular time thereafter. If and when you are released, you will be subject to licence and this will remain the case for the rest of your life. If for any reason your licence were to be revoked, such as if you reoffend, you will be recalled to continue to serve your sentence in custody.
21. The qualifying days that you have spent in custody will count towards the minimum term. In relation to you, Hawley, Gordon-Carew and Spence, the time spent is 364 days. In relation to you, Meikle, the time spent is 331 days. The appropriate statutory victim surcharge will be applied. I take account of the impact of Covid on your time in custody, but, given the length of the minimum sentences I must impose, I do not make any significant reduction for it.

22. Schedule 21 to the Sentencing Act also sets a starting point for the minimum term, before taking into account aggravating and mitigating factors. In your cases, Gregory Hawley, Lamech Gordon-Carew, and Dushane Meikle, the starting point is 15 years. In your case, and because of your age, Alize Spence, the starting point is 12 years. However, the starting point will not be the end point in your cases. In deciding upon a minimum term, I will not adopt a mechanistic approach, and I will balance all of the aggravating and mitigating factors when determining the minimum term for each of you. I say immediately that, in light of the circumstances of this case, the minimum terms that I must specify will be very significantly higher than the starting points.
23. I sentence you, Gregory Hawley and Dushane Meikle, on the basis that you played a leading role in the events that led up to the murder of Bill Henham. You are considerably older and more sophisticated than Lamech Gordon-Carew and Alize Spence. You, Gregory Hawley, were the head of the squat, and, you Dushane Meikle, were acting in an informal “security” role during the New Years’ Eve party. It is inconceivable that the other two would have taken charge of these events. You were the ones in control of them, and Gordon-Carew and Spence did what you told them to do, albeit very willingly.
24. The following aggravating features, some of which overlap, are common to each of your cases:
- (1) This was an assault on a defenceless young man, made vulnerable by his intoxication;
 - (2) There were four of you: this was a group attack on a single victim;
 - (3) You were under the influence of alcohol and drugs;
 - (4) The assault was sustained and brutal and took place over an extended period of anything up to an hour, in two locations within the building;
 - (5) The extreme brutality of the assault and the sustained nature of it is indicated by the sheer number of injuries, including 11 broken ribs, a deep wound to your victim’s forehead and brain injuries. I do not sentence you on the basis that the murder was sadistic (if I had done so, the starting point for three of you would have been much higher) but the wholly disproportionate and gratuitous violence is one of the most unpleasant aspects of the offence, and the ferocity and vigour with which the beating was carried out were not far short of sadistic. This was a merciless attack, involving the deliberate infliction of pain and suffering over a lengthy period;
 - (6) You used weapons, consisting of wooden spindles and shod feet;
 - (7) You caused a very great deal of mental and physical suffering to your victim, and persisted in the assault whilst fully aware of the pain and damage that you were causing to him. Having assaulted him in one location, you dragged him to a second location. He must have realised as he was being taken to the second location that you were planning to continue to assault him. There was evidence that your victim was screaming whilst you attacked him in the small room. He had injuries on his hands and arms which suggests that he was trying to protect himself whilst the assault took place;
 - (8) By the time that the assault ended, you had come to a joint decision to kill your victim;
 - (9) You then tried to conceal the victim’s body, and to conceal evidence of your involvement;
 - (10) You treated the victim’s body with great disrespect, placing his body in a dank and dirty recess, and removing all of his clothing; and
 - (11) None of you has expressed any remorse for your actions.

25. In addition, you, Gregory Hawley and Dushane Meikle, showed further disrespect to your victim's body. You, Gregory Hawley, wiped it down with disinfectant that was designed for cleaning floors and other surfaces, and you, Dushane Meikle, took photographs of the victim's partially clothed and then naked body. Comments that you made on your phone at the time that you took these photographs indicate that you were gloating about what you had done. Moreover, you, Gregory Hawley, and you, Lamech Gordon-Carew, boasted to others of what you had been involved in.
26. So far as mitigating features in relation to the circumstances of the offence are concerned, these are very limited and few in number. The most that can be said is that the murder was not premeditated and that you had not brought weapons to the squat.
27. I move on to your personal circumstances and mitigation.
28. Gregory Hawley, you were 26 years old at the time of the offence and are 29 now. You have been homeless during most of your adult life and at the time of the offence, and for some years before, were a user of class A drugs. You have a number of convictions for burglary and similar offences, which were committed to feed your habit. You had no previous convictions for offences of violence at the time of this offence. On three separate occasions in 2020, after the murder took place, you were convicted of possessing a bladed article in a public place, and you were also convicted in 2020 of battery, after you punched a stranger in the street in an unprovoked attack. There is very limited mitigation in your case. You played a leading part in this offence. You have shown no remorse. You have not even displayed the moral courage necessary to attend your sentencing hearing.
29. I will deal next with Alize Spence.
30. Alize Spence, you were 16 years and about six months old at the time of the offence and were 18 at the time of conviction. You are now 19. You have no previous convictions for violent offending. However, since this offence was committed you have been convicted of possessing a bladed article in a public place. I have seen a Pre-Sentence Report that has been prepared about you, and also a letter from your social worker. The Pre-Sentence Report states that you have continued to deny any involvement in this offence. The writer of the Pre-Sentence Report said that this was of concern, as was the fact that the writer saw little evidence of any victim empathy, remorse, or understanding on your part. You come from the Croydon area and you were effectively homeless at the time of the offence, though you had lived with your father until relatively recently. You had a difficult upbringing, having endured domestic abuse from your father, and with a mother who suffers from alcohol dependency. You spent some time in care. You obtained a number of GCSEs at school and started college but were excluded for poor attendance. You spent time in care. At the time of this offence you were making your living as a drug dealer, alongside Lamech Gordon-Carew. Along with Lamech Gordon-Carew, you had come to Brighton to sell Class A drugs, as part of a County Lines operation, and you were a professional drug dealer at the street level. Also like Lamech Gordon-Carew, you were a very regular user of cannabis. At the time of this offence, you had been living an anti-social, pro-offending lifestyle, and the Pre-Sentence Report said that you are an emotionally underdeveloped young man with a poor understanding of the risks and the criminal nature of your lifestyle.
31. In deciding upon the minimum sentence for you, Alize Spence, I have taken into account the Definitive Guideline which sets out Overarching Principles for Sentencing Children and Young People, and, in particular, the importance, when considering the appropriate minimum term, of considering the developmental and emotional age of the

offender and of considering, in accordance with paragraph 4.10 of the guideline, whether the young offender has:

'the necessary maturity to appreciate fully the consequences of their conduct, the extent to which the child or young person has been acting on an impulsive basis and whether their conduct has been affected by inexperience, emotional volatility or negative influences.'

32. I do not think that you have the necessary maturity fully to appreciate the consequences of what you have done. This is indicated by your lack of remorse. I also consider that you were influenced in what you did by the older and more mature co-participants. I take all of this into account, along with your youth at the time of the offence, your background, and the circumstances of your life so far. I take this into account as significant mitigation, though it is considerably outweighed by the circumstances of the offence and by your lack of remorse.
33. I should add that my attention has been drawn by your counsel to a letter dated 4 August 2020 in which the Single Competent Authority expressed the view that there were Conclusive Grounds to decide that you were a victim of modern slavery and a victim of criminal exploitation. The reasons for this conclusion were not set out in the letter. In my judgment, this is of no particular significance for the purposes of deciding upon an appropriate sentence for you. This is for several reasons. First, at trial you did not advance a defence under section 45 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 to the effect that you participated in the murder of Bill Henham as a direct consequence of being, or having been, a victim of slavery or of relevant exploitation and that a reasonable person in the same situation as you and with your relevant characteristics would have done the same thing. There was no evidence at trial that might conceivably have supported such a defence. Second, the Court of Appeal has made clear that the views of the officials of the Single Competent Authority when issuing a Conclusive Grounds determination do not amount to expert evidence for the purpose of criminal proceedings. Third, there is nothing to suggest that the Conclusive Grounds decision had anything to do with criminal exploitation concerning the murder of Bill Henham. The police force to whom the Conclusive Grounds determination was sent was Hampshire Police which is not, of course, the police force responsible for Brighton. Fourth, in so far as there may be a suggestion that you were compelled to take part in drug dealing as a result of criminal exploitation, this does not explain or amount to mitigation of your culpability in the murder of Bill Henham. Fifth, I have already said that I have taken your background and history into account when considering the minimum term to impose upon you.
34. Lamech Gordon-Carew, you were 18 years old at the time of the offence and are 20 years old now. You will be 21 tomorrow. You have no police, convictions, cautions or reprimands recorded against you. I have seen a Pre-Sentence Report in your case. In addition, you gave some evidence about your background during the trial, and I have seen an expert psychologist's report prepared by Dr Vincent Egan, which was provided in support of an application for an intermediary when you gave your evidence, and which I will take into account. You come from the Croydon area. Your father, who was a drug dealer, died violently when you were 11. You have a difficult relationship with your mother and you were effectively homeless at the time of this offence. You were assessed as having a learning disability and a very low IQ, and I bear this in mind. You had a troubled school career and were diagnosed with ADHD, which makes you impulsive, and also suffer from epilepsy, though I make clear that this does not amount to an explanation or significant mitigation for your offending. You used cannabis constantly. You were effectively a professional drug dealer, at the street level. A couple of weeks before the offence, you travelled down to Brighton, along with your friend, Alize Spence, in order to sell Class A drugs as part of a County Lines operation. It is

clear from the Pre-Sentence Report that you show no remorse and continue to deny your involvement in the case, notwithstanding having admitted to a police officer when you were arrested that you were present during the assault.

35. I have been informed that the Single Competent Authority has also made a Modern Slavery Conclusive Grounds determination in relation to you, on the basis that you were a victim of exploitation and vulnerable. This is in relation to your drug dealing. For the same reasons as with Alize Spence, however, I do not regard this as being of significance mitigation for the purpose of your sentencing for murder. To the extent that you are a victim of exploitation in relation to your drug dealing, it does not explain, still less excuse, your participation in this murder.
36. Although you, Lamech Gordon-Carew, are a couple of years older than Alize Spence and were over the age of 18 at the time of the offence, I take the view that the extent of your responsibility and culpability is the same as Alize Spence's, and is less than would be the case for most 18 year olds. You suffer from learning difficulties and have a low IQ. This is significant mitigation. The Court of Appeal has said time and again that the age of 18 is not a cliff edge, where sentencing is concerned. You have broadly similar backgrounds, and effectively played the same part in this murder, and you are both equally culpable. Accordingly, I intend to impose the same minimum term on each of you. The significant mitigation in your case is, however, considerably outweighed, as with Alize Spence, by the circumstances of the offence and the lack of any remorse or empathy.
37. You, Dushane Meikle, were aged 25 at the time of the offence, and are 28 years old now. You have 25 convictions for 42 offences. None of them was a serious offence of violence. Most recently, you were convicted in 2016 of possession of heroin and crack cocaine with intent to supply and, in 2018, of possession of a bladed article in a public place, namely a meat cleaver, and possession of cannabis. You were still under post-sentence supervision when you murdered Bill Henham. You were a habitual drug-user. I have read a letter from your aunt, who says that you can be a polite and considerate person. However, you have shown no remorse for this offence. As with Gregory Hawley, you played a leading part in this offence, and there is very limited mitigation. Again, as with Gregory Hawley, you do not have the moral courage to attend your sentencing hearing.

The sentences

38. Gregory Hawley, for the murder of Bill Henham, I sentence you to imprisonment for life. Taking account of all of the factors that I have set out, the minimum term will be 25 years.
39. Lamech-Gordon Carew, for the murder of Bill Henham, I sentence you to custody for life. Taking account of all of the factors that I have set out, the minimum term will be 18 years.
40. Alize Spence, for the murder of Bill Henham, I sentence you to detention at Her Majesty's pleasure. Taking account of all of the factors that I have set out, the minimum term will be 18 years.
41. Dushane Meikle, for the murder of Bill Henham, I sentence you to imprisonment for life. Taking account of all of the factors that I have set out, the minimum term will be one of 25 years.

Commendations and thanks

42. The investigation which led to this trial and these convictions was extremely lengthy and complex, and the police officers, investigators, and forensic scientists who played their part are to be commended for the extremely professional and skilful way in which they carried out their duties. When Bill Henham's body was first discovered, there were no obvious clues to the identity of the murderers, and it was only as a result of a painstaking forensic examination of the building, lasting many weeks, and the careful questioning of witnesses who had been present at the party, that the investigators were able to piece together what had happened and to find forensic evidence linking the four murderers to their crimes. This was a very impressive piece of work.
43. The officers and investigators whom the Court would like publicly to commend in particular are the following:
- Detective Superintendent Alex Geldart- Senior Investigative Officer
 - Detective Inspector James Ansell -Deputy Senior Investigative Officer
 - Detective Sergeant Hannah Taylor-Managing Officer
 - DC Dean Tuting – Officer in the case
 - Investigative Officer Paula Butler - Deputy case officer
 - DC Michelle Green – Investigating officer
 - DC Vicki Huxtable – Investigating officer
 - Ella Jones – Evidence and Disclosure officer
 - Michelle Duncan – Analyst
 - Adam Newton – CSI (Mr Newton has now moved on from the force)
 - DC Penny Walters and DC Kirsty Prentice – Family liaison officers
 - Melanie Lett – Crime Scene Manager
44. Finally, I would like to thank all members of the counsel teams and their solicitor colleagues, for their hard work, the skilful way in which they presented their cases, and for the positive and co-operative manner in which this case was conducted. I would also like to thank the staff of Kinly who helped with the technical assistance and, last but very much not least, the jury, and the Court staff whose contribution to keeping this trial going, despite the challenges posed by Covid, was magnificent.