



JUDICIARY OF
ENGLAND AND WALES

Sentencing remarks of Mr Justice Kerr

The Queen

v.

Umair Zaheer

Brandon Moore

Jordan Waring

Louis Coleman

Robert Brazendale

Bilal Khan

Hitesh Patel

Manchester Crown Court

4 February 2022

1. The defendants should remain seated for the moment. The court sits today to sentence them for serious offences committed from March to June 2020. The crimes fall into three categories: a conspiracy to acquire firearms and ammunition with intent to harm an individual; the supply of firearms and ammunition in a conspiracy to use them to endanger life; and conspiracies to supply cocaine, cannabis and ketamine. There is also one other offence of dealing cannabis in 2019.
2. The evidence that unmasked these offences was mainly of the most modern kind: CCTV, DNA, vehicle telematics and, above all, interception of “encrochat” covert communications widely used, and used only, by criminals to commit organised crimes. Unless I say otherwise, communications I shall refer to were by encrochat message.
3. The encrochat communications system was originally decoded by a French organisation. The relevant communications were analysed by police officers here, to good effect. That diligent police work has led ultimately to this court hearing and others yet to be held. The arrest and conviction of these defendants has probably prevented, at least, serious violence; and disrupted the criminal activities of a criminal gang.
4. To decide the sentences I have drawn on the usual legal sources: the sentencing code, relevant sentencing guidelines, case law and, not least,

the helpful submissions of counsel for the parties. I am grateful to them all for guiding me through the facts and the law during and after the two incomplete trials held late last year, before certain guilty pleas made a trial unnecessary.

Umair Zaheer

5. You are now 34. You have pleaded guilty to four conspiracies with various others: first, to possess firearms and ammunition with intent to endanger life; second, again, to possess firearms and ammunition with intent to endanger life; third, to supply cocaine; and fourth, to supply cannabis. I will take them in that order.
6. First, you conspired with Brandon Moore and Jordan Waring to obtain guns and ammunition to do serious harm to one Tyler Lomas, to avenge his shooting and wounding of Mr Moore and Mr Waring. You were charged with conspiracy to murder Mr Lomas, but that count was not pursued by the Crown. I therefore sentence you on the basis that you intended serious harm to him rather than to kill him.
7. Mr Moore and Mr Waring were both wounded by Mr Lomas in a confrontation in the Kersal area on 3 April 2020. This was reported not to the police but to you, via encrochat. You agreed to provide a gun and ammunition to harm Mr Lomas or those close to him. Efforts were made to find Mr Lomas and his girlfriend. His photograph was circulated.
8. Mr Moore and Mr Waring needed medical treatment but discharged themselves early from hospital, fearing recall to prison as they were on licence at the time. You discussed arranging discreet private medical treatment for Mr Moore at a safe location in Glasgow, out of the way, while continuing your quest to find Mr Lomas and obtain a car, guns and ammunition to harm him.
9. On 7 April 2020, Mr Waring returned to hospital for treatment and was recalled to prison. On 8 April, you commented that the situation was making you and your associates “look weak”. You sent on to Mr Moore an offer of “heavy toys”, including two AK47s and various other firearms with ammunition and a silencer. By 10 April, a gun and gun oil had been received by Mr Moore, arranged by you.
10. However, Mr Lomas was taken into custody on or about 12 April 2020. The plan was then changed: he was to be harmed in prison. But that did not happen. No harm was in fact done to him. Mr Moore was arrested on 12 April. You were arrested later, as I shall explain. Not until the start of the first trial did you admit that you were the holder of the two encrochat handles *my-morly* and *assassinscreed*.
11. In committing this crime, your culpability was at level A, high. There was significant planning and it was part of a group activity. I reject your counsel’s submission that the large majority of the messages were “self-

aggrandising puff” without any foundation. It is inconsistent with your plea of guilty, which includes admitting an intent to endanger life. I am sure the plot was deadly serious.

12. The harm done is category 2. There was a very high risk of death or serious physical harm to Mr Lomas and others, particularly those close to him who were also mentioned as intended targets. The harm is not category 1 because no shot was fired. The guideline range is therefore 11 to 17 years’ imprisonment, with a starting point of 14 years.
13. There are no relevant statutory aggravating factors. Your previous record of much less serious offending is of little relevance. There are numerous non-statutory aggravating factors. The offence was committed by a group to demonstrate and consolidate the power of your criminal gang and overshadow rival gang interests. The plan included concealing the weapon. An individual and his family and girlfriend were targeted. The weapons were not recovered.
14. As for mitigating features, you are not of previous good character. You have convictions but they are petty compared to these crimes. I have read testimonials from your partner and mother. I have read your letter to the court received at court on 3 February 2022. It expresses remorse that is said to be genuine. It comes very late, though. I do accept that there is another side to you. You are not only a ruthless gangster, you are also a good son, partner, father and fund raiser for charitable causes.
15. I take that mitigation into account, for what it is worth. The starting point will be 16 years. I have considered your counsel’s detailed submissions on credit for plea. I accept that the charges evolved over time; and that you have spent much of the period of the Covid-19 pandemic remanded in custody, in very difficult conditions.
16. I give you 5 per cent credit for your late guilty plea to the two firearms conspiracy charges. Your pleas came only after the second trial had started and only after you were driven to admit, at the start of the first trial, to being the author of the *my-morly* and *assassinscreed* encrochat handles.
17. That admission paved the way for your guilty pleas. They came very late but helped avoid a full trial, once the Crown decided it was willing not to pursue the charges of conspiracy to murder Mr Lomas. You were the first of those still preparing for trial to break ranks. The unusual course of procedural events was discussed in court yesterday and I will not repeat it here.
18. Applying a 5 per cent reduction from the starting point of 16 years, the sentence of the court for this first of your four offences would be one of 15 years 2 months. I will return to the question of totality, that is, the appropriate and proportionate overall sentence.
19. Next, you conspired with Bilal Khan and Hitesh Patel from 14 to 21 April 2020 to possess firearms and ammunition to endanger life or enable

another person to endanger life. There were three transactions. I am sure that you and your friend Mr Khan were the instigators and guiding hands in these weapons trades.

20. I reject the unrealistic suggestion that you were not involved in the first of them. It was virtually contemporaneous with the second and third trades; and it involved, as did the second and third transactions, Mr Khan, and your supplier of weaponry, Robert Brazendale, who has pleaded guilty to supplying the merchandise.
21. On 14 April 2020, you sent Mr Khan a list of lethal firearms, ammunition and accessories, with prices running to several tens of thousands of pounds. This was the list of available wares that formed the basis for the three trades. It included two AK47 sub-machine guns. The first and third transactions each included an AK47. That is no coincidence.
22. The first transaction took place the next day. An east German AK47 (Kalashnikov) in good working order was supplied with over 100 rounds of ammunition including some with soft points designed to expand on impact. Mr Brazendale received £10,000 in exchange. The gun and two ammunition clips were recovered by police from an address in Wigan on 6 June 2020.
23. The second transaction, the same day, was more complicated. It involved Mr Patel as well as you, Mr Khan and Mr Brazendale. The trade was the transfer of a Skorpion machine pistol (or sub-machine gun), an Uzi sub-machine gun and a Taurus Brasil revolver, with ammunition and accessories, all in good working order.
24. Mr Patel went to London to fetch a car for the transaction. It would have also included another AK47, but that would not fit in the concealed compartment of the car. Mr Khan offered to deliver that weapon himself. On 15 April 2020 outside a shop in Warrington, Mr Brazendale provided Mr Patel with the Skorpion, Uzi and Taurus, in return for £37,000 paid by Mr Patel, who then drove to London to deliver the firearms to an address in Brent from which they and the ammunition were later recovered.
25. The third transaction, on 15 April 2020, was the undoing of you and your co-conspirators. You agreed with Mr Khan that the AK47 which did not fit in the compartment of the car, would be stored at Firecrest Court, business premises in Warrington occupied by Mr Khan's uncle. Mr Khan advised you to stay away but you went there and were photographed (from the neck down) holding the AK47 and wearing clothes that matched those later found at your home.
26. Mr Brazendale delivered the AK47 to Mr Khan, who met you there, had the keys and controlled the alarm at Firecrest Court. Mr Khan too was photographed from the neck down holding the AK47. The photograph of you holding the AK47 was circulated to associates as a sign of your power. Mr Khan celebrated with jubilant messages boasting of the

firepower of the weapons and the prestige and thrills they brought.

27. The AK47 was recovered by police from Firecrest Court on 21 April 2020. A glove and rucksack at the scene had DNA from Mr Brazendale and Mr Khan on them. The weapon was in good condition. There was also ammunition of various kinds. Mr Khan got wind of the police search and warned you. He, you and Mr Brazendale were arrested towards the end of April 2020. You tried to dispose of an encrochat phone device just before your arrest. You were interviewed, made no comment, were bailed and rearrested on 20 October 2020.
28. The same sentencing guideline applies. The weaponry was more extensive than in the case of the conspiracy to harm Tyler Lomas. It was of fearsome destructive power. But there was no specific plot to endanger the life of a known individual, other than Mr Lomas. By mid-April 2020 he was in custody. I place the offending in the same category as the first conspiracy, with culpability at level A and harm at level 2.
29. The aggravating and, such as they are, mitigating features are much the same. The weapons were especially dangerous and lethal, with automatic firing. The ammunition included soft point expanding bullets. The plot to harm Mr Lomas shows the purposes these weapons would be likely to serve and the use to which they would, most likely, have been put had you and your accomplices not been caught.
30. By similar reasoning, I would impose a sentence after a trial of 16 years' imprisonment for the second conspiracy. After giving credit for your guilty plea of 5 per cent, the sentence, again, would be 15 years 2 months.
31. I turn next to your two drugs offences. The first is conspiring with Louis Coleman to supply cocaine, a class A drug, from late March to early June 2020. The second is conspiring with persons unknown to supply a class B drug, cannabis over the same period.
32. The period in the indictment is the period during which you conspired to supply the drugs. That is not the same as the period during which supplies were delivered. The point is important when considering DC Walker's summary of the relevant encrochat messages; and when weighing the evidence of PC Steven Reed, the Crown's drug valuation expert, against certain defence submissions.
33. The quantity of cocaine cannot be shown precisely. Mr Coleman stated that he was dealing in half kilos of cocaine at £20,000 each. Arrangements were made to de-contaminate the cocaine and divide it up. On 26 May 2020 a message indicates that you consider you are owed £32,000. Transport arrangements were in place. Supplies of cannabis came from outside this country.
34. I accept the Crown's submission and the evidence of PC Reed that there is clear evidence of bulk supply of cocaine and cannabis drugs on a commercial basis; of cocaine in amounts exceeding 5 kilos; and on

multiple occasions of cannabis weighing 10 to 20 kilos. The enterprise was clearly commercial and operated for financial gain. In my judgment, the harm in the case of the cocaine is category 1 and in the case of the cannabis is category 2.

35. You played a leading role in the enterprise, overseeing importation and transport of substantial quantities of the drugs. You clearly had substantial links to and influence over others in the supply chain. You passed cocaine down the chain to Mr Coleman, who acted under your direction and instruction. You were clearly experienced in this line of commerce.
36. For the supply of cocaine, the offence is in category 1, with a leading role in your case. The range is 12 to 16 years' imprisonment, with a starting point of 14 years. I would impose a sentence of 15 years after a trial. I give you 25 per cent credit for your plea. The sentence would therefore be 11 years 3 months.
37. For the supply of cannabis, the offence is in category 2, with a leading role in your case. The range is 4½ to 8 years' imprisonment, with a starting point of 6 years. I would impose a sentence of 6 years after a trial, which I reduce by 25 per cent to 4 years 6 months.
38. The sentences for the two firearms conspiracy offences will run concurrently with each other. The sentences for the two drugs conspiracy offences will run concurrently with each other but consecutively to the sentences for the firearms conspiracy offences.
39. The total sentence of the court would therefore be 15 years 2 months plus 11 years 3 months, making 26 years 5 months. Applying the principle of totality, I will reduce the firearms conspiracy sentences by 1 year to 14 years 2 months. I will reduce the sentence for conspiracy to supply cocaine by 5 months, to 10 years 10 months. The total sentence therefore comes to 25 years' imprisonment.
40. I have also considered the question of dangerousness in your case and in that of the other defendants to whom I am coming. You, most of all, pose a clear serious threat to your enemies and to those involved in law enforcement. But I think the public can be adequately protected by determinate sentences, together with the Serious Crime Prevention Order sought by the Crown. I will make that order.
41. Please now stand. For each of the two firearms conspiracies, the sentence is 14 years 2 months, concurrent with each other. For the conspiracy to supply cocaine, the sentence is 10 years 10 months. For the conspiracy to supply cannabis, the sentence is 4 years 6 months, to run concurrently with the sentence for conspiracy to supply cocaine. The total sentence of the court is therefore be one of 25 years' imprisonment.
42. You will serve two thirds of the sentence for the two firearms conspiracies in prison and half the sentence for the drugs offences in

prison. On your conditional release and for five years thereafter you will be restricted in the manner set out in the order: you will only be able to carry one mobile communication device; you will not be able to carry more than £1,000 in cash; and you will be restricted to one vehicle of which the details must be supplied to the National Crime Agency.

Brandon Moore

43. You are now 24 and were 23 when you committed the crime to which you have pleaded guilty: conspiracy to possess firearms and ammunition with intent to endanger life. You conspired with Umair Zaheer and Jordan Waring to procure guns and ammunition to do serious harm to Tyler Lomas.
44. On 3 April 2020, you were on licence, released from prison. You reported to Mr Zaheer that a “blender” – a nondescript car that would not attract attention – was needed. Later, at a confrontation in the Kersal area, you and Mr Waring drove at Mr Lomas and he shot you in the arm and Mr Waring in the back. One of you at least was carrying a “blade”. You reported these facts to Mr Zaheer.
45. The three of you at once planned revenge. The plan was serious. It was not bravado. It was as real as the wound to your arm. You briefly attended hospital but did not stay long for fear of arrest and a return to prison. Mr Waring was trying to track down Mr Lomas or his girlfriend until, on 7 April 2020, he returned to hospital and was taken into custody.
46. You took over the encrochat handle *remotepug* from Mr Waring. You did not return to hospital but tried to get covert and discreet medical treatment in Glasgow with Mr Zaheer’s help. The latter reported on 7 April that he was ready with “straps” (guns). You sent messages to another co-conspirator and to Mr Zaheer about the need for a car and a gun (“thing”); a gun that would not jam as two guns had previously.
47. There was then a discussion about gun oil and supply by Mr Zaheer of a “Lugar”. Mr Zaheer may not have provided this particular gun to you but I am sure that at some point you were in actual possession of a gun. Mr Waring was in custody and you were due to go to Glasgow and in need of treatment. There was a plan to provide a weapon, not just gun oil. The oil would serve no purpose without the gun.
48. You received Mr Zaheer’s list of available weaponry on 8 April and were enthusiastic about it. You had been following Mr Lomas’ girlfriend, who had fled, as you reported to Mr Zaheer. By 11 April 2020, you believed Mr Lomas was in custody, having read a story in the Manchester Evening News suggesting this. The plan then became to harm Mr Lomas in prison, with the help of associates on the inside.
49. You were arrested on 12 April 2020 and tried to smash your encrochat device at a police station, to conceal evidence of messages. You did not make any comment to police when interviewed. Shortly before the first

trial you said in a defence statement that you were a drugs courier, were not involved in the plot to harm Mr Lomas and made your encrochat statements to save face.

50. Your counsel maintains that you were not as serious about harming Mr Lomas as the words of your messages suggest. I reject that; it is inconsistent not just with the words of the messages but also with your plea of guilty. The messages show a serious determination to harm Mr Lomas. After all, he had harmed you and Mr Waring. This was not make believe. The three of you were bent on revenge.
51. The level of your culpability is at the top end of level B, medium. You played a significant role in the group activity, with some planning. I also agree that the harm done was category 2. No shot was fired, but there was a high risk of death or serious harm to Mr Lomas or those close to him. The range is therefore 8 to 12 years, with a starting point of 10 years.
52. You have a record in the magistrates' court of stealing vehicles and from vehicles, theft, burglary, drugs offences, harassment and anti-social behaviour, though nothing like this much more serious offence. The offence was committed as a group, as part of hostilities between rival gangs. No weapons were recovered. You were on licence when you committed the offence. You sought to conceal evidence by smashing your encrochat device.
53. I accept that you have had a difficult childhood, experiencing as well as doling out violence. Your younger siblings were luckier than you in not having a violent father at home. You were assaulted in a young offender institution while serving a sentence. You were 23 when you took part in the conspiracy, still a young man. I have read the letters to the court from your mother and sister and sympathise with them.
54. Nonetheless, I accept that it was intended you would fire a gun at Mr Lomas. Although you did not do so, I find your culpability such that the sentence must be at the top end of the range for category B2. I would impose a sentence after a trial of 12 years' imprisonment.
55. You pleaded guilty to the charge after the jury had been discharged in the abbreviated first trial. I will give you 5 per cent credit for your plea, in the unusual circumstances, recognising that court time and resources were saved even though the plea came very late.
56. Stand up please. The sentence of the court for this offence is 11 years and 5 months' imprisonment. You will serve two thirds of that sentence in prison and you will then be released on licence.

Jordan Waring

57. You are now 24. You were 22 when you committed the offence of conspiracy to which you have pleaded guilty. You conspired with Umair Zaheer and Brandon Moore to procure guns and ammunition as part of

a plan to do serious harm to Tyler Lomas.

58. You took part with Mr Moore on 3 April 2020 in driving a car at Mr Lomas, who shot you in the back. You were on licence after release from prison. At least one of you and Mr Moore was carrying a “blade”.
59. You then joined in the plan to avenge the shootings. Your basis of plea does not mean you can deny taking part in the plot to harm Mr Lomas. Your plea of guilty means you accept taking part in the conspiracy and doing so with the intention of endangering life. You made efforts to locate Mr Lomas and reported them regularly to Mr Zaheer.
60. Either you or Mr Moore – it matters little which of you it was - sent Mr Zaheer a photograph of Mr Lomas on 7 April 2020, which was circulated further in the attempt to find and harm him. Both you and Mr Moore were keen to track him down for that purpose. On 7 April, you returned to hospital for treatment, were arrested and returned to prison. After that you took no further part in the conspiracy.
61. I am sure you knew the plan was to obtain a gun and ammunition and that it was intended to be used on Mr Lomas, in revenge for the wounds he had inflicted on you and Mr Moore. There was a real risk of death or serious injury to Mr Lomas or people close to him.
62. Your culpability is at level B because you played a significant role in the plan to harm Mr Lomas, in particular by the efforts you made to locate him and your regular progress reports to Mr Zaheer. The harm done was in category 2 as no shot was fired, but there was a high risk of death or serious injury to Mr Lomas or those close to him.
63. You have previous convictions in the magistrates’ court for harassment, drugs, threatening with a pointed blade in a public place, battery, theft, robbery and delivering a counterfeit currency note; as well as a warning in 2014 for possessing a prohibited weapon for discharge of a noxious liquid. You were a natural candidate for gang activity of the kind I have seen in this case. This offence was committed while you were on licence.
64. On the other hand, you were only involved in the conspiracy for three to four days, unlike the others. You were young, only 22, when you took part in the conspiracy. I have read the letters of support from your mother and girlfriend and your own letter to the court. I accept that you and those close to you want you to be a better person and that you hope to become one in future and not offend further.
65. The range for category B2 is 8 to 12 years’ imprisonment, with a starting point of 10 years. After a trial, I would impose a sentence of 9 years’ imprisonment for your part in the conspiracy. I reduce the period from the normal starting point by a year, balancing the aggravating and mitigating features and in particular because your involvement in the conspiracy, though serious and determined, was short lived.
66. You pleaded guilty to this count at the start of the second trial. I am

prepared to give you 5 per cent credit for your late plea.

67. Stand up please. The sentence of the court for this offence is one of 8 years and 7 months' imprisonment. You will serve two thirds of that sentence in prison and you will then be released on licence.

Louis Coleman

68. You were aged 21 and 22 when you committed the offences of conspiracy with Umair Zaheer to supply cocaine and conspiracy with persons unknown to supply ketamine. You have pleaded guilty to those offences. You are now 23. The indictment period of the conspiracy is from late March to early June 2020 and is based on encrochat messages sent and received by you, Mr Zaheer and others.
69. You were interviewed on 13 April 2021 and made no comment. You have been in custody since 14 April 2021. You indicated willingness to plead guilty to these two counts in advance of the trial but were not arraigned on these two counts until 16 November 2021, when you pleaded guilty to them.
70. I have already considered and dealt with the quantity of cocaine involved in Mr Zaheer's case. I am satisfied that you were involved in cocaine trading in amounts putting the harm in category 2. You took part in the same supply chain, lower down the chain. You and Mr Zaheer agreed to cooperate in decontaminating a consignment.
71. I accept your counsel's submission, also accepted by the Crown, that your role was a significant one and not a leading role. The guideline range is therefore 6½ to 10 years' imprisonment, with a starting point of 8 years.
72. As for the ketamine, while the quantity cannot be precisely ascertained, I have read the statement of PC Dunbar and accept from his evidence that the harm falls into category 2, with an indicative quantity starting at 1 kilogram. PC Dunbar concludes that you were involved in obtaining 2 kilos and in trying to source 1 kilo for someone else.
73. I will treat your role as a significant one, again without opposition from the Crown. The starting point is therefore 4 years' imprisonment, with a range from 2½ to 5 years.
74. You have previous convictions for drugs (possession of cocaine), driving offences and assault. No particular non-statutory aggravating features are identified.
75. You have been in custody for the first time, in conditions made more difficult by the restrictions associated with Covid-19. I am told by your counsel that you have earned "enhanced status" and a prison job while in custody. I have read supportive references from friends and family which speak well of you.

76. For conspiring to supply cocaine, I will take a starting point of 9 years, a year above the normal one because of the concurrent sentence for the ketamine conspiracy. You are entitled to 25 per cent credit for your plea, but not the full one third credit. You made no comment when interviewed in April 2021 and did not indicate willingness to plead guilty until some time later. The sentence is therefore 6 years 9 months.
77. For the conspiracy to supply ketamine, the starting point will be 4 years, which I will reduce by 25 per cent to 3 years, to give credit for your guilty plea. That sentence will run concurrently with the sentence for the conspiracy with Mr Zaheer to supply cocaine.
78. Stand up please. The sentence of the court for conspiracy to supply cocaine is 6 years 9 months. You will serve half of that sentence in prison and you will then be released on licence. The sentence for conspiracy to supply ketamine is 3 years, to run concurrently.

Robert Brazendale

79. You are now 34. You have pleaded guilty to conspiring with Umair Zaheer to transfer prohibited weapons and ammunition. I have already described the three transactions on 14 and 15 April 2020, in which you were centrally involved; your role in those transactions; the fearsome arsenal of guns, ammunition and accessories which formed the subject of them; and the sums totalling upwards of £47,000 which you received in exchange for the merchandise you delivered.
80. You were caught after your DNA was found on the rucksack left at Firecrest Court. You were arrested on 27 April 2020 with an encrochat device on you, as well as an iPhone and lists of names and figures including Mr Zaheer's *my-morly* handle with "8,000" next to it. Packing for ammunition was found at your home address. You had a lockup facility in Warrington where £17,000 cash was found. Photographs of an AK47 had been taken there.
81. You were bailed and then released. You went to Spain, lawfully, in the summer of 2020. You were arrested in the Malaga area on 20 October 2020 and extradited back to this country about two months later. I accept that you then had some difficulty consulting with your lawyer due to coronavirus restrictions and the need for you to self-isolate.
82. You were initially charged with the more serious offence of conspiracy to possess firearms with intent to endanger life. Once that charge was replaced with the lesser charge, where the intent to endanger life is absent, you pleaded guilty to that charge on arraignment, on 26 February 2021.
83. The relevant sentencing guideline is a different one this time. I find your culpability at level A, high. You were in a leading role in the group activity as a key facilitator of the transactions. You were the instrument of physical delivery of the weaponry, while Mr Zaheer organised the transactions. You clearly worked in expectation of substantial financial

advantage. Precautions against detection were taken, namely use of the lock up facility. The planning involved encrypted messages.

84. Since the weapons were not used, I assess the harm as category 2 rather than 1; but because they were sophisticated military combat automatic weapons and the ammunition included soft point expanding bullets, at the top end of category 2. This was a medium scale enterprise, with a degree of sophistication. The guideline provides for a range of 12 to 18 years' imprisonment, with a starting point of 14 years.
85. You are not of previous good character but you have relatively minor convictions which are not relevant. I have seen the letters of support written by your former employer and three close family members. I accept that you are a skilled and competent worker and a dedicated family man.
86. I take a starting point of 15 years after a trial. You are entitled to credit for your plea. I do not give you the full one third credit advocated by your counsel. You left this country knowing that you faced a reckoning with the law. Even though you were not prohibited from travelling abroad, I cannot but conclude that you hoped to avoid that reckoning.
87. I will, however, give you 25 per cent credit for your guilty plea on arraignment for this offence. Stand up please. The sentence of the court is one of 11 years 3 months' imprisonment. You will serve half your sentence in prison and will then be released on licence. I give a direction under section 327(3) of the Sentencing Act 2020 that your time spent in prison in Spain will count towards your sentence.
88. I will make the Serious Crime Prevention Order sought, which will take effect on your release on licence. It is clearly justified. On your conditional release and for five years thereafter you will be restricted in the manner set out in the order: you will only be able to carry one mobile communication device and not more than £1,000 in cash.

Bilal Khan

89. You are now 33. You were 31 when you committed the offence to which you have pleaded guilty. You conspired with Umair Zaheer and Hitesh Patel from 14 to 21 April 2020 to possess firearms and ammunition to endanger life or enable another person to endanger life. There were three transactions. I have described them already, including your part in them.
90. You were arrested in late April 2020. After your arrest, you were interviewed on more than one occasion and made no comment. You were rearrested on 20 October 2020. You were arraigned and pleaded guilty to the charge on 18 November 2020.
91. The Crown says your role was a leading one, as much a leading role as that of Mr Zaheer. As for harm, the Crown emphasises how lethal the weapons were and what terror they could wreak, as I have already

mentioned. Although no actual harm arose, the risk to the public and to those involved in law enforcement was especially high.

92. In my judgment, your culpability was high, at the top end of level A. You played a prominent and leading part in the transactions, in particular by providing the Firecrest Court premises. You celebrated the weaponry in chilling messages after the third transaction. The harm was category 2. The sentencing range is therefore from 11 to 17 years' imprisonment, with a starting point of 14 years.
93. You have previous convictions for drugs offences which are not relevant. I have seen the testimonials from family members and others who speak well of you. I accept that you have led a productive life apart from this conspiracy offence and the drugs offences. I have read your letter to the court apologising for your criminal behaviour and for letting down your family, employer and community.
94. I will take a starting point of 16 years' imprisonment after a trial. In my judgment, you are entitled to full credit for your plea of guilty. You pleaded guilty before other defendants were arraigned, due to a request for a delay while the then outstanding issue of admissibility of encrochat evidence was considered in the courts.
95. I will therefore reduce the sentence of 16 years by one third. Stand up please. The sentence of the court for your offence is one of 10 years 8 months' imprisonment. You will serve two thirds of that sentence in prison and you will then be released on licence.
96. I will make the Serious Crime Prevention Order sought by the Crown. It is clearly justified. On your conditional release and for five years thereafter you will be restricted in the manner set out in the order: you will only be able to carry one mobile communication device and not more than £1,000 in cash.

Hitesh Patel

97. You are now 27. You were 25 when you committed your main offence of conspiring with Umair Zaheer and Bilal Khan from 14 to 21 April 2020 to possess firearms and ammunition to endanger life or enable another person to endanger life. You have pleaded guilty.
98. There were three transactions. I have described them, including your part in them. You acted as the delivery driver in the second transaction. You paid the £37,000 to Mr Brazendale. You were arrested in June 2020. Your iPhone was seized when your car was searched, but no encrypted device has been attributed to you.
99. You were interviewed on 21 October 2020, when you provided a prepared statement denying any knowledge or involvement in the offences. You pleaded guilty to the offence on re-arraignment on 12 February 2021.

100. I find your culpability is at level B, medium. Your role was less prominent than that of your two co-conspirators. You were not possessed of an encrochat handle or device. The harm is category 2, for reasons I have already given. The normal starting point is therefore 10 years' imprisonment, with a range from 8 to 12 years.
101. You have minor previous convictions for offences arising from possession of cannabis.
102. In mitigation, I have read three letters in support of you. I accept that you have led a productive life in stable employment and that you are a hard worker. It is a great pity you decided to take part in this criminal conspiracy. You have spent your time in custody constructively, completing courses and furthering your education.
103. I will take a starting point of 9 years, towards the lower end of the range. I accept that you are entitled to credit of 25 per cent for your guilty plea. The sentence for the offence of conspiracy to possess firearms with intent to endanger life is therefore 6 years 9 months.
104. You have also been committed to this court for sentence for an offence of dealing cannabis. You were observed on 25 November 2019 by police officers in the course of doing so, in an alley in Chester. You and your associates were detained in the alley and searched. A small amount of cannabis was found in your car. Cash amounting to £760 was found on your person and a further £110 in the car.
105. When interviewed, you made no comment. You pleaded guilty to the offence at the earliest opportunity. The category of harm in the relevant sentencing guideline is category 3 as this was street dealing, selling directly to users. Your role was a significant one, with an expectation of significant financial advantage and an awareness of the scale of the operation.
106. The starting point for the offence is therefore imprisonment for 1 year, with a range from 26 weeks to 3 years. There are no particular aggravating features. You have not previously been convicted of supplying drugs. I adopt the normal starting point of 1 year's imprisonment. You are entitled to the full one third credit for your plea. The sentence will be imprisonment for 8 months, to run consecutively.
107. Stand up please. For the offence of conspiring to possess firearms and ammunition with intent to endanger life or enable others to do so, the sentence is 6 years 9 months' imprisonment. For the offence of dealing cannabis the sentence is 8 months' imprisonment, to run consecutively. The total period of imprisonment is therefore 7 years 5 months. You will serve half of that period in prison and the rest on licence.

Conclusion

108. Those are the sentences of the court. Any statutory charges will be applied administratively. I have made an order setting a timetable for

proceedings under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002. There will be an appropriate order for forfeiture and destruction of items seized in the course of the investigations.

109. I will end by repeating the total sentence of imprisonment for each of the seven defendants, as follows:

- Umair Zaheer: 25 years;
- Brandon Moore: 11 years 5 months;
- Jordan Waring: 8 years 7 months;
- Louis Coleman: 6 years 9 months;
- Robert Brazendale: 11 years 3 months;
- Bilal Khan: 10 years 8 months; and
- Hitesh Patel: 7 years 5 months.