



IN THE CENTRAL CRIMINAL COURT

R v David Fuller

Sentencing Remarks

1. In June and November 1987 you murdered two vibrant young women Wendy Knell and Caroline Pierce in Tunbridge Wells, Kent. Those were sexually motivated killings. Despite an extensive and well publicised investigation, you were not identified. Indeed, you escaped detection until a 2019 scientific case review re-examined the DNA findings from the murder scenes. Following a vast deployment of police staff nationwide, to visit nearly 100 people and take samples to compare with those found 32 years earlier, the police arrived at your front door. A sample taken from you produced a DNA profile which matched that from the murders exactly. You were arrested on 3 December 2020. On 4 November 2021 you pleaded guilty to the murders, four days into your trial.
2. During the intervening forty plus years you had obtained work in maintenance. Firstly, at the Kent and Sussex Hospital where you were employed from January 1989 until July 2011. You then obtained the position of a maintenance supervisor at Pembury Hospital and you worked there until your arrest. I have no doubt you were wary of the risk of attempting to commit sexual offences which might be detected given the atmosphere of public alertness in the Tunbridge Wells area, after what had become known as the 'Bed-sit murders'. These employments gave you access to areas which are ordinarily out of bounds to the public; in particular, the mortuaries of both hospitals. You would pass through security by using your employee swipe card, when the mortuary staff had gone home from work.
3. Once inside the mortuary, hidden from CCTV surveillance, you were free to systematically and relentlessly sexually abuse the bodies of at least 101 dead women and girls. The youngest was aged 9, the oldest had reached 100 years before her death. Some were abused very shortly after they died. Many shortly before or after loved ones had been to see them. You photographed and filmed the acts you carried out using your own digital camera before transferring the images onto computer hard drives which you concealed at home. Evidence of

your offending has been discovered dating back, to 2005, and as recently, as within a week of your arrest. You were never disturbed or challenged in all those years, but you were prepared in case that happened, carrying items of maintenance equipment for subterfuge to ensure you had a ready explanation for your presence in those parts of the hospital out of hours.

4. When your house was searched meticulously after your arrest in December 2020, four portable hard-drives were found in a box attached to the rear of a chest of drawers in a wardrobe. Elsewhere, explicit printed images of dead women being sexually abused by you were found hidden within the office and the wardrobe. It is clear from this evidence that over the course of many years, you were not only obsessively preserving the images of your abuse, you exhaustively catalogued and indexed them. To do so, you copied images of the mortuary logbook showing the names and ages of those brought into the mortuary. These logbook photographs were taken in 2018 rather than at the time of earlier abuse and you used the information found there in your complex filing system. Although you denied it, there is evidence that you did research into your victims and potential victims including looking at social media accounts they had.
5. Once you had captured your sexual abuse you viewed the images, tried to manipulate the videos and, on occasion, made large numbers of stills from the videos. One hard drive alone contained over 800,000 images and 504 videos. It took nine officers five months to work through the property seized from your home. The digital material included that found on 1300 CDs, 2,200 floppy discs, 30 mobiles phones, 34,000 photoprints, negatives, slides and camera film roles. The contents of the Hard drives equated to 23 terabytes of digital material. It took six officers working on four specially purchased high powered machines 12 months to process 95% of the material.
6. Your internet search history told the story of a man obsessed with rape and murder and you viewed images of sexually violent offending against women and girls. One web link marked as an internet explorer favourite of yours had a URL including the words "...torture_murder_snuff_video". The task accomplished by the police officers and civilian employees who searched and assessed this material is colossal. Indeed the extensive team-work of forces around the country as well as Kent Constabulary throughout this investigation should be acknowledged and praised.

7. On 8 October 2021 you pleaded guilty to fifty-one offences relating to seventy eight victims who had been identified by that time. These consisted of thirty-three charges of sexual penetration of a corpse, a charge of voyeurism and a variety of offences concerning the taking, making or possession of indecent images of children and extreme pornographic images.
8. On 15 December, almost exactly a year ago, you were sentenced to a whole life order in respect of the murders which the court determined were premeditated and involved sexual conduct shortly before or after the killing. Because of the extent of evidence of sexual conduct before the court I also concluded that the primary spur for your offending was a deep-seated necromania exhibited in necrophilia.
9. For the 51 sexual offences against the dead you were sentenced to a total of 12 years concurrent to the whole life term. Those concurrent sentences will not add to your whole life order, how could they, but they recognise each individual person against whom you have been discovered to have offended.
10. Since then a further thirteen of your victims have been identified. Ten more remain unidentified and will remain so. On 4 October this year you were charged with sixteen offences. These are twelve counts of sexual penetration of a corpse contrary to section 70(1) of the Sexual Offences Act 2003 and four offences of possession of an extreme pornographic image contrary to section 63(1) of the Criminal Justice and Immigration Act 2008. You entered guilty pleas to all of those counts on 3 November 2022 and I must now sentence you.
11. These charges relate to women aged between 45 and 92 at the time of their deaths. Some of the charges concern women who cannot be identified. A number are group offences in which up to seven victims are included in a single count. You violated the bodies of all these women while many were still wearing medical equipment from the treatment they had received from doctors trying to save their lives, such a defibrillation pads, catheters and cannulas.
12. I will describe the detail of your offending in brief and composite terms. You filmed and photographed your penis in the mouths, anuses and vaginas of the dead. You penetrated the bodies with your fingers and tongue. You sucked the breasts of some victims and masturbated while assaulting them. You carried out repeated offences against victims on the same occasion and on multiple

successive days. Some you manhandled across a doorway about 12 inches from the floor, others you placed on the floor, on a chair and in different positions. Some victims you sat astride. One woman's body received an injury to her nose as you assaulted her.

13. The last count I have to deal with you for concerns extreme pornographic images which were grossly offensive, disgusting or otherwise of an obscene character and portrayed in an explicit and realistic way acts which involved sexual interference with seven female human corpses. One of those seven women was the subject of this offending on 30 November 2020, days before your arrest for the two murders from 1987.
14. The systematic nature of the way you had recorded your offending can be illustrated by reference to one portable hard drive. Exhibit KH/83 contained three folders; "Necrolord", "Register" and "Deadly". Some of the content could not be accessed. Within the folder "Deadly" was a sub-folder titled "Deadliest". That also contained sub-folders. One of the sub-sub-folders titled "00 BEST YET" contained a further 36 folder. Of these 27 were titled using a number, then a woman's name and then a further number. Within these folders you stored images of you sexually interfering with the corpses of women and girls. It is by looking at such images, comparing the creation dates and other records with the mortuary log book and other evidence, that the identities of the 91 named victims were found.
15. It would be wrong to name any victim and it is unnecessary to do so. Among those you abused were women who had led fulfilling and rich lives. They were the best. One had flown across the Atlantic in a propeller driven airplane via Iceland, alone. Another was a talented skier. One had worked at Bletchley Park during World War II. Many had long and happy marriages. A number had worked hard in professions such as teaching or in the NHS, caring for others and looking after the interests of their students, clients and patients. All had families that they nurtured and loved. Some spent the last part of their lives in suffering, whether through disease or old age. But they didn't lose their dignity until you decided to take it from them.
16. Your victims are not all among the dead. They fill this court room and other places which are connected to this court by video link. The court has heard of the impact on these families. When members of Kent Police's family

engagement team visited to break the news it was incomprehensible to them. How could their loved ones be so violated in a place which was meant to care for them and keep them in peace? Some have the comfort of faith, others not even that. They describe being heart-broken by the immorality of your abhorrent acts. You have sullied and stolen fond memories. There is the inconsolable guilt of not being able to protect the vulnerable, of their own and their family's damaged mental health, the impossibility of un-knowing what they have been told happened, of un-seeing the images they have imagined. It has shaken their sense of being able to trust the world and trust hospitals. Some of them have worked in the very hospitals involved.

17. Most have not shared the news with anyone but the closest family. Having to keep the secret is another unsought responsibility. They have been able to unburden themselves to this court. They feel that they are mourning their wives, mothers, grandmothers, aunts, sisters, daughters and nieces all over again, often many years after their deaths. They have been left in a dark place. They have expressed the outrage and revulsion that the women you abused would have felt at your objectification of them and they give voice to them. Quite understandably they express feelings of shame even though they know they are not the ones at fault. Despite this they have shone a light into court today by describing in loving words the special people they lost.
18. They believe the pain is irradicable, that it will never go, and that you have stolen the happy memories they have. The court has listened carefully to and read every single word of these statements. If there is any benefit to the transparency of this sentencing hearing for which you have had to come to court and witness, in public, their distress, may it be of some comfort to each person who has spoken or written that they have been able to pay tribute to their precious loved ones and give them the dignity of their own memories in life. If it is at all possible, I hope that the end of this sentencing process will strengthen them and allow them to leave you here, while they go on with their lives. That they can banish the shadow you have cast, let it go, and return to the good times and the purer memories of the person they knew and lost.
19. There is a settled process by which the court reaches sentence. I must assess the degree of your responsibility, establish the harm caused and consider aggravating and mitigating features. There is no sentencing guideline for sexual

penetration of a corpse or for possessing extreme pornography. The maximum sentence for both offences is 2 years imprisonment.

20. In my judgment each of these offences was of high culpability, all of them of the highest possible blameworthiness. The offences committed in the mortuaries involved an astonishing breach of trust and invasion of privacy which was repeated so much that it became habitual. The dead bodies of women were used for your sexual gratification, each was recorded and some were further manipulated when reduced to digital images. The mortuary offences were also of the highest category of harm as the impact statements the court has heard have testified. You had no regard for the dignity of the dead. Women who had recently died, were attacked at a time when they were utterly alone and unable to resist or report your exploitation. As you well knew, those who cared for them were mourning their loss at the very time you were abusing them.
21. There are numerous aggravating features obvious in the description of what you did. The location, the repetition, the abuse of position, the utter degradation of those recently living human beings and in particular the multiplicity of victims. There is no mitigation. I have seen no evidence of genuine remorse as opposed to hollow regret now you are under public scrutiny.
22. A number of sentences are to be made concurrent, and I have paid careful attention to ensure the sentence overall complies with the Totality Guideline provided by the Sentencing Council. The law obliges me to allow a quarter reduction for the guilty pleas. Although the sentence I pass now will be concurrent to the whole life order, obviously it cannot be otherwise, it is right to pass separate sentences for each offence so as to acknowledge the offences against each individual woman.
23. Had these offences come before me for sentence individually, each sentence would have been much more severe. Had I been sentencing for these sixteen offences on 15 December last year the total sentence for the sexual offending would have been greater than 12 years imprisonment concurrent to the whole life order. The sentences today must be proportionate to those passed last year because the offending had all been discovered by then but the victims not identified and the offending is all part of the same course of conduct over the same period of time.

24. And who are you David Fuller? You are 68 years old. In 1973 and 1976 you were convicted of dozens of burglaries committed by climbing into homes through windows. You spent the subsequent years living a lie, the façade of a mild and ordinary life, while in seclusion you committed revolting and outrageous acts of the deepest darkness. You have a family who you deceived over all those years.
25. As I told you last year the depravity of what you did, to those you killed and those you defiled after death, reveals that your conscience is seared. It is almost impossible to believe that a single man can cause the misery, to so many, that you have done. But you did it and in consequence you are paying the price that human justice can exact, the rest of your mortal life in prison.
26. I order forfeiture and destruction of the physical evidence of your offending which has been listed on a schedule consisting of 27 exhibits made up of numerous computer drives, discs and images.
27. On counts 1-10 which reflect the sexual penetration of individual women the sentence is 4 months imprisonment on each consecutive. On count 11 which is a collective count for the filming and photographing of the victims in counts 1-10 the sentence is 4 months concurrent. On count 12, a collective count covering the photographing and videoing of victims against whom no penetration can be proved, the sentence is 3 months concurrent. On counts 13 and 14 which concern sexual penetration of three victims who remain unidentified the sentence is 4 months consecutive on each count. On counts 15 and 16 which both concern photographing and videoing of unidentified victims the sentence is 4 months concurrent.
28. The total sentence imposed today is one of 4 years imprisonment. It will be served consecutive to the sentence of 12 years imposed for sexual offences in December 2021 and concurrent to the whole life order. You will remain in prison until your death.

Mrs Justice Cheema-Grubb

7 December 2022