

R. v. KUSAI AL-JUNDI AND MOHAMED EL-ABBOUD**SENTENCING REMARKS**

1. On Thursday 19th January 2023, you were convicted by the jury of the murder of Louise Kam and I must now sentence the two of you.
2. From the time you were first put in touch with Louise Kam earlier in 2021, Al-Jundi you told her lie after lie. You claimed to be a person of means with the backing of a multimillionaire girlfriend who was going to fund the acquisition of her properties at a level in excess of the market value, so that Louise could provide homes for her two sons and you take your share. In fact you had no assets of your own and no rich girlfriend. You told lies to many others connected to Louise and wheedled your way into acquiring possession of two cars from another person you befriended and deceived, Anna Reich. Anna Reich described you as something of a ‘Walter Mitty’.
3. Al-Jundi you sought to persuade Louise Kam to enter into an arrangement whereby the properties would be gifted to you, ostensibly as this would avoid stamp duty and other duties, but in fact because this would result in you having legal ownership of them without having to pay anything.
4. Over the weeks that followed Al-Jundi you instructed, or sought to instruct, a number of different solicitors. They either refused to act, or advised that Louise Kam would need separate legal representation, as the proposed transaction clearly carried a high level of risk for her. Through your cynical deception it was Louise Kam who ended up paying for those legal services through which you hoped to defraud her.

5. Louise Kam's bank ultimately refused to make further transfers to you Al-Jundi because they suspected fraud: such was your dishonesty that you caused Louise Kam to lie to her bank and mortgage provider in order that you could further profit from her.
6. By the middle of July 2021 Al-Jundi you had secured a power of attorney document signed by Louise Kam, and signed TR1 Transfer Forms for both properties.
7. On the material presented at trial I am satisfied that by 26th July 2021, Al-Jundi you had resolved to kill Louise Kam. Your plans had crystallised at least a few days before. On 24th July 2021, you bought an expensive fireplace for 16 Gallants Farm Road – a clear indication that you were treating the property as your own; and on the following day you instructed your solicitor to prepare a document which would purport to prove that Louise Kam had entered into a contract and had been paid. On that same day you told your mother that Louise Kam was dying of cancer and that you were to be left her assets in her will. It may well be that your plan was to pretend, as you subsequently claimed, that Louise Kam had travelled to China. Armed with the power of attorney and transfer forms you may well have considered that, in her absence you would have, or could easily secure, legal ownership of her properties. You plainly told El-Abboud that you would make a significant amount of money from Louise Kam's death, and that a share of that money was to be El-Abboud's reward for killing her.
8. El-Abboud you also played a role in the fraudulent activity before 26th July. You moved into the house in Gallants Farm Road and treated it as your own. Within hours of killing Louise Kam, you sold her BMW car for cash and then spent some of the proceeds on new clothes. In TikTok videos you posted you mocked the wealth of Louise Kam and showed you were enjoying the trappings of what you and Al-Jundi had achieved by your deceit.
9. On the day that Louise Kam was killed, she had driven to her house at 16 Gallants Farm Road expecting to meet with a solicitor and the parties to the transfer of her properties. Although she had been advised and warned by her family and others not to trust you, or to engage in the process of dealing with her property in the way she appeared to be doing, it seems she mistakenly believed, despite these warnings, that all was above board.
10. She spoke to her close friend Kami Rohany at 3:02pm that afternoon. 11 minutes later at 3:13pm, Al-Jundi you left Gallants Farm Road and went with a girlfriend Maria Amariucaí, to seek to set up an alibi for the time of Louise's killing. Maria is someone else you deceived. You expressed your love for her and yet told her nothing of your wife and three children.

11. Louise Kam was killed at Gallants Farm Road. The cord of a hair dryer was used as a ligature to strangle her. As the post-mortem examination revealed there would have been a violent struggle when Louise was attacked. Other injuries were noted to her body and it is likely she would have been killed within some 30 to 40 seconds of the attack starting and the ligature used. Her dead body was then left at 16 Gallants Farm Road. Having killed Louise, El-Abboud you moved her car from the driveway and parked it on a side street out of view. As I have mentioned, Al-Jundi you went about seeking to provide yourself with an alibi for the time of the murder, and El-Abboud you drove Maria back to her home in Coventry before returning to London.
12. In the course of driving Maria to her home, El-Abboud you told her you had killed Louise Kam. She did not take you seriously, but you said you had grabbed her from behind. The account you gave to Maria was consistent with the way Louise was killed. You told her Al-Jundi had asked you to do it as the woman owed him £2 million and Al-Jundi had promised to share the money with you. You claimed to be scared of Al-Jundi as you were dependent upon him for a job and a place to live.
13. Later that day and into the early hours of the next day the two of you wrapped Louise's body in plastic bags and a duvet, before putting the body in to a wheelie bin at 16 Gallants Farm Road and covering it with garden rubbish.
14. Later on 27th July the two of you orchestrated the move of that wheelie bin from 16 Gallants Farm Road to 16 Wood End Road in Harrow where it was placed with other wheelie bins, also with the number 16 marked on them, and other rubbish so as to seek to cover up what you had done and in the hope, no doubt, that the contents of the wheelie bin would be end up at a local authority rubbish site and the atrocity you had committed would not be traced back to you.
15. After you killed had Louse, you took her mobile phone and bank cards. Messages were sent from her phone purporting to be from her to her family and close friends. In those messages you sought to deceive those who loved and cared for Louise as to her true whereabouts and what it was that you had done to her. El-Abboud when you were arrested in connection with Louise's disappearance you claimed to be helping the police, but told them nothing of what had actually happened.
16. Al-Jundi you told more lies to a solicitor about Louise – again in an effort to give yourself a cover story. You claimed that Louise had stolen money from you.

17. Al-Jundi you did not give evidence in the trial. Your case was that in effect, El-Abboud was the killer. El-Abboud, when you gave evidence in the trial you sought to blame Al-Jundi. While giving evidence you were shown to have lied comprehensively as to what you had done, what you knew and what had actually taken place. The two of you have rightly been convicted on compelling evidence.
18. In moving impact statements from Louise's son Gregory and from Kami Rohany it is clear how much Louise was loved and admired by her family and friends. A woman of 71 who loved and cared for her sons, Richard and Gregory, suffered brutal injuries at your hands and then with complete disregard you sought to dispose of her remains.
19. Al-Jundi you are aged 25. There are no previous convictions recorded against you. El-Abboud, you are 28. There are only minor matters recorded against you and I propose to ignore those for the purpose of sentence.
20. In relation to murder the only sentence that can be passed on you is one of life imprisonment, and that is the sentence I will pass. The issue for this Court is the minimum term that you will each serve before you are first considered for release. When it comes to the minimum term that you will serve, I make it plain that I am not ordering that you are to be released at the end of it. That will be a matter for the Parole Board. Only when the minimum term has been served can the Parole Board decide whether it is safe to release you. If the board does release you then you will remain on licence and liable to recall for the rest of your life.
21. I am grateful to all for the helpful sentencing notes that have been provided.
22. Having considered the provisions of schedule 21 of the Sentencing Act 2020, this case has an initial start point for the minimum term of 30 years on the basis that this was a murder done for gain. As I have indicated, the two of you had sought to defraud Louise out of her house, flats and commercial properties. Figures set out in texts and others messages speak of several millions.
23. Having identified 30 years as the appropriate initial start point for the minimum term, there are several aggravating factors to be considered in this case. Firstly, this was an attack by you that was extensively planned and premeditated: there was a significant degree of planning over a lengthy period. The messages that were uncovered in the investigation show the way in which you took advantage of her. I note also that the attack takes place in the home of Louise and her vulnerability. There were extensive efforts after the killing to conceal her body. Not only did you engage in efforts to physically conceal her body and what you had

done, you also sent many, many messages to her family and closest friends purporting to be from Louise giving the impression she was alive and well and had disappeared with money that was yours. I need to be careful to avoid any double-counting as the start point is one of 30 years. However, the features I have identified together do lead to a significant uplift in the appropriate minimum term.

24. In terms of mitigating features in this case there are none. In my judgment this is a case with a clear intention to kill, and the only matter to pay some regard to is age and the lack of any convictions or having only minor convictions recorded against you, and in your case Al-Jundi, the impact on your wife and the children she will be left to bring up.
25. El-Abboud, although it might be said that Al-Jundi played the lead role in the long-running defrauding of Louise, I draw no distinction on the sentences to be passed on the two of you. The evidence clearly shows what you did and did willingly and that you along with Al-Jundi did what you did out of greed.
26. In my judgment, and taking into account all the aggravating and mitigating factors I have identified, the appropriate minimum term is one of 35 years. The days on remand between arrest and now, which I am told number 549 days in each of your cases, will count towards that sentence and so the minimum term will be 35 years less the 549 days. The sentence here is one of life imprisonment with a minimum term of 35 years less 549 days.
27. As the statutory surcharge applies in this case the appropriate order will apply and can be drawn up.

Recorder of London
His Honour Judge Mark Lucraft KC
Central Criminal Court,
LONDON EC4M 7EH
February 1st 2023.

28. Before leaving this case, I should firstly pay tribute to those police officers involved in this through, detailed and highly efficient investigation. I appreciate this has very much been a team effort, but I would wish to acknowledge in particular the work of DI Robert Dodds. He was the officer in the case and oversaw the investigation and identified lines of enquiry. DC Dan Mulleri who was responsible the digital evidence: analysis of the device downloads, the phone call and cell site data, and the production of the Timeline document. DC Sophie Dagleish, the CCTV Officer: conducted and oversaw the trawl of the relevant areas for cameras, seizing and viewing the footage, producing over 200 ‘clips’ or relevant evidence, and oversaw the production of the event and scene graphics. DC Laura Guise who dealt with Witness Co-ordination: management of the multiple civilian witnesses required at various stages to attend trial, along with the longer term management of key witnesses including Maria Amariuca, Anna Reich and Amjad Salfiti. DS Isla Edwards, the Disclosure Officer: in the context of an investigation which gathered a very significant volume of background material and DC David Musselwhite: Family Liaison Officer, and responsible for the management of key witness Kami Rohany.
29. In this trial each defendant had the services of an interpreter so that they can follow proceedings in their native language.
30. I would wish to express particular thanks to Mr Jonas. He has been in this courtroom for much of the last 4 months covering this trial and also the one before it. That was also a murder trial but involved the partial defence of manslaughter by reason of diminished responsibility. As with this trial the defendant gave evidence over a number of days and there was also complex mental health evidence.
31. The role of a court interpreter is not just with language skills, but in many other ways too. It has been particularly obvious to me that not only is Mr Jonas a highly proficient linguist, but he is someone who understands the process of a trial. I know that what is seen in court is just a part of the role of a court interpreter. From all I have seen, and from what I know from those responsible for representing Mohamed El-Abboud Mr Jonas, you are someone with not just the ability to provide continuous contemporaneous translation, but also someone equipped with the emotional intelligence and intellectual understanding to bring to your work. Counsel for the defendant have made clear to me that their view is that Mr Jonas you are an excellent interpreter with a complete understanding of the role. My sincere thanks to you. I will make sure a copy of these remarks are provided to you.