



JUDICIARY OF
ENGLAND AND WALES

IN THE CROWN COURT AT COVENTRY

REX

-V-

**TYRONE HOLLYWOOD, LEIGHTON WILLIAMS, RUSHARN WILLIAMS-REID
and AARON COATES**

Sentencing Remarks

1. Exactly a year ago today, at around 8pm on 18 April 2023, first Tyrone Hollywood (aged 16) and then Leighton Williams (aged 28), confronted Kelvin Ward a 50 year old father, with machetes and killed him. Video footage played to the jury captured how a powerful, stolen Ford Kuga car bearing false plates and driven by Tyrone Hollywood had aggressively chased and repeatedly rammed the smaller vehicle in which Kelvin was being carried by his son Dylan Ward McKenzie. The pursuit continued for half a mile, before the car's airbags were activated, forcing it off a busy road in Castle Bromwich, Birmingham. Once the cars came to a halt Hollywood, Williams and another occupant of the stolen car, Rusharn Williams-Reid (aged 17) got out and pursued Dylan. It is no exaggeration to say he was running for his life. Williams and Williams-Reid were both armed with blades described variously as long machetes or "zombie-knives".
2. As they sped along wildly, door-bell recorded footage caught them calling out, "Oi don't leave him fam...Get him fuckin' now, keep chasing him" Dylan escaped with his life because he came across someone who let him ride on his electric bike and flee. Either at this point or earlier when he could not keep up with the others Tyrone Hollywood, who was not armed when he left the car, returned towards the fourth occupant of his car, the defendant Aaron Coates (also aged 17) who was standing not far from where the cars had been left. Kelvin Ward had been stuck when the airbags inflated but he freed himself and drove the defendant's stolen car towards where Hollywood and Coates were. This was the direction in which those chasing his son had gone and he was, no doubt, hoping the catch them and rescue him. But he must have seen Tyrone Hollywood. He may have thought he was returning because he had

already managed to attack Dylan. The car struck the kerb by railings in the centre of the road where Hollywood was. It missed Tyrone Hollywood but crashed.

3. Kelvin Ward got out of the car. Aaron Coates handed Tyrone Hollywood a long machete with which Hollywood went after Mr Ward. Kelvin Ward was unarmed and alone. He presented no threat to either of the defendants. Hollywood jumped over the railings in pursuit. He made several swipes at Mr Ward, intending to strike him. Mr Ward tried desperately to evade him, moving around in the road and around a pedestrian crossing. In anguish he pleaded unsuccessfully to be let into a car being driven by a member of the public. While Hollywood was engaged in this ruthless attack on a clearly frightened man, Leighton Williams returned from the failed attempt to kill Dylan and joined in the attack. Shouting was heard. They were saying, "Kill him, everyone kill him...Right and again. And again. And again. Yeah" The court is sure that Leighton Williams struck the single brutal blow with his machete which penetrated Mr Ward's work-clothing and passed through to Mr Ward's heart causing catastrophic bleeding. He soon fell to the floor whereupon Hollywood stood over him, taunting the dying man and thrusting his machete towards him.
4. All the defendants, Williams-Reid also having returned by now, ran off and escaped in a car which picked them up at a rendezvous point a few streets away.
5. This sentencing hearing follows a trial in which all four were convicted by the jury. The court has in mind the evidence at the trial, including the accounts and presentation of Williams and Coates who chose to go into the witness box. Since conviction the court has been provided with pre-sentence reports on all defendants except Leighton Williams who did not attend his interview with a probation officer. Some of the defendants' families have written to the court. A Consultant Clinical Psychologist's report dated in September 2023 and an intermediary's report by Miss Millington in August 2023 both on Tyrone Hollywood, and an intermediary's report on Aaron Coates by Miss Cager dated in August 2023 are relied on. All that material has been read and absorbed. The pleas in mitigation, presented effectively by counsel who have prepared sentencing notes and said all that they could, have been taken into account. These sentencing remarks will be provided in writing as soon as they have been delivered so that all those concerned in the case, or reading about it in the future, will understand how the court reached the conclusions that it has.
6. It took just one actual stab wound to kill Kelvin Ward. No one would die by a knife in this way if knives were not carried about unlawfully on the streets of our cities. The law is that young and older men, including all of the defendants, who carry knives or associate deliberately with those who do, will go to prison for long terms if the knives are used to kill. There are no second chances when someone is stabbed to death, not for them and not for the perpetrators.
7. What happened on the evening of 18 April 2023 was not spontaneous violence between strangers. The home Mr Ward shared with his partner Tammy McMillan and their son Dylan Ward McKenzie (now 20) was the target of attacks on the three nights before 18 April 2023. Their cars were set on fire and the house damaged including windows broken. The scale of reckless aggression and intimidation was recorded on door-bell and other footage. The assailants deployed large zombie-type

knives, bricks and fire. A firearm was discharged. The target sought was Dylan Ward McKenzie. No one was injured. Each of the defendants were involved in those attacks, though not necessarily on each night. The prosecution's case was that at that time a group of largely young men had decided to seek revenge for damage they believed Dylan had caused at the home of Aaron Coates. Although the full picture beyond those events has not emerged in the evidence it is tolerably clear that all the events of April 2023 were the latest in a series of violent outbursts between Tyrone Hollywood, Aaron Coates and their associates on one side, and Dylan Ward McKenzie on the other. More sadly still, these three boys had once been friends.

8. On one of the night-time attacks, the last one, the house was broken into by the back door. Dylan had retreated upstairs with a number of friends, ready for whoever came in, and they were unable to get to him.
9. Kelvin Ward and his partner, Tammy McMillan had moved out of the damaged and insecure house. On 18 April, after work he was returning a friend's car which he had borrowed and his son Dylan went with him to drive him home afterwards. It was on their way back that they stopped at a fast food outlet to buy a meal and were spotted by the four defendants out together, driving in the stolen car which Hollywood and Coates had taken possession of hours earlier. They were armed and had balaclavas.
10. Hollywood rammed Dylan Ward McKenzie's car but Dylan managed to manoeuvre the car away and so the high speed pursuit began, with the fatal consequences described. This was a planned attack, the defendants were not randomly driving around, they were prepared to use lethal violence should they come across Dylan Ward McKenzie.

Impact statements

11. Kelvin Ward was a deeply loved and appreciated human being. His sudden, violent death on a street, in front of traffic and people looking out of their windows was an outrage and it will never be forgotten by those who knew him. I have read, in full, nine victim personal statements from his family and a friend, expressing in powerful personal language how much the loss of Mr Ward from their lives has shocked and hurt them. He worked hard to provide for his family and they face a life-long absence at every important event they have in the future. In particular Dylan Ward McKenzie will have to live with the psychological consequences of the traumatic experience of being with his father as he lay dying on the road, with what is sometime called survivor's guilt and though he is not responsible for the actions of these defendants he will, no doubt, feel regret for any part he played in the way these events unfolded. I take what I have read into account but it should be clear that the harm caused by any offence that results in a death is immeasurable. Mr Ward's life was priceless. The sentences passed today are not, in anyway, a measure of the value of the life of the victim.

Verdicts

12. Rusharn Williams-Reid is to be sentenced for the conspiracy to murder, as are all defendants. Aaron Coates was acquitted of murder but convicted of manslaughter. Tyrone Hollywood is to be sentenced for murder on the basis that at the time

Leighton Williams stabbed Kelvin Ward he intended that Mr Ward be killed or caused really serious harm. Leighton Williams will be sentenced as the principal who caused the death. The court is urged, in light of the fact that there was evidence of only one wound and in view of the way that the prosecution put this case to the jury, namely that the attack on Kelvin Ward was spontaneous and not part of the conspiracy to kill his son, to find mitigation in an intention to cause serious harm less than death but the court is sure to the criminal standard of proof that at the time he was struck, both these defendants intended to kill Kelvin Ward. The totality of the evidence including the number of attempts made to strike him, the single stab wound which was inflicted with severe force as the pathologist found and the use of fearsome long blades all support that conclusion.

Approach to sentencing

13. The court has been referred to a broad range of materials and guidance which have all been considered in determining sentence. Of particular relevance are the Sentencing Act 2020 particularly ss. 259, 272 and 274 (life sentences for those under 18 at the time of conviction), s322 and Schedule 21 (mandatory life sentences for murder), The Sentencing Council Guideline for Sentencing Children and Young People, the Unlawful Act Manslaughter Guideline, The Attempted Murder Guideline, The General Guideline: Overarching Principles, Totality and the guideline for Sentencing Offenders with mental disorders, developmental disorders or neurological impairments. From time to time in these sentencing remarks direct reference is made to aspects of that material. I have applied relevant sentencing guidelines, but flexibly so as to achieve a just outcome.
14. Having heard the trial I am in a position to assess your individual culpability, the extent to which you are to blame for what happened on 18 April, and to make an assessment about the extent to which, at this point in time, you pose a serious danger to the public in the future.
15. Three of you are still teenagers, your brains and personalities are not fully mature. The considerations in your case are different to those that apply to Leighton Williams. The imposition of substantial terms of detention will not arrest your development but it means you will reach maturity in restricted and unnatural circumstances. Paragraph 1.5 of the Sentencing Council Guideline for Sentencing Children and Young People explains that immaturity, such as yours, can impact on decision making, risk taking behaviour and whether you fully understood the impact of your actions on others. Although there are differences between you, and differences in the degree to which this applies I am sure that each of the three of you behaved as you did through a combination of deliberate malice, inexperience, emotional volatility, personal limitations and negative influences. Those influences include other people, of your age and older, who glamorize the carrying of frightening knives or pretend that carrying a knife is the way to protect yourself. The court does not under-estimate the difficulty of growing up in a sub-culture where machetes and other knives are carried routinely. But under the law everyone is responsible for themselves.

16. With sad frequency trials such as this one expose the dangers of knife carrying and the necessarily severe sentences that must follow offences such as these. But the message seems not to get through to young men like the three of you. The false teachers who say you should carry knives are not in the dock now, you are.
17. Two of you reached the age of 18 before you were convicted but that does not mean the court should assume you have achieved even an average 18 year old's degree of maturity. Maturity is not simply a matter of chronological age. The Guideline applies to those under 18 but much of it's content is helpful when dealing with those just above that age. Accordingly, I have taken into account all the information available about your stages of development in the context of the evidence, together with suitably nuanced consideration of the Youth Guideline which draws attention to the degree of planning, the level of force used (if any), the extent to which the offender was aware of the possible consequences of their actions, the inherent vulnerability of young people compared to mature adults, any mental health or learning disabilities, emotional and developmental age and external factors which may have affected your behaviour. Foolish, adolescent conduct can be as dangerous as determined adult actions.
18. None of you can take back what you have done but you are all at a cross-roads. There must be every chance that, if you commit yourselves to resist the negative influences you are exposed to in custody, you can grow into men who will be a credit to your families even as you stand here today, wholly disgraced. As the months and years go by, the way you respond to your sentences is the power that all four of you have left to you, to be better than your actions in April last year.

Sentences

19. The victim surcharge applies in each defendant's case and is imposed.
20. **Rusharn Williams-Reid** you must be sentenced for conspiracy to murder. You were aged 17 in April last year and 18 by the time you were convicted. You refused to discuss the case with the probation officer, you didn't give evidence and you have put forward no explanation for your involvement. At trial your defence was that you had left your phone in the Kuga car driven by Tyrone Hollywood and it was someone else that joined the pursuit of Dylan Ward McKenzie, not you.
21. You have one previous conditional caution from 2016 which is not relevant given your age at the time. Your mother, aunts, grandmother and step-father have written to the court expressing their condolences to Mr Ward's family and describing their distress and sense of failure in finding you in this situation. They should know that it is not their fault; the blame is entirely yours. You are able, you have been employed successfully in the past and you were aiming to become a civil engineer. Character references from a wide range of other people have been provided. They speak highly of you and recall your "strong people skills and [a] talent for communication", you have been described as family orientated, someone who "deeply cares for and prioritises the well-being of his loved ones, especially his autistic sister". At an after-school club you helped with your interactions with the children are said to "marked by patience, kindness and empathy." It is clear that until the case before this court

you were a positive role model. You are a young man with potential and it is a great shame that you chose to throw that away.

22. Contrary to the case put forward on your behalf I have no doubt you were involved in at least one of the night-time attacks on 2 Chelmsley Avenue because your phone was dropped there and picked up by the police. Your other phone was in the Kuga and it made an automated call to the emergency services after the Kuga was crashed by Kelvin Ward. It was then taken away from the damaged Kuga while the attackers were escaping. The jury was sure you were with your phone.
23. What is clear is that this was not your quarrel. Dylan Ward McKenzie did not know you directly although he knew your brother Cassius Williams who has also been convicted of involvement in the attack on the Ward family home in separate proceedings. You are in the dock because you went along with your friends, playing a full part in something which was obviously dangerous. But 18 April was not the only time you have been in possession of a large knife, The jury saw two images of you in possession of machetes found on the phone you had when arrested. Furthermore, no one who watches the footage of you running down the road with your fearsome knife could fail to conclude that at that time you intended to kill Dylan. The only reason you didn't is because he got away from you. It was an error of judgment of the highest order to join in with your friends attack on 2 Chelmsley Avenue and to agree with them to chase and if you could, kill Dylan.
24. A key question in your case is whether it is appropriate to impose a life sentence on you. The law provides for such a sentence if certain requirements are met. The central assessments are two-fold, are you a dangerous offender, that means the court is of the opinion that there is a significant risk to members of the public of serious harm occasioned by the commission by you of further specified offences and secondly, is the seriousness of the offence for which you are to be sentenced such as to justify the imposition of a sentence of custody for life? You would not engage with the writer of the pre-sentence report and that troubles me. But I am prepared to accept that this is because to do so would require you to confess and it is a sign of your immaturity that you didn't want to be seen to back down from the defence you put forward. From the letter you wrote which was read by counsel it appears that you are now able to admit your role. That is progress.
25. The probation officer had concluded, doing his best to analyse your personality and likely future behaviour, that you are a dangerous offender. Given what is known about your better nature in the past it is submitted by Mr Kent KC that over time it is more than possible that you will put this period behind you and emerge a mature and responsible man. After deliberating on your youth, everything known about your previous behaviour and character, the fact that you didn't injure anyone and the jury was not sure that you were a party to the killing of Kelvin Ward the conclusion I have come to in your case is that neither of these requirements is satisfied.
26. However, you didn't just agree to murder Dylan Ward McKenzie with three others, you armed yourself with an especially dangerous knife, and when you found him alone you and your group pursued him as he fled for his life. It was chance that saved his life. You arrived on the scene of the attack on Kelvin Ward and saw what

happened to him, this did not cause you to disassociate yourself from your friends, indeed after you all fled the scene all of you acted to dispose of evidence such as phones, clothes and the weapons.

27. The Sentencing Council has not issued a guideline for conspiracy to murder. As well as having regard to the principles in the Over-Archiving Principles Guideline, I have considered both the sentencing regime for murder if you had been successful in your endeavour, as you nearly were, and also the attempted murder guideline because the conspiracy was put into effect and led to an attempt to murder which was likely to succeed. For murder with a knife committed when you were 17 detention at His Majesty's pleasure for a minimum term of 23 years could have been expected. If you had been older the sentence for conspiracy to murder in these circumstances involving an armed group which had pursued the car which their intended victim was driving and caused it to come off the road, before pursuing him with machetes, seeking revenge, and disposing of evidence afterwards, would have been at least 18 years custody. Although you have reached the age of 18 now the immaturity of your thinking processes and your personality when you committed these offences a year ago require a reduction. In addition the positive character evidence already summarised is personal mitigation.
28. Accordingly, the least sentence for conspiracy to murder that fulfils the purposes of sentence and the court's public duty is 13 ½ years detention in a Young Offender Institution of which you will serve two thirds, that is 9 years, before being eligible for release on licence. The 337 days you have served on remand will count towards your sentence.
29. **Aaron Coates** you were convicted of conspiracy to murder and in addition of manslaughter. The jury was not sure you intended that Kelvin Ward should be killed or caused really serious harm when you passed the machete you had in your hands as you left the Kuga, to Tyrone Hollywood. You must be sentenced on the basis that having agreed that Dylan McKenzie should be killed you left it to the three others in the car to pursue him but when Tyrone returned to where you were waiting, you deliberately encouraged or assisted the attack on Kelvin Ward which led to his death intending to assist someone who you believed would cause some harm.
30. You were 17 years old at the time and you were 18 years old when convicted. Conspiracy to murder requires proof of an intention to kill. Your intention for manslaughter was less grave as the jury found. Accordingly, and without repeating everything already said about the conspiracy these are the features of the overall case specific to you. Firstly, this whole series of offences against the McKenzie-Ward home and against Dylan and his father were motivated by the dispute you and Tyrone Hollywood had with Dylan. Even though you didn't chase Dylan yourself and you did not intend that Kelvin Ward should be seriously hurt, you bear a heavy responsibility for the totality of what happened. It was not a single incident, you could have called off your group once the family home had been damaged, or when their cars were burnt, but you didn't. Secondly, in the same way as Rusharn Williams-Reid, your age is an important factor because in my judgment you are immature and unable to think in a developed way with full appreciation of the consequences of

your actions as an adult can. You could have gone to the police with what you believed was happening to you and your family but you didn't. You thought taking the law into your own hands was the better option. It never is.

31. Thirdly, you have a diagnosis of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder which means you find it difficult to concentrate or sit still. While this did not cause your offending it is a feature of your personal mental make-up which puts you at some disadvantage compared to those people who do not have this condition in that you may act more impulsively than them. This effect is apparent from the report of the intermediary Miss Cager and it led to a special measure, a screen from the public gallery, being deployed when you gave evidence at the trial. The degree to which this disorder is relevant to the course of conduct shown in this case which was motivated by revenge rather than impulsive action or lack of concentration, is limited. The relevant report should go to detention with you to assist those who will look after you there.
32. Fourthly, your mother who has expressed understandable distress at the situation you find yourself in, believes that your behaviour began to change when you had to leave mainstream school because of problems with concentration and you met young people who were bad company. Certainly, you acquired some relatively less serious convictions for criminal damage, battery and possessing cannabis. You have been influenced by others, some older than you, to carry knives and this became your chosen life-style. I reject the account you gave in evidence and repeated to the author of the pre-sentence report, that you genuinely believed carrying a machete was means of solving problems. Your abuse of cannabis and associating with others is indicative of the direction you had chosen and would have meant you were more disinhibited than otherwise on 18 April and the previous nights. Fifthly, you have expressed regret for Mr Ward's death to the author of the pre-sentence report and to the court through a letter written by your mother. Your offending has had an impact on your family who have moved home because of it. As your mother says, many lives have been turned upside down by what happened in April last year.
33. You must be sentenced for two offences. The total sentence must be just and proportionate. The relevant manslaughter guideline applies to offenders aged at least 18 at the time of sentence. This is a category B offence because death was caused in the course of an unlawful act on your part which involved an intention to cause harm falling just short of grievous bodily harm. The court is driven to that conclusion because of the nature of the weapon you handed to Tyrone Hollywood, a large zombie or machete type knife, and because of the fact that you did so in the context of being part of an agreement to kill Mr Ward's son following a series of attacks on the McKenzie Ward home. The starting point is 12 years custody. You acted with others to dispose of evidence but this is taken account of in the sentence I will impose for conspiracy to murder. Your unrelated previous convictions are disregarded.
34. I have thought carefully about whether you are a dangerous offender, which as already stated is a particular legal test. The author of the pre-sentence report expresses the opinion that you are. Looking at the broad picture I have at this moment in time, I have come to the conclusion that while you do pose a threat of

causing serious harm by the commission of specified offences in the future, neither a life sentence or an extended sentence is required because the long custodial term I must impose for these two offences, on someone who is only 18, is sufficient protection for the public and it will enable you to take the opportunities you have to mature, reform and reduce your risk to others.

35. For conspiracy to murder in your case the sentence is 15 years detention in a Young Offender's Institution. For manslaughter the sentence would have been 8 years detention in a Young Offender's Institution consecutive, reduced from the guideline starting point of 12 years to account for your youth. It is reduced further to 6 years to ensure that the whole sentence is proportionate. It is to be served consecutive to the sentence for the conspiracy. The total sentence is therefore, 21 years detention. You will serve two thirds, that is 14 years, before being eligible for release. The 336 days you have spent on remand will all count towards that sentence.
36. **Tyrone Hollywood.** You have been convicted of murder and conspiracy to murder. Despite being only 16 years old, by April last year you had acquired convictions for robbery, assault, being concerned in the supply of class A and class B drugs, possession with intent to supply class B drugs and you were the subject of a Youth Rehabilitation Order at time of the events I have described. You have a troubled history set out in full in the reports I have read, which should go into detention with you. Your family was unstable when you were very young and you were expelled from secondary school and then from a pupil referral unit. You began to associate with older pro-criminal youths who introduced you to drug supply and exploited you. You were stabbed in October 2022 leading to weeks of hospitalisation and symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder. Although the police investigated the case you did not co-operate and no one was charged. If you had then it is possible that the events leading to this current case and the consequences would never have happened.
37. You did not give evidence at the trial but you have written a letter to the court. It expresses remorse for your actions and you say you have some awareness of the pain your victim's family must be feeling. If you mean what you say it is a promising letter because if you stick to your expressed intention to pursue healthy relationships and positive interactions from now on then you will have taken the right steps for a better future.
38. Members of the Youth Offending Team worked with you and saw patchy progress. You are assessed as emotionally immature with fluctuating self-esteem. The latter may be the product of your childhood trauma, the stabbing and family bereavements especially of your grand-parents, to whom you were close. Your overall general cognitive abilities and intellectual functioning were tested by the psychologist and found to be borderline for your age but not within the learning disability range and the results may be an underestimate given the amount of education you have missed. You and Aaron Coates are life-long friends. You too may have ADHD. You, as well as Aaron Coates have loyalty to the criminal code of not incriminating others. In your case also I consider this to be a result of your immaturity and failure to appreciate the consequences of that approach.

39. Although you didn't run from the car with a knife, you were the driver of the car during its dangerous ramming and chasing and successful effort to run Dylan Ward McKenzie off the road. There is persuasive evidence that you are a likely to pose a significant danger of carrying out similar crimes in the future if you do not change ie you are, at present, a dangerous offender. Despite your youth you had the wherewithal to obtain a stolen car, bearing false number plates, and you were able, with your friend Aaron, to gather together a group of people willing to arm and disguise themselves and use severe violence against unarmed victims. You are also assessed by the Youth Offending Service who have known you since 2017 to pose a high risk of causing serious harm in the future, especially as you continue to express the intention to carry weapons. However, it is not necessary for me to pass a dangerousness sentence for the conspiracy to kill in your case because the danger you pose is dealt with by the life sentence required for murder.
40. Because of your age and the matters I have referred to above the sentence for the conspiracy to murder would be 10 years detention. The notional adult sentence is heavily discounted because of your age and the particularly difficult start you have had in life.
41. This sentence will be served concurrently to the sentence for murder and so it will be reflected in a measured way, consistent with the sentencing principle of passing a just and proportionate total sentence, in the minimum term I impose.
42. The only sentence the court can impose on you for murder is detention at His Majesty's pleasure. This is a life sentence like the adult life sentence I have to impose on Leighton Williams. For a life sentence the law requires the judge to set the minimum time an offender must serve. Everyone should understand that the ultimate minimum term imposed on you today is only the first part of the sentence. Every day of it has to be served in detention. Only when that has happened will you become eligible to apply for release on licence. The Parole Board will decide if it is safe to release you. You will have to work hard to persuade them of that. Whenever you are released you will be on licence for the rest of your life and liable to recall to prison.
43. By paragraph 5A Schedule 21 to the Criminal Justice Act 2003 and the Sentencing Act the starting point for the minimum term where a knife has been taken and used to kill by someone aged 16 is 17 years detention. This takes account of your age, but your particular personal history and circumstances justify some limited reduction. This was a group offence in the context of intended deadly violence towards another person. The fact that this murder itself was not planned and that you admitted manslaughter just before the trial began will be reflected in the limited uplift applied to the starting point for the overall minimum term to encompass the minimum term for the conspiracy to murder. Aggravating features of the case such as group offending and disposing of evidence is already accounted for either in the starting point or in the sentence for conspiracy to murder.
44. I have had regard to paragraph 3(1) Schedule 21 which provides that if the seriousness of the combination of the murder and the conspiracy to murder is particularly high in the case of someone aged 16 then a 20 year starting point has to

be considered. In my judgment this is such a case given the nature of the overall offending. It would not be excessive, disproportionate or unfair to treat the two offences as together justifying close to that minimum term.

45. Accordingly, Tyrone Hollywood the sentence for conspiracy to murder is 10 years detention in a Young Offender Institution. If that sentence stood alone you would have to serve two-thirds of it before you could be released. However it will be served concurrent to the sentence for the murder of Kelvin Ward which is detention at His Majesty's Pleasure for a minimum term of 19 years from which 360 days you have served already must be deducted. The minimum term to be served from today is 18 years and 5 days. In light of the views of the Birmingham Youth Offending Service I do not consider it necessary to impose a Parenting order.
46. **Leighton Williams** you are the oldest offender in this case. You are a mature, physically imposing man aged 29 and you alleged that you had been wrongfully accused. You claimed not to be present at and involved in any violence towards the Ward family, although you knew and associated with some of the defendants. You said you had arranged to meet Aaron Coates to smoke cannabis together on 18 April but only met up together once the violence had finished. In reality you were an enthusiastic member of group chasing Dylan Ward McKenzie and having seen the footage many times I am sure that the fatal blow to Kelvin Ward was yours. You had been fully committed to the ultimately futile chase of Dylan and were, no doubt, frustrated at having to return to the others without catching him.
47. For the conspiracy to murder I have to decide whether a life sentence is required. For reasons I will explain in a moment you are someone who poses a significant risk of serious harm to members of the public by the commission by you of further specified offences and the gravity of this offence together with the murder justifies and in your case requires a sentence of imprisonment for life pursuant to s.274 of the Sentencing Act 2020. You will serve this life sentence concurrent to the compulsory life sentence for murder.
48. It is necessary to determine the appropriate minimum term. The starting point for this is the notional determinate term that the conspiracy would otherwise have attracted. As you know from what the court has said to others this is 18 years imprisonment. The law is that the minimum term must be two-thirds of 18 years.
49. You had no quarrel with Mr Ward but you were prepared to strike that man with severe force and with a very dangerous knife at a time when he was already under attack by your co-defendant. You sought to hide evidence and went prepared to the scene to kill, albeit not initially the man who died, but these two features are accounted for in the sentence for conspiracy. You are a dangerous and persistent offender with a number of previous convictions which aggravate the position. These include possessing a hunting knife with a 17cm serrated blade in public in October 2015, possession of heroin with intent to supply in 2016, possessing a machete and another, smaller knife in 2020 and possessing an imitation firearm with intent to cause fear of violence in 2020. You were on licence when you committed these offences having been released from prison on 27 February 2021.

50. The evidence revealed that you had learned some elements of criminal trade-craft aimed at evading conviction such as leaving your phone somewhere separate from where you were committing these offences. As with Tyrone Hollywood the fact that this murder was not premeditated will be reflected in the limited uplift applied to the starting point for the minimum term to encompass the term for the conspiracy. It is not often, even in circumstances as bad as these that there is no mitigation and I do take account of the pain you will suffer in not being able to play a full part in the life of your child. Nor is there any evidence at all that you pressured any of your co-defendants or that they acted under your direction. As is clear it was their quarrel that you involved yourself in, rather than yours.
51. The only sentence for murder is life imprisonment. It is necessary to set the minimum term you must serve. As for Hollywood this is only the first part of your sentence. By paragraph 4(2) Schedule 21 because you took a knife to the scene and used it to kill Kelvin Ward the starting point is 25 years. The aggravating features require an increase and the concurrent life sentence for the conspiracy to murder Dylan Ward McKenzie must also be reflected by an uplift in the minimum term. I bear in mind that the mere fact that you had a younger co-defendant does not require an inevitable reduction in your term, it is no credit to you that you carried out this murder with a teenager who was not much more than half your age. As ever, the final minimum term must be just and proportionate to the overall offending. By paragraph 3(1) Schedule 21 if the seriousness of the combination of the murder and the conspiracy to murder is particularly high in the case of an adult then a 30 year starting point has to be considered. In my judgement, whether calculating from the 25 years starting point and allowing for the conspiracy or taking an overall assessment, your case does merit close to that uplift.
52. For conspiracy to murder Dylan Ward McKenzie you are sentenced to life imprisonment with a minimum term of 12 years. This sentence is concurrent to the sentence of life imprisonment for the murder of Kelvin Ward for which I have reached a minimum term of 29 years. The period you have already served on remand must be deducted. That is 360 days so the minimum term I impose is 28 years and 5 days. As already explained every day of the minimum term imposed by the court will be served before you are eligible to apply for parole. If you are released on parole you will always be liable to return to prison if you breach your life-long licence.

Mrs Justice Cheema-Grubb DBE
18 April 2024