



JUDICIARY OF
ENGLAND AND WALES

In The Crown Court at Birmingham

Rex – v – Peter Charles Johnson

SENTENCING REMARKS

1. On 19 January 2024 you were convicted of 10 offences concerning communications you sent to four unrelated people between 2020 and 2023 which made threats to kill, were intended to cause distress or amounted to a course of conduct which put a person in fear of violence by harassment.
2. This is something you have a habit of doing. You did similar things to an ex-employer between 1997 and 2006, to ex-colleagues at Newcastle College in 2000 and to your neighbours between 2018 and 2019. Your method is to send threatening or obscene letters and other paraphernalia to intimidate and frighten your victims. Some you also stalked. These previous offences also involved you writing to the employer of those you targeted, accusing them of sexual deviance and paedophilia.
3. You explained your previous offending which you agreed was abusive, by telling the jury that you had fallen out with people who you believe bullied you, and sent such communications as a coping mechanism. You said you could not control yourself. You can be quite intense and get fixated or highly focussed on something or someone. The real root of your offending may be in autism diagnosed as an adult and your depression. I accept that you do have real trouble making yourself understood. You also fail to understand other people. But I don't accept that you cannot control yourself. There have been gaps in your offending, including between 2006 and 2012.
4. You denied committing any of the offences you were accused of at the trial in January this year. You continue to. Although you said you had no grudge against any of the four objects of your fixations the offensive and threatening letters and packages you sent to them were of a particularly despicable kind, including references to sexuality and offending against children. This makes the offences more serious. Another aggravating factor is that each of your targets was a public servant in a senior post, one of them a Crown Court Judge. The jury concluded that you intended each of your victims to believe that you intended to carry out the threat to kill them.
5. You didn't suggest that any of the victims in this case had bullied you or that you had any genuine grievance against any of them. Even now, it is not suggested that the judge or the prison governors have failed you in any way. Some of them you had not even met. While there is no doubt that those who take up public office or work in senior positions must accept criticism of their work and decisions, whether it is informed or indeed ignorant, nothing you included in your communications comes close to that.

6. HHJ Steven Everett was the judge who sentenced you to 28 months imprisonment on 25 June 2019 for five offences against your neighbours of stalking involving serious alarm or distress contrary to s.4A Protection from Harassment Act 1997. As part of his sentencing remarks, inevitably, he made a critical assessment of you. You said you bore him no animosity but that was a lie. You were released from Her Majesty's prison Altcourse on 30 December 2019. During your sentence you had become friendly with another prisoner Kevin Cairns. In 2020 you and Cairns spent time together. He promised to help you move to an attractive new home and you began to transfer money to bring that about.
7. However at the end of the year you began to fall into old habits. You prepared and sent a number of repugnant, abusive and threatening letters to the judge who had sentenced you. Coincidentally he also sentenced Kevin Cairns who was convicted of fraud in March 2019.
8. In evidence you said Kevin Cairns must have committed all the offences you were charged with in order to get you into trouble. He knew your methods, copied them, manipulated you to incriminate you and stole from you. It is tolerably clear that he and his wife had proceeded to defraud you and his name appears on some of the threats made to Judge Everett later on in this sequence of offences. But the jury rejected your defence. I sentence you on the basis that having begun to send your particular style of obnoxious communications to the judge, you decided, at some point after you had begun to suspect the Cairns were not genuine friends, to frame Mr Cairns for that and similar offences. This is another reason why I am unable to accept your claim that your responsibility for this offending is much reduced because of autism and depression.
9. Having begun to send letters with intent to cause distress or anxiety on 8 December 2020. In the letters received from March 2022 you began to make threats to kill the judge and, in separate letters sent to their prisons, to three prison governors. These are the most serious of your offences. This is when you first included reference to Kevin Cairns and of course your relationship had soured by then.
10. It is not necessary to describe the details of these letters but I must give a flavour. They included mocked up images of the judge based on open source professional photographs which you replicated and endorsed with abuse and threats. You suggested he was corrupt, a Nazi and an ignorant bigot. You accused him of abhorrent sexual deviancy. You (who have no connection to Islam) purported to issue a fatwa against the judge. You said you would be in court and at the court door watching for him. You sent him an insulting fictional obituary you had created for him.
11. These letters were sent to his places of work and some were opened by him, causing shock and distress, as he explains in an impact statement. To start with he had no idea who was responsible or what their resources were. Security arrangements had, inevitably to be strengthened.
12. You were arrested on 13 April 2022 in respect of your threats to the judge. You were interviewed and bailed by the police. You made no comment in interview and later said this was because you were in fear of Mr Cairns. This put a stop to you but only temporarily. On 7 July you were arrested in relation to the offences against all four victims. In the interview you provided a prepared statement blaming Kevin Cairns. You were bailed again.
13. In February 2023 you started sending abusive letters to the judge again and put him in fear of violence by harassment. Finally you were arrested in July last year

and interviewed before being charged. In interview you sought to explain the DNA evidence from the stamps and letters and other evidence away as coincidence or to blame Kevin Cairns.

14. I have considered the Sentencing Council guideline for Sentencing Offenders with mental disorders, developmental disorders or neurological impairments and the Threats to kill guideline. I have also considered the need to pass a sentence which is just and proportionate to the overall offending. I have listened carefully to everything Mr Harry has said on your behalf.
15. The threats to kill are of A2 gravity. They involved significant planning and were sophisticated. I have already said that I do not consider that your diagnosis of autism or the depression you suffer from, reduces your culpability on this indictment to any significant degree although I will consider these matters as providing some mitigation overall. Despite the broad backs that public servants must have the persistent campaign you mounted against the judge caused some distress and had a practical impact in that you sent the letters to different courts he sat in and so there was a spread of people who had to deal with them. This means that for a single offence a starting point for sentence would be two years custody. You committed four such offences although not all would have achieved that categorisation on their own.
16. The offences are aggravated by being against a number of public servants, being repeated and some persistent, by your history of similar offending against members of the public you had fallen out with and by some being on licence and others committed on police bail. The use of gross homophobic content in some of the communications makes matters worse as does the fact that you sought to set up another person to be blamed for some of this offending as revenge for his defrauding of you.
17. By way of mitigation is your diagnosis of autism with its various specific features, which makes communication more difficult than for the non-neurodivergent person, the depression you have suffered for some years, the additional difficulties that you face in a custodial setting and the positive reports of your conduct in prison. However, despite the evidence and your convictions, you continue to deny responsibility. The author of the pre-sentence report states that you see yourself as the victim and you maintained to him that Kevin Cairns forced you to make some of the threats. This is not a claim you made in evidence and I reject it. This stubborn denial is not likely to be due to autism. You know what you are responsible for and it is not a good indicator for future good conduct that you will not face up to it. Mr Harry has detected, as he put it, 'a green shoot' of self-reflection in speaking to you today, which I hope is genuine. You must work with all those who offer you help with your complex mental health needs while in custody and when on licence to find other ways to express your frustration and sense of being hard done by. It is not too late.
18. You are now aged 62. Taking all these matters into account, I impose the least sentence commensurate with the facts and my duty to the court. The sentences for the other offences recognise their lesser maximum sentences and totality.

Count	Victim	Offence	Sentence
1	Steven Everett	Sending letters with intent to cause distress or anxiety. Committed on 8th December 2020-14th October 2021 while on licence.	8 months concurrent

2	Steven Everett	Making threats to kill. 1st March 2022 - 12 April 2022	2 years imprisonment
3	Steven Everett	Sending letters with intent to cause distress or anxiety. 1st March 2022 - 12th April 2022	6 months concurrent
4	Steven Everett	Sending letters with intent to cause distress or anxiety. 1st February 2023 - 4th May 2023 Committed while on bail.	8 months concurrent
6	Rebecca Newby	Making threats to kill. 2nd March 2022 - 14th April 2022	9 months imprisonment consecutive
7	Rebecca Newby	Sending letters with intent to cause distress or anxiety. 2nd March 2022 - 14th April 2022	6 months concurrent
8	Samantha Pariser	Making a threat to kill on 3 rd March 2022.	9 months imprisonment consecutive
9	Samantha Pariser	Sending a letter with intent to cause distress or anxiety on 3 rd March 2022.	6 months concurrent
10	Steven Williams	Making a threat to kill between 1st March 2022 - 14th April 2022	9 months imprisonment consecutive
11	Steven Williams	Sending a letter with intent to cause distress or anxiety 1st March 2022 - 14th April 2022	6 months concurrent

19. The time you have spent on remand in custody will count towards the sentence of 51 months I have imposed. You will serve half that sentence before being released to serve the remainder on licence.

20. I have not imposed a Criminal Behaviour Order in the terms requested for the reasons I have explained and no application has been made to amend those terms.

21. I impose the victim surcharge.

The Honourable Mrs Justice Cheema-Grubb DBE