

REX

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LUCY LETBY

SENTENCING REMARKS

1. Lucy Letby, on the 21st August last year, following your conviction after trial of 7 offences of murder and 7 offences of attempted murder of babies, I sentenced you to imprisonment for life and directed that the early release provisions did not apply. I must now sentence you for a further offence of attempted murder of which you have been convicted by another jury.
2. All 15 offences of which you have now been convicted were committed over a period of almost 13 months between June 2015 and June 2016, when you were employed as a neo-natal nurse at the Countess of Chester Hospital in Chester. As I observed last August, you acted in a way that was completely contrary to the normal human instincts of nurturing and caring for babies and in gross breach of the trust that all citizens place in those who work in the medical and caring professions.
3. The further offence of which you have been convicted was committed on 17th February 2016. The baby concerned, Baby K, was born at 02:12 that morning and weighed 692 g. She was 25 weeks gestation. Although she should have been born in a hospital staffed and equipped to care for babies of this extreme prematurity, because her mother had gone into labour the decision was made that, for reasons of safety, she would be delivered at the Countess of Chester. Despite her extreme prematurity her condition was good. The clinical team was able to intubate her and she was stable on a ventilator in the first two hours of her life in an incubator in the intensive care room of the unit. Your messaging with colleagues revealed you had a close interest in her birth. You were aware that she was to be transferred to a more specialised hospital. As you did with other babies over that period, you targeted her. When the nurse assigned to look after Baby K asked you

to take her role for a short time while she left the neo-natal unit to update Baby K's parents on her progress, you took the opportunity to attempt to kill her by pausing her alarms and deliberately dislodging the endo-tracheal tube through which she was being ventilated causing the oxygen saturation levels in her blood to start to drop. The consultant on duty was apprehensive about you being responsible for Baby K in the light of the series of other incidents with which you were associated where neonates had collapsed unexpectedly and for unexplained reasons. He came to check on Baby K and saw you standing by her incubator doing nothing as she continued to desaturate. He ventilated Baby K through a small mask and she picked up extremely quickly. She was re-intubated and stabilised. You maintained your interest in Baby K and interfered with her breathing again at least once more just before your night shift ended. When she had been stabilised and the specialist transport team were satisfied she could be transferred, Baby K was taken to Arrowe Park Hospital where she deteriorated and, sadly, died 3 days later in the early hours of 20th February.

4. This offence was but one of a series of similar offences. Baby K was an extremely premature baby and her death cannot be attributed to your actions. You are to be sentenced for attempting to murder her. As I said last August, you are intelligent and, outwardly, you were a very conscientious, hard-working, knowledgeable, confident and professional nurse, which enabled you repeatedly to harm babies on the unit without arousing suspicion for some time. You relished being in the intensive care nursery and your messages to colleagues revealed an interest in babies that were on, or coming to the unit who had uncommon medical conditions. You would often conduct searches on Facebook for parents of babies you had murdered or attempted to murder. I repeat what I have said before, only you know the reason or reasons for your murderous campaign.

5. As I observed when I passed sentence last August the impact of your crimes has been immense. In Baby K's case, her mother described the impact on her and the family and friends in her personal statement, read to the court this morning. Their anxiety in relation to Baby K, who was their first child, was heightened by your actions of attempting to end her life. It was another shocking act of calculated, callous cruelty.

6. Although whole life sentences of imprisonment are reserved for wholly exceptional cases, for the reasons I gave when sentencing you last August I was satisfied that such sentences were appropriate in your case. Baby K was another of your victims in what was a campaign of murder spanning almost 13 months. She was exceptionally vulnerable and in a place where others were striving to provide her with dedicated medical and nursing care. You betrayed the trust of Baby K, her parents and all those working at the hospital. You caused her physical suffering and added psychological suffering to her family. During the course of this trial, as you did in the last trial, you have coldly denied any responsibility for any your wrongdoing and sought to attribute fault to others. You have no remorse. There are no mitigating factors. In their totality, the offences of murder and attempted murder were of exceptionally high seriousness and just punishment, according to law, requires a whole life order.

7. Lucy Letby, for the further offence of attempted murder I sentence you to imprisonment for life. Because the seriousness of your offences is exceptionally high I direct that the early release provisions do not apply. The order of the court, therefore, is a whole life order. You will spend the rest of your life in prison.