



# **Judiciary of England and Wales**

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## **R v Ryan Timms**

**At Warwick Crown Court**

### **The Sentencing Remarks of Mr Justice Jay**

**Ryan Timms**

**Please remain seated until I ask you to stand.**

**You have been found guilty on the jury's majority verdict of the murder of Lynsey Timms. The jury was satisfied so that they were sure that Lynsey did not commit suicide as you claimed, but that you killed her with murderous intent.**

**This is a tragic case: a murder committed against the backdrop of a history of domestic violence and in the context of drug and alcohol abuse. The consequences for your and Lynsey's family have been devastating.**

What exactly happened on the night in question is not entirely clear, but I am able to make the following findings in light of the jury's verdict. I apply the criminal standard of proof throughout. We know that considerable quantities of alcohol and cocaine were consumed that night by both you and Lynsey, and it was your evidence to the jury that in such circumstances both of you descended into a dark place after the initial high wore off. The argument that you saw fit to record on your phone provides a window of insight into your relationship. You were harping on about a grievance which was already a year old and for which Lynsey must have apologised to you on numerous previous occasions. And yet you went on and on about it. In my judgment, your behaviour was nasty, controlling and vindictive. You reduced Lynsey to tears and did not care.

You knew that Lynsey was due at work at 8am on Monday 31 July 2023. You knew that she had a very responsible and demanding job, and that she needed her sleep. And yet the arguing continued, on and off perhaps, into the early hours. You went downstairs to pour yourself another rum and finish your cigar. Between 3:11 and 3:22 you sent

Lynsey those four text messages when she was trying to get to sleep. Although Lynsey did not read those messages, it is probable that she was aware that you were sending them. In the first of these messages you were going back over the same old grievance and trying to needle her.

Contrary to the Crown's case to the jury, I am sure that what happened was that at 3:35am you went upstairs to confront Lynsey. She had not suffered her cardiac arrest before then because Professor Deakin effectively ruled it out. You were angry that your messages had been ignored. Either Lynsey was still awake, angered by those messages; or, possibly, she had managed to fall asleep. If the latter, you woke her up. At some point, an almighty row erupted with both you and Lynsey probably equally angry, albeit in your case with no justification. The argument culminated when you were both either upstairs or downstairs – I am not sure which, but it was probably upstairs – and Lynsey hit you on the head. You then put Lynsey into that hold we can hear you confess to on the police bodycam equipment, and you maintained the pressure for the three minutes specified by the Home Office pathologist in his evidence to the jury.

The incident ended with Lynsey in cardiac arrest probably shortly before you telephoned the emergency services at 3:49. I accept your evidence that you dropped your phone, although I cannot be sure what you were doing in the 51-second gap calculated by the police officer. Either you were carrying Lynsey downstairs as you have claimed; or, you dropped the phone to run upstairs to stage the suicide. It matters not which.

You claimed from the very start that Lynsey killed herself. The pathology could not exclude that possibility, and some of Lynsey's messages to you spoke of suicidal ideation. It is beyond doubt that in many respects you made Lynsey's life miserable. As Jade told the jury, she was so defeated; she was the shadow of the woman she was. However, I do not believe for one moment that Lynsey would have killed herself, leaving her four children - three of whom are still young - without a mother. Further, as the jury found, that there was a mass of circumstantial evidence which strongly pointed away from suicide and towards your guilt.

Today, the court has heard victim personal statements from Jade Timms, Lynsey's daughter, Stephen Taylor and Barbara Taylor, Lynsey's parents, Charlotte Brown, Lynsey's sister, Paul Sanders, Lynsey's uncle; and from work colleagues and friends, Raju Reddy and Sian Roberts. Lynsey's death is causing incalculable pain to her family, friends and colleagues at work.

Parliament requires me to pass a sentence of life imprisonment in your case and to specify the minimum term. The starting point for the minimum term you must serve before the Parole Board decides whether it is safe to release you is 15 years imprisonment.

I emphasise that this is the starting point for the minimum term. I must adjust the minimum term to arrive at a period which reflects both the aggravating and mitigating factors in your case.

The aggravating factors in your case are several. Lynsey was killed by her husband, whom she was entitled to trust, and in her own home, where she was entitled to feel safe. As I have said, you well knew what tended to happen between you after taking that cocktail of alcohol and

cocaine: in my judgment, that is a further aggravating factor. In addition, I am satisfied based on all the evidence the court received that there was a history of domestic violence perpetrated by you that lasted a number of years. I take into account Lynsey's low platelet count which magnified her tendency to bruise and the fact that, as I directed the jury, there is a chasm between what happened previously, leading in the main to bruising of the limbs but occasionally a black eye, and what happened that night. Not all the bruises that the jury heard about were in my judgment caused deliberately by you, and I take that into account.

I have considered whether your staging of Lynsey's suicide in the particular circumstances of this case should be regarded as an aggravating factor. The case law which has been drawn to my attention shows that, in general, lying about what happened or blaming another are not treated as aggravating factors. However, in my opinion you did more than that. You took active steps to make this murder look like suicide, and in so doing seriously hampered the police investigation, and delayed justice. The fact that the steps you took were not particularly convincing is nothing to the point. Had suicide not been

raised by you at the very outset, the only issue in this case would have been the nature of your intent. In my view, it is right that I should treat your actions that night, and maintained throughout this trial, as an aggravating factor.

I am satisfied so that I am sure that you intended to kill Lynsey. The pathology compels me to that conclusion. This is not a further aggravating factor.

As for the mitigation, your murder of Lynsey was spontaneous and far from premeditated. You have shown no remorse but I believe that I may properly infer from your obvious distress immediately after the incident that you deeply regretted what you had done.

Your previous good character – the absence of previous convictions – carries very little weight.

In my judgment, the mitigation available to you carries less weight than the aggravating factors. The minimum term will, therefore, be more than the starting point of 15 years.

**I must also explain that if you are released from prison because the Parole Board decides that it is safe to do so at the relevant time, you will remain on licence for the rest of your life and be liable to be recalled to prison if you breach the terms of your licence. What I can say in your favour is that, when your minimum term has been served and subject to you receiving positive reports from those responsible for you, I see no reason why you should not be released. This is not a case where I assess that the level of danger you pose is such that you would struggle to persuade the Parole Board that release is appropriate.**

**Finally, I am required to specify the period already spent in custody to be counted against the sentence I must impose so as to reduce it accordingly.**

**The standard victim surcharges will apply.**

**Please stand.**



**The sentence I am imposing in your case is the life sentence required by law. Balancing all the aggravating and mitigating factors in your case, the minimum term I am specifying before credit is given for time spent on remand in custody is one of 19 years' imprisonment. The 193 days you spent on remand in custody will be taken into account to reduce your sentence.**

**You may go down.**