



Judiciary of England and Wales

REX

-v-

KRIESHA STROUD

LEANDRO LOPES

JORDAN TAMS

NEWCASTLE CROWN COURT

30 JANUARY 2025

Sentencing Remarks of Mr Justice Constable

1. Kriesha Stroud, Leandro Lopes, and Jordan Tams, you have each been found guilty of the murder of Gary Belfield and the attempted murder of his son, Luke Williams.
2. Given that each of you committed murder when under 18, you will be detained at His Majesty's Pleasure, in accordance with Section 274 of the Sentencing Act 2020. That means a life sentence.
3. It is necessary for me to consider what the minimum time is before you each are eligible for release. Whether you are to be released after that time is a decision for the Parole Board and will be decided on the basis of whether, at that point, you no longer present a danger. If you remain a danger, you will serve longer than the minimum term, and may never be released. However, you are all young and you will have a very long time to reflect on your actions. You will no doubt work on your rehabilitation so that you do not present a danger to the public. Even after release, should that happen, you are

liable to be recalled for the rest of your life if you breach the terms of your licence. I impose the relevant statutory surcharge at the appropriate amount to be set administratively, and a collection order, and an order for the forfeiture and destruction of the weapons seized.

4. It is necessary for me to explain how I have decided on what that minimum term will be. Different considerations apply to each of you and I need to consider your different roles and the different factors which make matters worse (or aggravate), or those that count in your favour (or mitigate). It will take a little time for me to explain that. I must also sentence you, Leandro, for the offences of Robbery, ABH and Fraud, for which you were convicted in your absence on 29th October 2024. When I have finished sentencing you, your legal team will be given a copy of my remarks and they can explain them to you should you need that.
5. At the outset, it cannot go unremarked that the dreadful attack to which the two victims were subjected, one of whom was lucky to escape with his life, is shocking not just for its brutality and senselessness, but because it was encouraged and carried out by three who were, at the time of the killing, children. You, Leandro, were the oldest at 17 years and 7 months. You, Jordan, were 17 years and 1 month, and you Kriesha were just 15 years and 1 month.
6. Having heard the evidence, I am sure to the criminal standard of all the facts I refer to in these remarks.
7. Just after 9 pm on the 27th of April last year you, Jordan and Leandro, both wearing dark clothes and balaclavas, entered the home address of Gary Belfield, aged 40, in the Felling area of Gateshead where his son, Luke Williams, aged 21 at the time, was also living. You, Jordan, were armed with a knife and you, Leandro, were armed with a screwdriver. You, Kriesha, had minutes before finished speaking with Leandro and Jordan, agreeing what was about to happen. You waited outside. Jordan and Leandro, you entered that properly with your weapons out in front of you, knowing that Gary and Luke were in the flat and that an encounter with them was inevitable.

8. We will never know what precisely happened in the last moments of Gary's life, but it is clear that whilst inside you, Jordan and Leandro, subjected Gary and Luke to a sustained and brutal attack. Gary and Luke both suffered numerous serious injuries caused by the weapons you took with you. Gary was stabbed deep into his thigh by you, Leandro, an injury which cut his femoral vein and artery, causing significant blood loss and undoubtedly contributed directly to his death. He sustained a total of 10 further stab wounds, including 5 to the back of his body with damage to his ribs, the right lung, his liver and bowel, which would also have contributed to his death. Having heard the evidence, I am sure that the stab wounds to Gary's back were caused by you, Jordan, when at some point you turned your attention to him. Gary sustained numerous other injuries including defensive wounds which demonstrate his fight for life. This included a stab wound to the sole of the left foot which passed through the sole of his trainer and then 5cm deep into his foot. This was also inflicted by you, Jordan. The ferocity speaks for itself.
9. As for Luke, he sustained a fracture to the left transverse vertebra in his lower back caused by moderate to severe force from a stab wound inflicted by you, Jordan, together with three other stab wounds and sharp force injuries again consistent with defensive injuries. It was by chance that the forceful stab to his back did not cause a fatal injury. All the injuries to Luke were inflicted by you, Jordan. Luke managed to escape from the property when he realised that life had already started to fade from his father and there was nothing he could do but save himself. Gary was left on the sofa either dead or dying from blood loss.
10. As Luke escaped and ran past you, Kriesha, he said "what the fuck are you doing here". You knew full well what you were doing there. I accept that you were not looking in through the kitchen window watching the attack, as for some misguided reason you boasted afterwards. You cannot have been because the blind was pulled down within the property, and was splattered in blood during the attack. But nevertheless you were waiting outside the flat to see your plan being put into action by Leandro and Jordan. Luke managed to make his way to nearby premises where he came to the attention of Mr Thompson, a mechanic, who must be thanked for calling 999 and administering treatment to Luke until the emergency services arrived.

11. I have taken account of the moving victim impact statements from James Belfield, Gary's father, and Luke Williams, which have been read in open Court today. It is not necessary for me to repeat the details of those statements. The needless loss of a son, the senseless loss of a father has caused, understandably, indescribable devastation to every generation of Gary's family. Their grief has been made worse by the slurs about Gary's life they heard during the trial, the complete absence of remorse immediately after the events and, indeed, horrendously callous sentiments expressed by you, Kriesha, after Gary's death. Luke has described the constant psychological impact, as well as ongoing physical pain caused by the events of that night. Words cannot do justice to describe the emotional trauma which must be caused by losing a father in the circumstances I have already recounted.
12. In relation to the murder of Gary Belfield, I must follow the principles in Schedule 21 of the Sentencing Act 2020. I am sure that each of you either physically carried the knife and the screwdriver to the scene intending to commit any offence or have them available to use as weapons, or encouraged others to do so with the same intention, and that those weapons were used in committing the murder. Accordingly, paragraph 4(1) of Schedule 21 applies to you all. This states that the starting point for those aged 17, is 23 years. The starting point for those aged 15-16 is 17 years. I recognise that you, Jordan, and you Kriesha, were each just a month into the relevant age in your category. There is also a large jump between the starting points applicable to the different ages or age-ranges. This is relevant because Schedule 21 sets out where the sentencing assessment begins, and these starting points should not be applied unthinkingly so as to introduce cliff edges which dictate, rather than inform, the assessment which is appropriate on the facts of each individual concerned.
13. I have considered the Sentencing Children and Young People Definitive Guideline, and have also reviewed the helpful publication from Judicial College - Youth defendants in the Crown Court. I must, and do, have always in mind in respect of sentencing youths the principal aims of the youth justice system and the welfare of the offender.
14. I consider first those aggravating features that apply to each of you.

15. First, the degree of planning and premeditation. It is clear that by the early evening of 27 April 2024 you, Kriesha, started to organise the break-in at Gary's flat to retrieve the dog. I accept that the original plan devised by you, Kriesha, centred upon retrieving a dog which you believed belonged to your half-sister Courtney, following the ending of her relationship with Gary. I do not believe that your plan from the very start was to exact a revenge killing on them, driven by your unsubstantiated belief that Gary was a paedophile and by Courtney's allegations that she had been attacked by Luke some weeks earlier.
16. You recruited Leandro during a 3 minute conversation at around 6.20pm that evening, and Jordan, your then boyfriend, around 45 minutes later. 15 minutes or so after that contact you, Kriesha, and Leandro were in each other's company, and were soon making your way to Felling metro station close to the address of the victims. You met up with Jordan and you were in each other's company for some time leading up to the attack. You, Kriesha, made enquiries as to whether Gary and Luke were in. By 8.50pm, the three of you are shown to be making your way closer towards Elliot Drive, and shortly before the attack, you were again shown in each other's company close to the victims' address. I am sure, as described by a witness, you Kriesha were mainly doing the talking with Leandro and Jordan nodding.
17. I have no hesitation in finding that you, Kriesha, were well aware of the weapons Leandro and Jordan were armed with. The three of you saw Gary and Luke arrive at the flat. Whether or not you earlier thought that the flat might be unoccupied, from that moment on you knew for certain that, if you entered the flat, some sort of confrontation was all but inevitable. The three of you had a discussion about whether to proceed now that you were sure that Gary and Luke were in. The three of you decided to do so. It is clear from their verdict that the jury were sure of your intention to kill Luke, and there is no rational basis upon which I could sensibly conclude you had a different intention in respect of Gary. Having heard the evidence, I am sure that your intention to kill both men crystallised, at least with finality, during the discussion which took place just prior to entering the flat.

18. This intention to kill is not itself an aggravating feature. Rather, in itself, it deprives you each of a potential mitigating feature. Nevertheless, I make reference to this feature at this stage because it is relevant to the extent of planning and premeditation.
19. I am sure that although the burglary was clearly planned, as was the fact that you, Leandro and Jordan, went armed with weapons, the killing of Gary, and the attempt on Luke's life, was not planned significantly in advance.
20. You, Jordan, had previously talked about using your knife in the most graphic terms. Just over a month before the attack you said, amongst other similar, disturbing things, "*...I'm getting that fucking mad, I want to fucking kill someone*". That is what, faced with the opportunity to use your knife in anger, and driven by the knowledge of your girlfriends' beliefs about the characters of Gary and Luke, you set about doing immediately upon the inevitable confrontation with Luke, who came out into the hallway first. You, Leandro, did not lead the charge but you joined in with equally lethal intent when you plunged your screwdriver into Gary's thigh. Kriesha, when sending Jordan and Leandro into what was the inevitable encounter with Gary and Luke inside the flat, you shared their intent to kill. Whilst you did not wield either the knife or the screwdriver, Kriesha, it is plainly of significance that without you, none of this would have happened. I am sure that, in relation to each of you, your premeditated intention to kill formed shortly prior to entering the flat, when you all knew for certain that the two men would be there.
21. I do not, therefore, aggravate any of your sentences on the basis of significant planning or premeditation, for as I have described, I cannot be sure that this is what happened. However, your intended attack was premeditated in the circumstances I have described and you cannot rely upon the lack of premeditation as any mitigating feature in accordance with Schedule 21.
22. In view of the number of injuries both caused in offensive action and as a result of defensive action, which I have described, it is clear that Mr Belfield must have suffered considerably in a terrifying and unprovoked attack by two masked men in the minutes leading up to his death. This is an aggravating feature, and the more so in the case of you Jordan who I am sure, apart from the screwdriver stab wound, inflicted all the other

stab wounds. It is also an aggravating feature that the attack took place in the victims' home. The disposal of the screwdriver by you, Leandro, and the burning of your clothes, in order to conceal evidence, Leandro and Jordan, is also an aggravating feature.

23. Leandro, you have previous convictions. In relation to robbery and assault for which I must sentence you today, I ignore this at this stage so as not to double count. You were also cautioned on 29 April 2024 for an offence of Assault occasioning Actual Bodily Harm. In the context of the sentence for murder, is an aggravating feature albeit not a significant one.
24. Jordan, you also have a previous conviction for having a blade in a public place. This too is aggravating feature although again, not a significant one. It is also an aggravating feature in your case that you had been taking drugs which reduced your ability to think. I have also taken the view on the evidence I have heard that, within the flat, you took the lead and inflicted most of the violence.
25. Kriesha, you also acted on the day in question under the influence of cannabis. Ordinarily this would be an aggravating feature, but taking into account the evidence within the reports before me which underline the reasons for your abuse of this substance, I accept that this is a neutral factor. I accept that you were not in the flat. You were not in control of the precise use of violence eventually inflicted. However, your intention to kill consistent with the jury's verdict was one which, as I have found, was crystallised before the attack began and I cannot lose sight of the fact that you were the instigator of the events.
26. Turning to the Sentencing Council's Guidelines in respect of Attempted Murder, taking the knife and the screwdriver to the flat means that this is High Culpability. Harm falls into category 2. This provides a starting point of 25 years, for an adult. It is necessary to take into account your age. I take the sort of reductions set out in Schedule 21 which are, whilst not directly applicable, a good guide given that the adult starting point of 25 years is the same for both the murder and the attempted murder in the circumstances of this case.

27. As for aggravating features in respect of the attempted murder, the level of harm has been reflected in the starting point and should not be aggravated further.
28. I now consider personal mitigation for each of you in turn.
29. Leandro, in respect of your personal mitigation, I take into account the fact that until you were 6 years old you were in the care of your abusive father and that you never experienced a relationship with your mother. Whilst this will have impacted your development, you have since coming to the UK in 2012 with your paternal Aunt been in the care of two of your Aunts where you have enjoyed a more stable and less chaotic upbringing. I have read the letter provided to me by your aunt, Anarita, who with her family plainly provided you with a loving environment and is clearly devastated by these events and the impact your actions have had on the victims and the victims' family, as well as of course on your own family. I accept your expressions of remorse and regret are genuine.
30. Jordan, I also take into account that you have had a considerably dysfunctional childhood, lacking in appropriate role models and have had to witness and suffer emotional and physical abuse from those who should have cared for you. You have been almost throughout your life the subject of intervention from Child Services. I accept that as a result of the unstable and neglectful environment in which you have grown up, your level of emotional maturity is not in line with your chronological age. As a result of the emotional abuse and neglect you were subject to intervention by the social services. I also accept that, notwithstanding the slurs against the victims you made on arrest trying to justify your actions, even in the short time since the trial you have come to realise the impact of your actions and have expressed remorse.
31. Kriesha, I have read the reports prepared that tell me of the life you have had. I do not propose to go into the considerable detail I have had the benefit of reading, both through reports prepared in advance of trial but also through your pre-sentence report. I accept both that you can show signs of immaturity for your age, and the characterisation of your upbringing by your counsel as disastrous. It is impossible to describe your childhood as remotely approaching a stable, happy or innocent one, and it is to your credit that notwithstanding this you had stayed out of trouble with the police until your

actions on this day. Your absence of convictions is of itself a mitigating feature. Whilst responsibility for your central involvement in such terrible crimes must justify a lengthy sentence of imprisonment, notwithstanding your age and relative immaturity, I accept by way of mitigation that you have had visited upon you, through chronic neglect, sexual abuse and exploitation, a deeply traumatic start to life which will have contributed to an inability to think through consequences, and act in an appropriate manner, reflected in your level of emotional maturity, as well as a deep-seated mistrust of those you had relied upon to protect you. I also accept that, notwithstanding your words in the hours and days after the events, you have come already to a more mature realisation of the terrible consequences of your actions.

32. I will now identify what I consider to be the correct starting point and sentence. I need to consider the count of murder and the count of attempted murder separately first, as though I was sentencing them in isolation. I will then decide the minimum tariff you will serve taking account of the totality of your offending.
33. Leandro. You fall squarely within the 17 year old age range, and there is nothing to suggest that your level of maturity is not average for a 17 year old. I take into account of the fact that at age 18, the starting point is 25 years, and at 15-16, it is 17 years. I consider that the appropriate starting point for you is 20 years. Taking into account the aggravating features which increase that, and your personal mitigation which decreases it, I would sentence you for the murder alone to a minimum sentence of 21 years.
34. Jordan, you are younger not just chronologically but, on the evidence I have, also lack, to a degree, the normal emotional maturity for your age. Considering the just application of the Schedule 21 starting points and age ranges, I consider the appropriate starting point for you is 18 years and 6 months. However, I also take account of the more significant role you played in inflicting violence, and, taking account of both aggravating and mitigating factors, I would sentence you for the murder alone also to a minimum sentence of 21 years imprisonment.
35. In considering the starting point for you Kriesha, I take account not only your chronological age but your level of maturity which has been impacted by the upbringing I have described. There is an inevitable overlap between the factors which go to this

assessment of maturity and your wider personal mitigation. I consider the appropriate starting point is 15 years. Taking into account the aggravating and other personal mitigating features I have referred to, the appropriate tariff if the murder was being sentence alone would be 16 years imprisonment.

36. For the Attempted Murder, if it were being sentenced in isolation, I would take the same starting points for each of you for the reason I have given.
37. Leandro, taking into account the aggravating features, and your personal mitigation, I would sentence you for the attempted murder alone to a determinate sentence of 20 years imprisonment.
38. Jordan, taking into account the aggravating features and your personal mitigation, I would sentence you for the attempted murder alone to a determinate sentence of 20 years imprisonment.
39. Kriesha, taking into account the aggravating features and your personal mitigation, I would sentence you for the attempted murder alone to a determinate sentence of 15 years imprisonment.
40. Before turning to totality, it is necessary for me to sentence you, Leandro, also in relation to robbery, assault and fraud. The circumstances were captured on CCTV from which it can be seen that you were one of a group youths who followed a solitary male. You and the two other males in the group attacked the victim, Mr Milburn, knocking him to the grounds and repeatedly kicking him. During the course of the attack, which was begun by you and in which you played a leading role, the victim's phone, which also contained his bank card, was taken. The card was used in the aftermath by all of the group to buy food. After each use, the card was returned to you, Leandro, who was clearly coordinating the frauds. I have read the Victim Personal Statement written by Mr Milburn some sixteen months after the offence in which he says that he was incredibly shocked and upset in the immediate aftermath of the attack on him. He is a self-employed electrician and did not work for a week as he did not want customers to see him with his injuries. He has previously suffered from mental health difficulties and

the incident caused some of these to re-appear. He continues to dwell on events and to speculate as to why he was targeted and whether it may happen again.

41. You were 16 years and 10 months old at the time. Although you are 18 now, in accordance with the authorities, I must have regard to the maximum sentence that would have been available at the time of your offending and, as my starting point, I should take the sentence which would have been imposed if you had been sentenced as a child. Pursuant to the relevant guideline relating to robberies committed by youths, where a custodial sentence is to be considered, as it undoubtedly would be as the offence was so serious that no other sanction would have been appropriate, the Court should consider for those aged 15 – 17, a sentence broadly within the region of half to two thirds of the appropriate adult sentence. On the adult guidelines, this offence, for reasons identified above, would fall into category B2 with a four year starting point. Were the robbery to be sentenced in isolation, taking into account the reduction due to your age, this would attract a 2 year custodial sentence. Given your age and lack of previous serious offending, I am sure, however that this would have been suspended. The ABH offence, effectively, reflects the violence used in the robbery would attract a concurrent sentence to avoid any double counting. The fraud offending totalled just over £20 and, on its own, would not attract a custodial penalty. Given that I find that your sentence for this offending would have been suspended, I do not add any further period to your tariff for murder, but the sentences will run, unsuspended, concurrently.
42. I must now take into account the principle of totality in respect of the murder and attempted murder. This principle means that the total sentence for each of you is not simply the total of the two sentences added together. I will increase the minimum tariff on the murder in order to take account of the sentence for attempted murder, which will run concurrently. I must bear in mind that, if you were serving a sentence for the attempted murder alone, you would serve 2/3 of that sentence in prison, with the remainder on licence. I also need to take account of the days you have spent on remand. For you Leandro, and you Kriesha, this is 272 days. For you, Jordan, it is 274 days.

Please stand up.

Kriesha Stroud. For the murder of Gary Belfield, you are to be detained at His Majesty's pleasure. The minimum term you will serve before you are eligible for parole is **20 years'** imprisonment. For the attempted murder of Luke Williams, I sentence you to 15 years imprisonment, to be served concurrently. Taking into account days served on remand, the minimum term is **19 years and 93 days.**

Leandro Lopes. For the murder of Gary Belfield, you are to be detained at His Majesty's pleasure. The minimum term you will serve before you are eligible for parole is **26 years'** imprisonment. For the attempted murder of Luke Williams, I sentence you to 20 years imprisonment, to be served concurrently. For the Robbery and the Assault, I sentence you to 2 years' imprisonment to run concurrently to each other and to the sentence for murder. In relation to the fraud, no separate penalty. Taking into account days served on remand, the minimum term is **25 years and 93 days.**

Jordan Tams. For the murder of Gary Belfield, you are sentenced to life imprisonment. The minimum term you will serve before you are eligible for parole is **26 years'** imprisonment. For the attempted murder of Luke Williams, I sentence you to 20 years imprisonment, to be served concurrently. Taking into account days served on remand, the minimum term is **25 years and 91 days.**