

IN THE CROWN COURT AT TEESIDE

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-v-

SIMON VICKERS

SENTENCING REMARKS

1. Simon Vickers you may remain seated until I tell you to stand.
2. You have been found guilty to the murder of your daughter Scarlett Vickers on 5th April 2024 in your family home.
3. She was just 14 years of age, a normal healthy young woman with a long life ahead of her when it was cut short by you. She died in the kitchen of her home within minutes of having been stabbed. It went from an ordinary, happy, family Friday night to tragedy within seconds due to what must have been your loss of temper. There is no other plausible explanation. You have never given a truthful explanation of what happened.

Brief facts

4. Scarlett lived with you her father and her mother, your partner of 27 years, Sarah Hall. There has been no evidence found to suggest you had anything other than a normal loving family life
5. It was a Friday night. After work you had smoked some cannabis and drunk some wine; I am satisfied given the evidence more that the three quarters of a bottle or four glasses you have said you drank.
6. Scarlett came home and was in her bedroom whilst you watched the football on the TV. You then joined Sarah Hall as she cooked your evening meal.
7. Scarlett came downstairs at about 10.15pm to join you in the small kitchen. She and her mother were throwing grapes at each other, which you wanted them to stop. Sarah Hall then pinched you on the bottom from behind with some cooking tongs. As you turned she caught your finger with them and you said "Ow". Scarlett then said words "Dad don't be

a whimper". Sarah Hall then had her back to you as she had resumed cooking and heard you say how would you like it.

8. Exactly what then happened only you know.
9. Scarlett said Ow Ow and Sarah Hall turned to see her standing injured. There was no knife in her because, I am satisfied, you had taken it out, as part of the stabbing motion. It would not have been possible for Sarah Hall to have missed it unless it was already back on the kitchen surface where you placed it and it was later noted to be when the paramedics arrived. I have no doubt that you had hold of the knife before, during and after Scarlett was stabbed.
10. Scarlett died as a result of a single knife wound to the left side of the chest. This had breached the chest wall between the fifth and sixth ribs, going through the lower most point of the upper lobe of the left lung, before passing into the left ventricle of the heart where it ended. The approximate wound tract length was 110mm or 11cm. The knife also had to pass through her fluffy night gown, top and bra. The was not the result of trifling force. The stab into the heart caused blood loss into the left chest cavity, and it is this blood loss which has ultimately resulted in Scarlett's death.
11. To stab Scarlett you must have been close to her. She was stabbed in part of her chest normally protected by the arm.
12. After being stabbed Scarlett, she stood in the area close to the back door before collapsing. As Sarah Hall said the last thing she must have seen was panic on your faces.
13. Sarah Hall made the 999 call. The paramedics arrived at 22.50 and Police officers also attended. PS Sarah Thompson stated that she could see paramedics were performing on and you and Sarah Hall were stood at the doorway of the kitchen. She asked you to go into the living room until she understood what had occurred. You said to her "We were mucking about". She noted that you were heavily intoxicated, his speech was slurred and that you smelt of intoxicating liquor. Mr Brierly also thought you were under the influence of drink. Having seen and heard all the evidence and including that of Mr Crow who did not express a view that you were intoxicated and that there was no concern in the police station, I am satisfied that you were affected by the alcohol you had drunk.
14. I cannot be sure of the part alcohol and cannabis played in this offence. It is likely they played a significant part but I cannot be sure to the criminal standard.
15. Scarlett was declared dead at 23.50.
16. You have given very different accounts as to what happened; specifically that

- (i) Scarlett was stabbed by accident
 - (ii) That you had been throwing knives
 - (iii) That you had thrown a spatula or tongs
 - (iv) That Scarlett lunging towards the knife
 - (v) That you had swiped the tongs along the kitchen surface
17. The unconvincing and wholly implausible version that you told the jury involved you swiping tongs across the kitchen surface and them flying up in the air and you not having even been aware of a knife before or after Scarlett suffered injury. Indeed you said no knife in any equation except Sarah had cut onions. Given the evidence of the pathologist this was clearly untrue. She came by that fatal injury through your hand. As she said your arm needed to be braced at the time of the stabbing motion.
18. It is right that you have always accepted that your actions caused Scarlett's death, but you have never explained what those actions were. Your beloved daughter deserved that you told the truth; you have not done so.

Schedule 21

19. For the grave offence of murder there is only one sentence prescribed by law that is imprisonment for life. That is the sentence I shall impose upon you in due course. However, I am required to determine the minimum period you should serve in prison before you are eligible to be considered for release on parole.
20. It is most important that you and everyone concerned with this case should understand what the minimum term means. The minimum term is not a fixed term after which you will be automatically released but the minimum time that you will spend in custody before your case can be considered by the parole board. It will be for the parole board to say at that time whether or not you will be released. If and when you are released, you will still be subject to licence and this will be the case the rest of your life. If for any reason your licence were to be revoked you would be recalled to prison to serve your life sentence in custody.
21. In coming to the appropriate minimum term I must first decide where this case falls within schedule 21.

Starting point

22. Here the starting point is 15 years. The knife was not taken to the scene. It was picked up whilst you were in the kitchen on the spur of the moment. However the starting point is not necessarily the end point and I must weigh up the relevant aggravating and mitigating factors

Aggravating factors

23. The obvious and seriously aggravating factor is that Scarlett was 14 years old and a child

in her own home.

24. Although your father /daughter relationship does not fall within the scope of Domestic Abuse Act 2021 as Scarlett was not 16, the principles in the domestic violence guideline apply as you were living in the same household, and your relationship involved an expectation of mutual trust and security. Scarlett's age and the domestic context of the offending behaviour make this offence more serious because it represents a violation of that trust and security that normally exists between a child and parents.
25. Domestic abuse offences of all forms and offences against children are regarded as particularly serious within the criminal justice system. This factor warrants a significant increase from the starting point.
26. You have previous convictions. You are now aged 50 and in 1993 when you were aged 19 you were convicted of wounding with intent using a knife on the face of an adult male. You received 2 years detention. That conviction was over 30 years old. You also have some convictions for minor dishonesty; the last conviction being in 1999. Given the age or lack of relevance these convictions have not increased the sentence imposed.
27. As I have set out you were under the influence of alcohol. I am not sure that the cannabis had any material effect on you. The fact that an offender is voluntarily intoxicated at the time of the offence will tend to increase the seriousness of the offence provided that the intoxication has contributed to the offending. However I am not sure, so applying the criminal standard, that alcohol did contribute to the offence; which I am driven to conclude was a flash of anger.

Mitigating factors

28. I accept that immediately after you stabbed Scarlett you were devastated by what you have done and that since you have been a broken man. You have lost your only child at your own hand and will always live with that awful fact.
29. I also accept that this was a momentary act of anger and also that there was no premeditation. I am not sure that there was an intention to kill and sentence on the basis that there was an intention to cause really serious harm

Credit for time on remand

30. Credit must be given for time on remand.
31. You will have spent 217 days in custody for this offence.

Associated matters

32. I direct that if the surcharge applies in this case in respect of any of you it should be drawn

up in the appropriate amount.

33. A transcript of these sentencing remarks be attached to your file for the benefit of the Parole Board. Compensation is not appropriate.
34. I also wish to praise the work of the Police and Prosecution team. It was of the very highest quality and the public and victims and this Court have been very well served by it. Such work rightly deserves public recognition.

Sentence

35. Stand up please.
36. Simon Vickers only you know precisely what happened in that kitchen on that Friday night which led to you fatally stabbing your own young daughter in what should have been the safety of her own home. What the jury were clearly sure of is that you have lied when you have given the various different accounts of how she sustained the injury. You well know what happened.
37. Given that you must have held the knife firmly in your hand, that the stab wound was 11cm deep, and that it was caused with sufficient force for the handle to bruise the surrounding area, the Jury was sure that you had the intention in the moment of stabbing her to causing her really serious harm. It was a momentary, but devastating act of anger. It stole one young, precious life and ruined your wife's life and your own and her other relatives and friends will never forget her loss. There is no clock that can be turned back and you must face the consequences that the law dictates.
38. Simon Vickers for the murder of Scarlett Vickers I sentence you to life imprisonment. You will serve a minimum term of 15 years less the 217 days you have served on remand.
39. Take him down.

Mr Justice Cotter

Teesside Crown Court

10 February 2025

