

IN THE CROWN COURT AT LEEDS

12NY1552624

R

V

JASON HOLDGATE

NICOLA ANN BECK

SENTENCE

1. Overview

- 1.1. Jason Holdgate, on 27th February 2025 you pleaded guilty to the Murder of Michael Bradley.
- 1.2. The sentence for Murder is life imprisonment and that is the sentence that I impose on you on Count 1. Your guilty plea to Murder acknowledges a joint responsibility for the theft of the car and in your case Count 2 will lie on the file not to be proceeded without leave of the CACD or the Crown Court.
- 1.3. If you are released from that life sentence it will be after a determination by the Parole Board of the risks that you pose and you would then be subject to licence conditions for the rest of your life.
- 1.4. You will be and at risk of return to prison if you breach any of the terms of your release.
- 1.5. If you are released an appropriate surcharge will then be collected.
- 1.6. In your case Mr Holdgate, I must determine the minimum period that you will serve before you may be considered for release by the Parole Board.
- 1.7. Nicola Beck you bear no responsibility for Mr Bradley's death but today you have pleaded guilty to and must be sentenced for the theft of his car.

2. Facts

- 2.1. Michael Bradley lived at 26, Whitehorn Close, York.
- 2.2. To his family he was a kind, hardworking and unassuming man who will be missed by all who knew him, particularly by his sister, Tracey and cousin, John.
- 2.3. I offer my condolences knowing that there is no sentence that I may impose which will lessen their grief.
- 2.4. Michael Bradley was not socially close to his neighbours but he was regarded by them as a hardworking man with a predictable routine so when his attentive neighbour, Mr Phillip Bainbridge realised that he had not seen Mr Bradley outside as usual; that his bin had not been taken in after the street collection on 30th October and that his curtains remained closed during the day and with no visible lights at night, he was concerned and made a report.
- 2.5. On 4th November 2024, Police forced entry and found Mr Bradley lying on the floor of his bedroom. He had been left in an undignified state and with clothes piled upon him.

- 2.6. Michael Bradley's death was the consequence of repeated hammer blows that you, Mr Holgate, delivered to his head as he lay in his bed. You also wounded him with a knife.
- 2.7. The Home Office Pathologist, Dr Cooper, described evidence of multiple blows to the head and face with a weapon such as a hammer and stab wounds to the back of the neck. A full list of his many injuries together with a body map appear at pages T6 and T14 on the Digital Case system
- 2.8. The injuries caused with the hammer which was recovered from the bed included;
 - 2.8.1. A depressed comminuted (fragmented) fracture measuring 6 x 7.5cm below an abrasion on the scalp with at least 4 intersecting lacerations.
 - 2.8.2. A triangular laceration the top of the head,
 - 2.8.3. A subarachnoid haemorrhage.
 - 2.8.4. A further semicircular laceration to the head,
 - 2.8.5. Injuries around the eyes and mouth
 - 2.8.6. A depressed fracture to the front upper part of his jaw bone.
 - 2.8.7. Bruising to the left ear
 - 2.8.8. Bruising to his chest
- 2.9. You also used a knife, presumably the kitchen knife which was recovered from the bedroom and which is shown in a photograph at p.J123
 - 2.9.1. On his neck was a 2.8cm stab wound which penetrated 5cm,
 - 2.9.2. There was another stab wound to Mr Bradley's neck which penetrated only a few millimetres,
- 2.10. The exact number of blows is unclear but they represent a sustained attack and the marks on Mr Bradley's arms and hand and blood staining are consistent with Mr Bradley trying to protect himself from your attack which I infer began as he lay in his bed.
- 2.11. At some stage, but after prolonged bleeding whilst he remained on the bed, Michael Bradley was dragged onto the floor to enable a search under the mattress and around the bedroom.
- 2.12. You left him on his bedroom floor where he was found by Police on 4th November.
- 2.13. You were both arrested shortly after 1am on 5/11/24 on Northmoor Lane, Huntington, York. In Ms Holdgate's holdall was a letter that you had written which appeared to contain an explanation for your murderous attack on Mr Bradley, saying "the truth is why I did was he was slagging you off behind your back and saying that I just leave it all to you to get money and ask him for stuff he said you control me and everything we have and do. He was false with what he said to us and did.. it doesn't excuse my behaviour".
- 2.14. That may be the reason for your actions although Ms Beck claimed that it predated the attack upon Mr Bradley and so we may never know your true motive.
- 2.15. It is clear that you then took advantage of the situation and looked to steal what you could. There was no money in the cash box that bore your DNA and so you had either taken the contents or found it to be empty.
- 2.16. Together with Ms Beck you took his car and the following day it was sold for £150. It seems likely that the proceeds funded your drugs addictions because at 4:51 on 4/11/24 Ms Beck sent a text message on behalf of you both which read "we've got some money...could you help us score".
3. Starting Point for Murder Sentence
- 3.1. In accordance with s.321 of the Sentencing Code I must begin by considering the appropriate starting point within Schedule 21.

- 3.2. I have considered whether this ought to be considered as a Murder for gain but have concluded that the Prosecution assessment is correct. The theft of Mr Bradley's car was not a motivation for the killing but was instead an act of heartless opportunism. At a time when any right thinking person would have been racked with the guilt of responsibility for Michael Bradley's death your thoughts turned to making a financial advantage from his death and I shall therefore treat that as an aggravating factor in this sentencing exercise.
- 3.3. That being the case I agree that the case does not fall within paragraphs 2(1), 3(1) or 4(1) of the Schedule and that the appropriate starting point, in determining the minimum term, is that within paragraph 5 namely 15 years.
- 3.4. There are aggravating or other features beyond the one that I have just identified, which require a higher minimum sentence that starting point.
4. Aggravating or Other Features Increasing the Start Point.
- 4.1. The evidence of Mr Bradley's attempts to protect himself from your attack allow me to be satisfied that he experienced physical suffering before his death.
- 4.2. Mr Bradley was attacked when vulnerable in his bed and in the home where you and Ms Beck had been allowed to remain as his guests and where he should have been safe.
- 4.3. The attack involved many blows leading to multiple injury sites over Mr Bradley's head and face in particular.
- 4.4. The attack involved a hammer and a knife and whilst I sentence upon the basis that that they were already in the house rather than brought to the scene, you must have decided to use them to attack Mr Bradley in advance of entering the bedroom rather than seized upon them spontaneously. There was therefore a degree of premeditation.
- 4.5. After Mr Bradley's death you took financial advantage of the situation and left in his car, which, was later sold at a significant undervalue.
- 4.6. You have relevant criminal convictions including;
 - 4.6.1. 7/9/11 – Possession of an offensive weapon,
 - 4.6.2. 26/1/13 – Assault PC,
 - 4.6.3. 29/1/13 – Possession of a bladed article,
 - 4.6.4. 28/12/15 – Affray,
 - 4.6.5. 30/10/18 - ABH.
- 4.7. Michael Bradley's death has had a significant impact on those who loved him and particularly upon his sister and cousin.
5. Mitigating Features
- 5.1. There are no mitigating features
6. The Start Point
- 6.1. Before considering the effect of your pleas I would have imposed a minimum sentence of 20 years.
7. Factors Reducing the Minimum Term
- 7.1. You pleaded Guilty plea to Murder on arraignment on 27th February 2025 having notified that you wished to do so on 29th January 2025.
- 7.2. The earliest date for such a plea to be entered was 11th November and PTPH was on 12th December. The trial was fixed for 12th May 2025.
- 7.3. In a case other than Murder you might have expected a reduction in the order of 20% Accepting Mr Wright's reasoning I have reduced that to 10% (2 years) reducing from the SP that I have identified to 18 years.
- 7.4. I understand that you have been remanded into custody for 133 days and that should be deducted from the minimum term to be served. If there is any error in the number of days served, then the case must be brought before me to correct the sentence

8. Announce Sentence (Stand)

9. Jason Holgate

- 9.1. Jason Holgate, for the Murder of Michael Bradley, I sentence you to life imprisonment and announce that you shall not be entitled to have your case considered by the parole board before 17 years 232 days from today.

10. Nicola Beck

- 10.1. Nicola Beck, in your case the theft of the car was not pre-planned
- 10.2. Applying the guideline for Theft, I have assessed that your culpability falls between High and Lesser and therefore in Category B.
- 10.3. The car was of a value which places this offence into Category 3 for harm
- 10.4. The Start Point is High Level CO but the significant aggravating factor was that this theft was done taking advantage of the attack upon Mr Bradley by Mr Holgate and was a theft from a man who had provide shelter to you and Mr Holdgate
- 10.5. It is my view that that factor would increase the start point to a sentence of 26 weeks imprisonment but I have reduced from that position to recognise your lack of relevant previous convictions and cautions to 20 weeks
- 10.6. Your guilty plea attracts a reduction of 20% reducing your sentence to 16 weeks imprisonment.
- 10.7. You have been remanded in custody since your arrest on 5th November and it is therefore likely that you will be released soon.
- 10.8. Wherever you are released you must obey the terms of your release otherwise you will be at risk of being returned to serve any part of the sentence that you have not served.
- 10.9. On your release a surcharge will be payable and I make a collection order to enable the magistrates court to make the collection.
- 10.10.

HHJ Howard Crowson

Leeds Combined Court Centre

1 Oxford Row

Leeds

LS1 3BG