

Sentence Remarks R v Anthony Felton 62WN0143425

Anthony Felton you knew as well as anyone could the current prevalence of violence in our schools; instances of pupils taking weapons into school and attacks on staff and pupils are all too common features in the media. This very court on Monday must sentence a young girl for attacking and attempting to kill 2 teachers and a school pupil at her school. This incident took place just 25 miles away from your school. Anyone arming themselves with a weapon with the intent to cause harm is a grave matter indeed. And as the Head-Master of the school, to take and use a weapon to badly injure the deputy head is I suspect without precedent. And the appalling example that this sets to others needs no emphasis from me.

You are more than intelligent enough to have fully realised when you plotted this bizarre attack that the repercussions would be immense and far reaching. First and paramount the effect on Mr Pyke, a man who thought he was your friend. He was viciously struck from behind having been lured by you into what was effectively an ambush. While the injuries he sustained were mercifully less than you intended or tried to cause him, the psychological, emotional, and professional impact have been profound. However I must also consider the effects on others; the other staff members, on school morale and on impressionable pupils who looked to you as the ultimate authority figure in the school; the reputational damage to the school, gaining nationwide publicity for a dreadful reason. You would have known of those consequences when you slyly planned the attack. And all this aggravates the offence substantially.

I accept that this episode was a startling aberration in the life of a man who had deservedly reached the top of his profession and was respected and admired by many. This is reflected in the many references I have read about you; an inspirational teacher who had led an exemplary life up until the lead up to this offence. That makes this event even more baffling.

I take into account the fact that you were under great stress at the time, dealing with your mother's death and your own cancer diagnosis. But the trigger for your actions was overwhelming sexual jealousy arising from an adulterous affair and the uncontrolled rage it created in you. That caused your descent, which has been a precipitous one. I accept you are genuinely remorseful, and your Guilty plea is the most tangible expression of that. But I also consider your letter to Mr Pyke reflects your genuine regret. You fully acknowledge the harm you have caused not only to Mr Pyke but in the ways I have already mentioned. I also bear in mind you have used your time on remand to assist others.

Sentence – This is a category B 3 matter under the relevant guidelines. The offence is too serious for anything other than an immediate custodial sentence and you would have been told this by Mr Hipkin. I bear in mind this was an attempt, albeit a determined one to cause really serious injury. It is down to luck that it did not, rather than any lack of effort on your part.

Finally I bear in mind your unblemished character and wholly impressive life until the lead up to this offence. I bear in mind the inevitable impact of this sentence on you for the rest of your life. Your marriage, career and reputation have been irretrievably lost and that will weigh heavily on you well after you end your sentence.

Proceeds to sentence with 1/3 credit. Explained effect of licence

Sentence 2 years 4 months

Surcharge imposed and indefinite restraining order