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**v**

**Daniel Knorr**

**Indigo Rumbelow**

**Margaret Reid**

**Ellah Ward**

## **Sentencing remarks**

**HHJ MacAdam**

**Manchester Crown Court**

**Minshull Street**

**27 May 2025**

I have to sentence each of you for CONSPIRING TO INTENTIONALLY CAUSE A PUBLIC NUISANCE, Contrary to section 1(1) of the Criminal Law Act 1977 and section 78(1) and (4) of the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022.

The prosecution's case was that each of you intended to obstruct the public or a section of the public in the exercise or enjoyment of a right that may be exercised or enjoyed by the public at large.

For the avoidance of any doubt, although no sensible and honest interpretation of my remarks could conclude otherwise, I do not and could not sentence, the organisation Just Stop Oil. Any reference I make during my sentencing remarks to Just Stop Oil is made regarding each defendant's history and experience of protesting and offending which you were able to draw upon and to the extent of the JSO resources you had made available to you to to utilise when conspiring to commit this offence.

I have made it plain during submissions that I will sentence each of you as the indictment was framed by the prosecution, a conspiracy between 30 June and 6 August 2024, a closed conspiracy, that is confined to those persons specified in the indictment, rather than with persons unknown extending to a much wider conspiracy involving other similar JSO events. To do otherwise would be wrong in law and would be unfair.

Like the jury, as their verdict plainly did, I reject the suggestion that any of you believed that only minimal delay, inconvenience, cost would have occurred. That claim repeatedly made by you all is plainly dishonest and completely contrary to all of your claims again repeatedly made, that you want to be held accountable. Targeting a major airport was heralded in March 2024 by Ms Rumbelow speaking on behalf of JSO. The message which she on behalf of JSO intended to be understood, was to escalate JSO's protest actions. For the reasons I set out below, from the overwhelming evidence in this case, it was plain that her and those who conspired with her intended during the indictment period to cause massive disruption to many people to gain as much media attention as possible to force the government to act, all four of you being dissatisfied with the issue being dealt with by lawful democratic means.

All four of you had a trial lasting 3 weeks. If you had pleaded guilty I would have reduced your sentence to reflect that fact. A guilty plea, depending at what stage your plea was entered would have entitled you to a considerable discount in sentence, it would have saved valuable public resources and would have evidenced your claims that, like the historical civil rights protesters you each have sought to compare yourselves with, you broke the law and accept the consequences.

It is of course, the right of every person in a free and democratic society to exercise their right to have a trial and so I will not increase your sentence at all because you chose to exercise that right.

In accordance with s. 63 of the Sentencing Act 2020, I will pass sentence in each of the defendant's cases assessing the seriousness of each defendant's offending, by reference to the culpability and the harm intended to be caused by each of the offenders concerned.

Deciding the sentence to impose I have considered the five purposes of sentencing identified in s. 57 of the Sentencing Act 2020, that is punishment, reduction of crime (including its reduction by deterrence), reform and rehabilitation, public protection and the making of reparation to establish a provisional sentence.

I have taken into account relevant aggravating and mitigating features and other considerations under the stepped approach set out in the Sentencing Council's *General Guideline: Overarching Principles*.

Conspiring to cause a public nuisance of the scale intended is significantly removed from exercising article 10 and 11 rights lawfully and for the reasons that I will make plain below, I consider each of you to be highly culpable. You all from at the very least, the beginning of the indictment period, knew of or were actively involved in planning where, when and how the conspiracy was to be executed. Each of you played your part, sourcing the Air BnB, arranging transportation, obtaining the phones, planning media capture distribution via third parties, practising filming media, drafting of statements to be read to the police, obtaining the necessary and appropriate tools for the incursion.

This was a highly organised, planned and determined conspiracy. If it had been successfully executed, the evidence which was either unchallenged or tested without success, demonstrated would have for some time resulted in chaos not just at Manchester Airport but to infrastructure around the Airport and would have had a consequential effect on other airports. Many peoples flights to and from Manchester would have been delayed, rerouted or cancelled. The principle of deterrence when sentencing cases which are as serious as this is of particular relevance and importance in the context the pressing social need to protect the public and to prevent social unrest arising from the type of escalating illegal activity that all of you, affiliating yourselves with a cause had become involved with.

I have concluded, and it has not been suggested that I should not, that in each of your cases, your offending clearly crosses the custody threshold. It has not been submitted that there is a realistic prospect of any of you being rehabilitated, although, as I will come to; it is suggested that for some of you the risk you present of similarly offending in the future is now reduced. That feature of an individual defendant's case is a relevant mitigating feature and where appropriate will result in a downward adjustment in sentence.

Notwithstanding the mitigation that is available for each defendant, I have concluded that this offending was so serious, that to punish these defendants and deter them and others from similarly offending, immediate custodial sentences are both necessary and proportionate. I will pass the shortest term commensurate with the seriousness of the offence and each offenders role.

There are no Guidelines for this type of offending and the cases of Trowland and Hallam make clear that there is no tariff and that the appropriate sentence in each case must be decided on its own specific facts.

You have all spent a significant period on remand and this is the first time that you have been to prison. I accept that the current conditions in prison have and remain more difficult than they should be and take account of both factors.

The time spent on remand will count towards your sentence and the calculation of your early release date. You will each be released when you have served no more than half of the custodial element of the sentence, it maybe that depending upon the early release provisions that are provided by statute and other M of J initiatives, you will serve significantly less time in prison. Whenever you are released you will serve the remainder of your sentence on licence in the community. You will be subject to the terms of that licence, if you do not adhere to those terms you may be recalled to serve what remains of your sentence in prison. Any further offending by you whilst subject to licence may be considered as an aggravating feature of your offending.

I make in each of your cases a statutory surcharge. The Magistrates court will inform you of the precise sum. I make collection orders for the same.

I have considered the issue of costs. All four defendants, despite repeatedly stating how they all were determined to be accountable for their actions refused to comply with your disclosure obligations which are designed to ensure that the trial process is conducted so that the jury can concentrate on relevant issues. You knew that if you did engage it would have reduced the 3 weeks that the trial took. You took that course to advantage the JSO cause by unfair means, that is to use the trial process as a means of continuing to attract publicity for the JSO cause. You all hoped to be acquitted. You have given no assurance that you will not offend again. You did so to avoid the consequences of offending and no doubt so that the JSO causes you supported could be further publicised by the JSO media department who would 'spin' the result as a triumph. The stance taken by you distinguishes you all from others who have chosen to follow the long and honourable tradition of civil disobedience on conscientious grounds, that is accepting that you have broken the law and accepting the punishment that follows. Each of you instead, following the JSO legal document's guidance drawn up by Ms Rumbelow and no doubt others, paragraph 5 "we are continuing our resistance into the courtroom, we do this by pleading not guilty". And, "we know we are putting a serious strain on the legal system. When doing so, you each considered and I have no doubt to varying degrees all 4 of you still do, considered your cause to trump inconvenience to others whether that be the general public at Manchester Airport or other court users, be they defendants or the victims of crime whose trial you all knew you would delay by the trying of this case. As I have said, I will not increase your sentence because you chose to exercise your right to have a trial, in a free and democratic society that right is unqualified, however, I have considered the means available to you to meet the order for costs sought by the prosecution which is of course but a tiny fraction of the total cost to try you. Each of you is capable of working and you all intend to work when released from prison. I have had regard to your savings and assets where disclosed. I make prosecution cost orders in the sum of £2000 each payable at the rate of £100 a month. The first payment by each defendant to be made by 1 September 2024.

I make forfeiture and destruction orders for those items listed in the schedule drawn up by the prosecution agreed by each defendant.

I can see no purpose for the CBOs in their current form that the law as it stands cannot prevent and therefore decline to make any such order.

### **Culpability and Harm intended**

I sentence you, as the indictment has particularised, that you intended to enter Manchester Airport and there cause an obstruction. Not that you intended to cause serious harm, that is not to say that harm, in the ordinary sense that the word is used, would not have been caused by your obstruction or that you were not aware that causing such an obstruction would have had harmful consequences.

The conspiracy was financially and logistically supported within the JSO organisation. Roles and tasks were assigned to ensure success. The aim was to achieve maximum

publicity for your cause and so the incursion of the Airport early in the morning in early August when dozens of planes were scheduled to land and take off not only evidences the harm that would have occurred but that this was a very deliberate, ratchetting up of action. You prepared accordingly, well in advance. I accept, as no doubt the prosecution did when the indictment was drafted, and as the jury surely did when acquitting Mr Crane, that keeping what was planned to those involved on a need to know basis was a precaution taken during the planning of this JSO funded and coordinated protest. As several of you said in evidence, it was how other JSO protest actions that you had been involved in had been conducted. This precaution was taken because you were determined that this conspiracy be successfully executed, you all knew that the authorities were aware of JSO's plans to target airports and knew that if the police found out about this particular plan it would be stopped. You were all involved in different tasks, arranging transportation and accommodation, wire cutters and angle grinders of the sort that would ensure a quick entry to the airfield, industrial strength superglue sand and freezing spray to ensure that once glued to the taxiway you could not be quickly or easily removed. You all intended to cause as much of an obstruction as possible to gain as much publicity as possible. I reject the quite frankly ridiculous suggestion you each made to the jury, that you believed that your intended actions would have had only minimal impact on the functioning of the airport, that it would have been restricted to only where you were located or that as soon as removed from the taxiway normal operation of the airport would have been restored.

Airports are protected spaces for good reason. The risks to yourself and others of you crossing parts of the runway and accessing a taxiway are obvious. Your claims that you were confident that safety of all concerned was ensured because you were monitoring aircraft by a free to download Flight Tracker app I reject. Because the risks of crossing the standing platform and being on a taxiway were so apparent and consequences to the public so extensive, I have no doubt was why you all concluded would create a media event that would garner as much press attention as possible, you were all to quote Ms Rumbelow's words from the JSO event in March, seeking to ratchet it up.

Fortunately you were prevented from executing your intended plan The police intervened before you could get to Manchester airport and so you were unable to cause the disproportionate and extreme public nuisance that you very obviously intended. I will sentence each of you accordingly by reference not to the harm you caused, you were unable to cause any, but rather the harm you intended to cause.

You all in evidence claimed that you considered that the plan was very likely to fail, that to get as far as the fence would have been a success, that if you gained entry to the airport you would be stopped very quickly and would have immediately become non-resistant. However, it is clear that to avoid any of those possible outcomes was precisely why the planning was very thorough, it was because you intended to avoid detection, to avoid being stopped, to avoid having to be non-resistant. You did all that you could to ensure that the conspiracy would succeed and have the desired impact.

That is why, you all used internet based messaging services to communicate during the planning process, setting messages to delete after 1 hour. Mr Knorr cut off his GPS tag to avoid surveillance. A GPS tag that will have been fitted no doubt after a court accepted submissions made by him that further offending by him could be prevented. A recce had been done in advance by a JSO sympathiser to identify the most suitable point to do enter the airport. When stopped on the way to the airport you were found to have the means to cut through the perimeter fence quickly and efficiently. During the trial you claimed that if you had not been prevented from getting to the airport, then at the fence you would have alerted the authorities of your intentions prior to cutting through the perimeter fence, that the call to the police would have been made prior to cutting the wire. The note prepared by Ms Ward for reading when calling the police revealed that to be a lie. Ms Ward told the jury that she had written down what she wanted to say in advance so she would get it right. The note made no mention of, we are about to cut the wire, instead it stated twice, we are entering the airfield. For the reasons I have stated, I conclude that the accounts you gave in evidence to the jury were plainly dishonest. Your repeated claims made during the course of the trial of being honest and accountable I reject.

You were provided with burner phones on the day paid for by JSO and did not take your personal phones. You did so to prevent the police from using cell site technology to track where you were or where you had been and if others who were with you had a phone that you were together so when you were arrested as you fully intended to be access could not be gained which would implicate yourselves and others and disclose the full extent of this conspiracy.

If entry had been gained, you were equipped with all that was necessary to delay your removal, industrial grade superglue, sand and freezing spray. Your plan was to cross the starter extension of the runway and secure yourselves to one of the departing aircraft taxiways. The unused burner mobile phones, paid for by JS would then be used to transmit the media that you had rehearsed in advance the day before.

The prosecution say this was sophisticated offending. You each have claimed that it was not. It plainly was, you each relied on your individual and collective experience of being involved in protesting and the protest movement to plan and best use the extensive resources provided and available to you. You all hoped to execute your plan and achieve complete success.

Having heard all of the evidence during the trial process, as I say largely unchallenged or if tested without success, I conclude that if you had been successful the harm that you intended to cause was that the functioning of the airport to be temporarily brought to a standstill at the busiest period that aircraft arrived at and departed the airport, at the busiest time of year, the holiday season when thousands of families would have been arriving or departing the airport. You all knew and intended this because when planning you had been monitoring aircraft at Manchester airport in advance.

Because your plan failed, we cannot know how long the delay you intended to cause would have interrupted the operational functionality of the airport. However, the evidence unchallenged demonstrated that a specialist police team would have to have been assembled and transported with equipment to the airport, entry would have been gained by the team relatively quickly and so perhaps the process of removal would have begun an hour after your entry to the airfield. The industrial strength superglue, sand and freezing spray which you intended to use together would have maximised the time it would have taken to remove you. Your claims that because you would have offered no resistance you would have been dealt with quickly and efficiently resulting in minimal disruption that the general public would consider as acceptable were dismissed by the jury and I dismiss those claims when assessing the potential consequences that you planned to occur. At the very least, removal of you from the taxiway once the police had set about their task and cleared up afterwards would have taken at least a further hour.

Whilst all of this was occurring the security of the airport perimeter would have to have been checked. It was unchallenged during the trial that the possibility that this was a distraction technique to divert attention from another planned entry by another group would have to be taken seriously. The perimeter fence is 14 kilometres long and it would have taken a considerable amount of time to ensure that it was entirely secure. There was no meaningful or evidential based challenge to the prosecution's case, that such an incursion would have delayed the operational functionality of the airport for a considerable time. I conclude that the operational functionality of the airport would have been interrupted for at least several hours and likely the most part of the day because the airport owed a duty of care to the many 1000s of people working at or arriving at or departing from the airport. Discharging that duty would have been the first priority.

The result, had this conspiracy been put into effect, would have been massive disruption to 1000s of people and huge financial loss to the aircraft industry and therefore taxpayers. The misery cost for the general public would have been immense, 1000s of people expecting to leave the airport would have been delayed for extended periods of time. Those due to land from other airports would have been diverted to other airports no doubt many hours away.

You are all intelligent people and you have all protested before. You whilst conspiring were perfectly placed and I have no doubt did intend such chaos to come about. That you fully considered such consequences was apparent during the trial because all of you, hoping to be considered reasonable and caring people detailed to the jury that you gave a great deal of thought regarding the consequences you anticipated if successful. When doing so you all denied that if this conspiracy was successful you intended to cause the public massive inconvenience by disrupting the airports ability to function for a significant period of time. You each claimed that if the conspiracy was successfully executed it would cause only limited and short lived, minor inconvenience of the type that the general public are well used to and tolerant of. The jury rejected

that account as do I for the reasons I have already stated. You each planned thoroughly and you were each fully cognisant of what was intended to be achieved and were determined that it would succeed. Success, of course would have been measured by you by as partial or complete depending upon how far you got and the publicity generated. You all however were very obviously determined to achieve complete success, that is cause operational chaos at Manchester Airport. The misery to others by you doing so was of course considered as I have made plain, but it was dismissed, the general public you considered would just have to endure it, they would be collateral damage.

Notwithstanding that if this conspiracy had been successfully executed it would have led to disproportionate and extreme consequences I do accept that each of you were motivated by your conscience believing strongly in the cause you sought to champion. Although I do not comment on the validity or merit of the cause in which this conspiracy sought to promote the fact that you acted on strongly held beliefs reduces your culpability.

At the time this offence was committed:

- Daniel Knorr 22 and had the following convictions:
  - 28 September 23 agg trespass 12 month community order
  - 22 March 24 obstruction community order
  - He was on bail at the time of offending for
    - Court bail Oxford Library
    - GPS tag London criminal damage oil corp
- Indigo Rumbelow 30 at the time and had the following convictions:
  - 14 November 18 obstruction fine restraining order
  - 2 June 21 obstruction community order
  - 7 September 22 obstruction fine and breach CO no further action
  - 2 August 23 caution criminal damage
  - Police bail, conspiracy re airports not to go w/I 1km of airdrome
- Margaret Reid 53 at the time and had the following convictions:
  - September 22 obstructing the highway fine
  - 3 August 23 Aggravated trespass 12 month Community order
  - On bail at the time?
  - PSR act of conscience and stand by it no intent to do again. Accepts there are alts but not as impactful, will stay offence free. Protective factors HR SH
  - Court bail East London MC road disruption
- Ellah Ward 21 at the time and had the following convictions:
  - 19 June 24 Harassment 6 weeks/12 months SSO
  - Police bail conspiracy re airports not to go w/I 1km of airdrome
  - Court bail Southwark CC



Your previous convictions and being on bail, court or police bail at the time are aggravating features.

### **Mitigation**

I have considered the pre-sentence reports for each of you prepared by the Probation Service, the defence sentencing note at T9, the oral submissions of Ms O'Brien and Mr Dove on behalf of Ms Rumbelow, Ms Ward and Mr Knorr and Ms Reid's oral submissions. I have also considered again the testimonial evidence for each defendant produced during the trial and the various cases uploaded to the DCS T 1 and T5-8 and, the Response to the application for a Criminal Behaviour Order at T10.

All of you, putting aside your offending behaviour, are very intelligent normally honest people. You all care passionately regarding climate change and do so because you believe that the planet and its people are in danger. You have all undertaken work in the community and when remanded in custody that benefits others. That caring attitude I accept extends to all other aspects of how you have each lived your lives, and but for your offending would mark you all out as positive role models for others. All of these positive features reduce the sentence that I will pass.

I have to consider deterrence in respect of you and others offending in the future in a similar way. Ms Reid, Ms Rumbelow and Mr Knorr it is calculated by the Probation Service to present a High risk of causing serious harm in the future. Ms Ward is considered to present a medium risk of causing serious harm.

In Ms Reid and Ms Ward's cases I have concluded that there is some prospect that you will desist from engaging in crimes of this seriousness in the future. However, in Ms Reid's case that is largely due to the protective factor of her parents requiring her care and attention rather than any remorse and regret regarding her actions that she has demonstrated. I am not provided, nor could I accurately be, provided with any further details as to how long such care may be necessary and so how long this factor may reduce the risk you pose to the public.

In Ms Ward's case, she is young and I conclude, that she is immature, impressionable, gullible and naïve but as I have expressed during submissions, struck me as being more honest than her co-defendants in that she admitted that they all set out intending to enter the airfield and fix themselves to the taxiway. I conclude that there may be the beginnings of insight regarding how wrong it is in a free and democratic society to consider that your own belief in the worthiness of a cause to be justification for breaking the law.

In Ms Reid and Ms Ward's cases I will take account of these features of your case when calculating the appropriate length of sentence necessary, but I am not persuaded that either defendant would not at some point in the future offend in a similar way again under what they consider to be suitable circumstances.

Ms Rumbelow has stated that she will continue to protest but would not do anything like this again. I have difficulty accepting that she would desist from similarly offending in the future, she does not regret what she did and the assurance that, she would not do anything like this again is qualified by her stating to the PSR author, that she will endeavour to stay within the boundaries of the law.

Mr Knorr's position is more straightforward, he has for the first time been properly honest at least regarding whether he will engage in further similar action, I am told that he will not assure me that he will not do so.

I have reread the testimonial evidence submitted during the trial but accepting that in common with others who commit similar offences of this type, that is in support of strongly held beliefs, you would not ordinarily committed offences, is of little weight.

Each of you has previous convictions for criminal offences committed in support of the same or similar political causes, that is a feature that aggravates this offending but I accept that but for your strong beliefs regarding climate change you would otherwise all be law abiding.

I find that you are all highly culpable in that once each of you had agreed to participate in this conspiracy you each played an equal part to ensure its success. As I have stated, it was not successfully executed and so I reduce the sentence accordingly. The conspiracy embarked upon after Ms Rumbelow's announcement in March 2024, she stating that JSO action would be taken at airports. It was Ms Rumbelow's announcement that led to Ms Ward, Mr Knorr and Ms Reid's involvement in the conspiracy. That feature elevates Ms Rumbelow's culpability substantially.

### **Sentence**

Ms Rumbelow, you were on bail at the time of offending. I start at 48 months imprisonment. The conspiracy failed and because it did I reduce the sentence accordingly to 36 months. you do not persuade me that you are at all remorseful at all, if you are your remorse is very much qualified by believing your actions were justified. I am not persuaded that you would not offend similarly again. For the mitigating features I have set out I reduce the sentence to 30 months imprisonment.

Mr Knorr, You like your fellow conspirators were on police bail but additionally you removed your GPS tag in order to maximise the chance of successfully executing the conspiracy, this substantially aggravates your case. You have given no assurance that you will not offend again. I start at 48 months. The conspiracy failed and because it did I reduce the sentence accordingly to 36 months. Your culpability although high is less than Ms Rumbelow and so I reduce the sentence to 30 months. For the mitigating features I have set out I reduce the sentence to 24 months imprisonment.

Ms Reid and Ms Ward. I start at 48 months. The conspiracy failed and because it did I reduce the sentence accordingly to 36 months. Your culpability is less than Ms Rumbelow and Mr Knorr and I reduce the sentence accordingly to 26 months. The risk of similarly offending by you both is reduced for the reasons I have set out and I reduce

the sentence to reflect that to 24 months. For the mitigating features I have set out I reduce the sentence for each of you to 18 months imprisonment.