

Central Criminal Court

Her Honour Judge Sarah Munro

24 July 2025

Rex -V- Habibia Naveed Sentencing Remarks

1. Christopher Brown was a 72 year old solicitor who, despite his age, worked full time in a family firm and who lived a quiet life with at 11 Polsted Road, in Catford a property which he inherited from his parents. He was a skinny frail man. Despite being 5' 10" he weighed a mere 9 stone 2lbs. He was a man who helped people when they were at their most desperate.
2. Chris' loved ones and colleagues describe his loyal and caring nature, his vulnerability and his inability to extricate himself from you. Cassie Baker sets out the tragic consequences of your actions beyond the loss of Chris to them as a friend and colleague which include the closing of the firm, the consequent loss of jobs and the loss to clients. As Ms Baker says "You have taken away a good man and you have taken away any future memories".
3. On the night of 14th/15th August you snuffed out the life of that quiet, calm and selfless man as well as that of your pet cat.
4. Today you are here to be sentenced for Chris' manslaughter by reason of diminished responsibility and for causing unnecessary suffering to the cat.

FACTS

5. The facts are these: you had lived at Polsted Rd for some years. On 20th September 2016 Chris was persuaded to put the property into the joint names of you and Chris. The house was re-furbished and lodgers were taken in. You were in charge of and orchestrating all of that.
6. We now know that you had experienced mental health difficulties since you were 16. You are now 35. You had been sectioned 3-4 times since 2020. You had suffered delusions and would, whilst an inpatient, behave aggressively. You have been prescribed anti-depressants and anti-psychotic medication in the past on numerous occasions. However, it is common feature that once back in the community you stop taking your medication. You were, and continued to be at the time of the offence, a very heavy user of cannabis. That does not help your mental health as you well know.

7. Your contact with mental health service started in 2020 when your brother referred you to your GP due to your strange behaviour and paranoid thoughts.
8. On 15/6/20 you were caught driving recklessly and you were sectioned under the MHA and diagnosed with unspecified non-organic psychosis. You were released with anti-psychotic medication. You showed no insight into your condition, into your use of cannabis and you didn't take the medication.
9. You were arrested again in May 2022 having abandoned a car in Westminster. You were sectioned again. Whilst an inpatient you threatened patients and staff and kicked the doors on the ward. On discharge you again stopped taking your medication.
10. In April 2023 your mental state deteriorated acutely and you accused Chris of burying bodies and being a paedophile. You were again found to be psychotic and again sectioned. Yet again on discharge you stopped your medications.
11. However, following your release in July 2023, you were able to hold down a job and appeared better.
12. A year later you were still well despite not having been taking medication.
13. In the days leading up to Chris' death you were staying with your family. They noted a deterioration in your mental state. You were argumentative and you slapped your sister in the face which led to her calling 111.
14. On 12th August 2024, days before you killed Chris, your brother reported concerns about your mental state.
15. On 14th August at 0152 and 0211 your father called an ambulance for you saying you were in a psychotic state. You left the address before the ambulance arrived. You were reported missing. Your family had no further contact with you until after you had killed Chris.
16. Your father messaged Chris to ask if you were there but he said he hadn't seen you as he had gone to work.
17. Regrettably you persuaded your care co-ordinator who spoke to you on 14th that you were fine and she did no more than to arrange to see you on 16th. You were clearly able to manipulate others into believing you were well.
18. The evidence about what happened in Polsted Rd in the hours leading up to Chris' death comes from a neighbour and a lodger, Mr Rizwan. Mr

Rizwan heard you shouting and screaming for about an hour and things being moved around.

19. A neighbour heard you shouting and a lot of banging. You sounded out of control. You were demanding money. By 1400 you were on the balcony calm and singing quietly.
20. When Mr Rizwan woke up at about 1700 he heard you still screaming, shouting and making noises.
21. However you did not kill Chris then as the evidence shows he went out and came back alive and well at 1900. There was no one else in the house when Mr Rizwan heard you shouting and making banging noises.
22. You attacked Chris between around 2300 and 2350 on 14th August. You hit Chris a number of times to the head with a saucepan which broke in the process; you then sat on him breaking his ribs and strangled him. You then slit the cat's throat before leaving Chris covered in a dressing gown alone and dead or dying in the living room property where he was found by Mr Rizwan when he returned to the house at 0215 on 15th. You left a bloodied knife with which you had cut the cat's throat nearby.
24. Mr Rizwan called the police and they arrived at 0236. The police found Chris had suffered severe head injuries; he had 2 black eyes and a deep cut to his left eye. Rigor mortis had set in.
25. You ended up at a friend's house by 0640. He saw that you had blood on you. You looked "deranged". You wouldn't answer any of his questions. He drove you home but when you got close you saw the police and you told him to keep driving. He told you to get out of the car.
26. You did so and were walking around until your brother called you to say a body had been found at your home. You were claiming to be Jesus and saying you had been sent to eliminate evil in the world. You took a taxi to your mother's address where you were arrested at 1115.
27. You told police that "the devil attacked me last night and I won." You made comments to the effect that you were Princess Diana's daughter, that you slept in coffins and that Jesus raised you from the dead.
28. Chris died from the blunt trauma to the head, neck and chest. He had been strangled and suffered serious injuries to his head, neck and chest including broken ribs. The Consultant Forensic Psychiatrist was of the view that the injuries fitted your account which shows that you were conscious of exactly what you were doing as you killed Chris.

29. Following your arrest you were initially remanded in custody to HMP Bronzefield but then on 24/9/24 you were transferred to Spring Ward at Bethlem Royal Hospital where you remain.
30. On 21st January Dr Cumming reported that you were fit to plead. He took the view that the defence of diminished responsibility was available to you. You offered to plead to manslaughter on that basis and, following receipt of a report from Dr Patel who agreed with Dr Cumming's diagnosis, the Crown indicated that they would accept that plea.
31. You entered your guilty plea and the case was adjourned until today for sentence.

Psychiatric evidence

32. You told Dr Cumming that you had seen Chris kill his mother and that he was evil. You said you heard a voice telling you to kill him. You said you hit him with a pan and strangled him until he passed out. You said that the evil spirit had jumped out of Chris and into the cat which you then killed by cutting its throat with a knife. You told the doctor that when he asked you to stop you realised it was wrong but you hit him again with your hands.
33. Two Psychiatrists, Drs Cumming and Patel have examined you and agree as to the diagnosis of paranoid schizophrenia. Both agree that you have no insight into your mental health, diagnosis or symptoms. You hold delusional beliefs.
34. There is a pattern since 2020 of your admission to hospital, aggressive and violent behaviour when admitted followed by a period of stabilisation and discharge with prescribed medication, which you then don't then take. You will nevertheless remain stable (though still without insight) until the psychosis emerges again. You will continue to use cannabis.
35. Both experts agree that you were without a doubt psychotic at the time of the offence. Your use of cannabis is not irrelevant but did not cause the psychosis.
36. Dr Patel says that you suffered relapse into schizophrenia with symptoms of paranoid delusions about Chris and auditory hallucinations precipitated by non-compliance with psychotropic medication possibly exacerbated by cannabis use.
37. **MANSLAUGHTER GUIDELINES**
The sentencing options available for me are imprisonment, a s37 Hospital Order with or without a s41 Restriction Order under the 1983 Mental Health Act and a hybrid order under s45 A of the Act.

The Sentencing Guideline for the Sentencing of offences of Manslaughter by reason of diminished responsibility requires me to go through a number of steps in order to arrive at the most appropriate sentence.

38. **Degree of responsibility retained**

Step one requires me to assess whether the degree of responsibility for the killing retained by you is high, medium or lower.

In that context I have to consider the extent to which your responsibility was diminished by the mental disorder at the time of the offence and all relevant information available to the court.

39. There is no doubt that you were psychotic at the time of the offence: see Dr Cumming para 288. You have an established history of paranoid schizophrenia, with repeated admissions to hospital. There are cogent accounts from your family of a marked deterioration in your mental state in the days leading up to the killing. You had been off medication for a year. Whilst your use of cannabis exacerbates your symptoms, the fact that your symptoms persisted in hospital when you were abstinent indicates that cannabis was not responsible for your symptoms.

40. As Dr Cumming notes, you had a range of persecutory delusions and specific auditory hallucinations relating to Chris whom you believed was evil.

41. Dr Patel agrees. He states (at pp31-2) "Precipitated by non-compliance with psychotropic medication and possibly exacerbated by illicit drug use, (you were) suffering (symptoms) arising from a relapsed state of schizophrenia.

42. I entirely accept those diagnoses and assessments. However, as the guideline requires, I cannot overlook your non-compliance with medication, your failure to seek medical advice and your heavy cannabis use which together increase your level of responsibility.

I assess the level of responsibility retained by you as medium.

43. At Step 2 I have to consider the starting point and range of sentence. That gives a starting point of 15 years and a range of 10-25 years.

44. The aggravating factors include the use of strangulation and the use of a weapon.

45. The mitigation beyond your mental illness is your lack of any serious previous offending.

46. Step 3 requires me to consider Dangerousness. I have no doubt and Dr Patel agrees, that you are a dangerous offender. I must therefore

consider whether a life sentence or an extended sentence is appropriate in your case. Were I to take the view that either immediate imprisonment or a hybrid order under s45A were appropriate I would impose a discretionary life sentence.

47. However I have also to consider whether a Hospital Order is the best way of dealing with you bearing in mind all the factors and considerations set out in writing by Dr Cumming and Dr Patel and by Dr Cumming orally before me today.
48. Both experts are of the opinion that the best way to deal with you is by way of a s37 Hospital Order with a s41 Restriction.
49. In the light of the level of responsibility retained by you a penal element to the sentence is important and, if possible, should be imposed. . However, I accept that that could only on the facts of this case be done by way of a hybrid order pursuant to S45A accompanied by a Life Sentence. As Dr Cumming points out if such an order were made you could remain in hospital until deemed fit to be discharged. You would then be returned to prison. Should you relapse there is no power to return you to hospital under s45A. You would in those circumstances, be under the auspices of the parole board for consideration of when it would be safe to release you. Their powers are limited in comparison with the Mental Health Services who, if a s37/41 order is made could control your release, organise secure and medium secure facilities and recall you should you relapse.
50. in all the circumstances I feel constrained to impose the orders proposed by Dr Patel and Dr Cumming since the criteria in s37(2) are undoubtedly met. I therefore impose concurrent S37 MHA orders on Counts 2 and 3. There will be s41 restriction orders attached to the s37 orders which will last indefinitely.
51. Count 1 will be left on the file.
Surcharge.

