



THE RECORDER OF SHEFFIELD

SENTENCING REMARKS

OF

THE RECORDER OF SHEFFIELD
HIS HONOUR JUDGE JEREMY RICHARDSON KC

AT

THE CROWN COURT AT SHEFFIELD

ON

FRIDAY 11TH JULY 2025

REX

V

OLIVER CORNEY

Preamble

You may remain seated. You must listen with care to what I am about to say.

In the printed version of these sentencing remarks there will be headings for ease of reference.

These sentencing remarks will be made available to you, your lawyers, the press and the public a short while after the conclusion of this hearing. I also direct that the printed version of these remarks shall be placed within the relevant section of the Digital Case System.

These proceedings are being recorded for broadcast on television news to enable the general public to better understand the process of sentencing.

The public have a right to know what is being done in their name. There must be transparency in sentencing.

These sentencing remarks will also be placed upon the judiciary website.

Introduction

Oliver Corney, you are aged 35 years.

You fall for sentence in respect of your guilty pleas to the following crimes:

1. Causing Grievous Bodily Harm with Intent to Cause Grievous Bodily Harm contrary to section 18 of the Offences Against the Person Act 1861.
2. Possession of a firearm with intent to cause fear of violence contrary to section 16 of the Firearms Act 1968.

In respect of count 1 the maximum sentence is life imprisonment.

In respect of count 2 it is 10 years.

It must be made clear at the outset of these sentencing remarks that those who open fire with a gun aiming at another person in a public place intending very serious injury, must expect, and will receive, long prison sentences. Such conduct is exceptionally serious. Two of the statutory purposes of sentencing are the punishment of offenders and the protection of the public. In a case such as this, those two matters must be accentuated.

You pleaded guilty 10 days before the trial was due to commence. It is my judgment I should reduce the inevitable sentence of imprisonment by approximately 15% by reason of your plea and the stage at which you entered it.

The events for which you are to be sentenced occurred during the evening of 28th June 2024 at the Red Lion Public House at Wath-upon-Deane in South Yorkshire.

This case involved you shooting a firearm at a person whom you heard had an argument in a busy public house. You were not present during that argument. You came to the scene and opened fire three times. You missed individual at whom you were aiming and shot a very brave woman – Mrs Bonita Page – the licensee of the public house – who tried to prevent the earlier argument. She also sought to prevent you and others coming into the public house. She is deserving of the highest praise for her bravery.

You, on the other hand, must be condemned and punished severely for your wanton and highly dangerous actions.

The features of the case are these:

1. There was an argument in a public house with individuals, one of whom was called McIntyre. It appears that incident was about drugs. You were not involved in that. You, however, heard about it.
2. Mrs Page intervened, bravely, and broke up that argument.
3. You acquired a firearm.
4. You went to the public house with a view to shooting McIntyre. There were members of the public in and around the front yard area. There was some form of confrontation with you immediately outside the public house.
5. You opened fire three times into the front outside yard area of the public house intending to grievously harm McIntyre.
6. Instead, you hit Mrs Page in the leg.
7. The consequences for Mrs Page have been exceptionally serious.
8. After the shooting you made off and instructed your partner to dispose of clothing in an endeavour to cover your tracks.
9. You disposed of the firearm. It has never been found.
10. When arrested you made "no comment" in answer to pertinent questions by police officers.

Your conduct, by opening fire in a public place, was exceptionally dangerous and could have killed anyone present.

Not only must I judge the appropriate custodial sentence, but I must also consider whether you are a dangerous offender pursuant to section 308 of the Sentencing Act 2020; and, if you are, whether I should pass a Life Sentence or an Extended Sentence.

You have highly relevant previous convictions.

The Facts

The Red Lion public house is in Wath-upon-Deane. Mrs Page was the licensee. At the front of the premises is a yard area where customers may drink as well as pass through to enter the bar.

It was a busy Friday evening where several customers were sitting outside as well as within the bar.

At approximately 9.30pm an argument erupted inside the public house, which included a man called McIntyre. It moved near the entrance to the bar in the yard area. It is not clear why this argument occurred. It was almost certainly connected to drugs. Mrs Page bravely intervened between two much larger men and broke up the argument which involved scuffling and low level violence. You heard about this by some means.

You retrieved a firearm and at 9.50pm went to the public house area. You were by then wearing a long black leather jacket in which you secreted the gun. There was some form of confrontation in the street outside the public house. Mrs Page was in the yard of the public house as was McIntyre. She had shut the gates to prevent disorder. You opened fire three times aiming for McIntyre. You missed him and shot Mrs Page in the leg. There were gaps of 10 seconds and 3 seconds between the shots. Mrs Page was hit by the third shot. Others were plainly in danger by you opening fire 3 times.

The daughter of Mrs Page was nearby and removed the leggings and trousers her mother was wearing to treat the wound as best she could until the emergency services arrived. The bullet went right through her leg.

You made off immediately and disposed of the firearm.

You also removed clothing which you had worn. You thereafter asked your partner to dispose of that clothing in an endeavour to mask what you had done. Your clothing was, however, recovered.

You were arrested on 3rd July 2024. When interviewed under caution, you made “no comment” replies to all pertinent questions.

The Consequences for Mrs Page

Mrs Page was seriously injured. She was taken to the Major Trauma Department of the Northern General Hospital in Sheffield where an entry and exit wound was found relating to the gunshot through her leg. This caused muscle damage and required surgery to repair that damage. Fortunately, the route of the bullet through her leg missed major arteries. The consultant surgeon has reported that recovery from such muscular damage can be unpredictable.

The consequences of this for Mrs Page have been exceptionally serious. She was an active member of the community where she lived. She enjoyed being the licensee of the public house, but she has been forced to relinquish that role due to her injuries. It was a lucrative career. She is now in receipt of public assistance, and her husband has been forced to give up his work to care for her.

I have considered her personal statement and various other reports verifying the state in which she is now:

- When she was shot she was terrified and in immense pain.

- She was an independent and resourceful woman. She is now highly dependant on others. This was particularly so in the immediate aftermath of the shooting.
- The financial consequences of her leaving her lucrative role have been significant.
- She regards herself as a shadow of her former self.
- She has scarring on her leg.
- She continues to be in pain.
- She struggles to walk
- She now has PTSD.
- There is heightened anxiety. She becomes very scared during ordinary aspects of life.
- The acute anxiety is preventing her from working.
- She has sleep problems.
- She has recurring nightmares
- She is undergoing long term therapy

It is my judgment, the consequences for Mrs Page, having been shot, are exceptionally serious . Her life has been sabotaged from what it was. This is life changing and very detrimental to her.

Others have been affected too.

Previous Convictions

You have previous convictions.

In summary you committed 9 offences of violence between 2013 and 2025; 7 sexual offences between 2009 and 2018; and, 2 offences involving firearms/shotgun and offensive weapons between 2008 and 2018. The remaining matters cover a variety of offending including dishonesty, drug offences, harassment, breach of court orders (restraining orders and notification requirements) as well as public order crimes.

I have considered your criminal past with some care.

The Definitive Guidelines of the Sentencing Council

The categorisation of the case within the Definitive Guideline of the Sentencing Council for the offence under section 18 of the 1861 Act was disputed. The prosecution placed the case in category A1, whereas the defence submitted a lesser category based upon the injuries and consequences for Mrs Page. That was jettisoned this morning when a careful analysis of the guideline took place. Miss Barnes was right to concede the case fell within category A1. She urged me to keep a sense of proportion. That, I shall do.

An adjournment became necessary for the evidence to be clarified. That has now been done and I have already set out the situation.

I have no doubt whatsoever this case falls into category A1.

There is a starting point of 12 years with a range from 9 years to 16 years.

My reasons are straightforward:

- (A) The case plainly falls into category A in terms of culpability as there was an element of premeditation (you deliberately fetched the gun). You also used a highly dangerous weapon (the gun) and there was also an element of revenge.
- (B) In terms of harm, the case is one where there was a grave injury – but not the worst physical injury of its kind – however, the consequences for Mrs Page have been exceptionally serious such that she now has a psychological condition which has a substantial and long term effect on her ability to carry out her normal day to day activities and her ability to work. You have wrecked her life.
- (C) This is all aggravated by your previous criminality; the fact you disposed of the firearm and sought to cover-up the crime. Furthermore, at the time you committed the crimes you were under the influence of alcohol and drugs.

I am also entirely satisfied the case falls within category A1 for the firearms offence where there is a starting point of 8 years and a range of 7 to 9 years.

It is very important I do not double count factors.

I also have regard to the guideline relating to totality. I must pass a sentence which reflects your overall criminality which is both just and proportionate.

It is my intention to structure the sentence such that overall criminality will be reflected in the sentence for the crime under section 18 and the firearms offence will be a concurrent sentence. The sentence on count 1 will be the lead offence.

The PSR and Psychiatric/Psychological Reports

There is a very insightful PSR.

Your baleful upbringing was covered in this report as well as your troubled psychiatric history. You were expelled from numerous schools in your childhood. You were emotionally neglected as a child and your mother was an alcoholic. The probation officer indicates you have displayed a total disregard for the law and breached numerous orders of the courts. It is described as a sustained pattern of offending. Additionally, your relationships have been characterised as disordered, coercive and unstable.

Notwithstanding this truly appalling past, you managed to secure employment as a labourer. However, you are financially unstable which has been exacerbated by addiction to cannabis and cocaine. All these factors provide the backdrop to your extensive criminal past.

The psychiatric report reveals you have:

- An Emotionally Unstable Personality Disorder.
- This leads to emotional dysregulation and impulsivity.
- You also have traits of an Anti-Social Personality Disorder
- You are at grave risk of self-harm.
- In consequence of all of this, you have distorted thinking, disordered impulses, heightened aggression; and this is all worsened by the consumption of drugs.

The conclusion is you pose a high risk of re-offending and pose a high risk of causing serious harm to the public. The PSR also reveals a poor response to previous attempts at supervision.

I have carefully considered the reports of Dr Shenoy – the consultant psychiatrist – and Dr Culligan – the psychologist.

I am in complete agreement with Dr Shenoy that your presentation is complex. It is clear to me you suffered from ADHD as a child and when you stopped taking medication at the age of 18 this caused a serious deterioration in your mental state. You have a long history of cannabis misuse and your attempt at suicide has been set out.

Dr Culligan described you as “emotionally blunted”. She also indicated you are vulnerable and will face difficulties in prison.

Mitigation

The following points of mitigation have been advanced:

1. Your guilty plea.
2. The principle of totality.
3. Your appalling upbringing has been accentuated.
4. The psychiatric situation was advanced as a point of mitigation to explain your criminal conduct.

It was argued that the case fell into a lesser category than A1, but as I have already indicated, in the light of the new information, that argument has been jettisoned.

This morning Miss Barnes has indicated it is the hope and expectation that, once sentenced, you will be able to access the necessary medication – over

and above that which you are currently taking – so that your mental state may improve. That is the hope. It is unclear and unpredictable whether that will succeed, and if so, to what extent.

I have also been urged to pull back from contemplation of determining you to be a dangerous offender. Even if I do so categorise you, Miss Barnes has submitted I should not impose an extended sentence nor a life sentence.

The submissions on dangerousness were to the effect that I need to keep a sense of proportion. Miss Barnes has suggested that you are not a dangerous offender because she asserts there has been a change whilst in custody. That is true. Your mental state may have declined because you made a suicide attempt. You are undertaking courses and work whilst in custody. The main point is that there has now been a formal diagnosis of your mental state and there is, therefore, potential for improvement.

Miss Barnes had to concede the future is unpredictable.

Dangerous Offender

Section 308 of the Sentencing Act 2020 furnishes the court with the test to be applied when an assessment of dangerousness is necessary. I must ask myself whether you pose a significant risk to members of the public of serious harm caused to them which is occasioned by you committing further serious crimes (specified offences)?

I must consider all relevant information about you – including past offending, the facts of the current criminality, your mental state, and history.

The facts of this crime alone make you a dangerous man. You had an argument, you fetched a gun and you opened fire in a public place. When your criminal past is considered, the nature of that offending, and your psychiatric state, the picture is unquestionably one where you pose immense risks of causing serious harm again to a member of the public by you committing a very serious crime of violence or a firearms offence. I have to make that decision now based on current information – not upon hopes or speculation as to how things may be in the years ahead.

My conclusion, that you are plain and obviously a dangerous offender, is not a marginal decision.

Conclusion

My conclusions are straightforward.

On 28th June 2024 you opened fire with a gun three times into the yard of a busy public house. You intended really serious injury be caused to McIntyre stemming from an argument he had earlier in the evening – almost certainly connected to drugs. You missed him and hit the publican – Mrs Page. She was grievously injured and the consequences for her have been exceptionally

serious – you have wrecked her life. She was a brave woman. You were affected by alcohol. You could have maimed others by opening fire three times. It was only a matter of good fortune that you did not. Your conduct was exceptionally dangerous.

You made off and disposed of the gun.

You have an Emotionally Unstable Personality Disorder whereby you act impulsively and with aggression due to your distorted thinking.

You are highly dangerous and pose dangers to yourself and, most certainly, to others.

The protection of the public and the punishment of you for your serious offending is my paramount concern in this case.

It is my view that I must move upwards from the starting point for an A1 offence on count 1 – namely 12 years – to reflect overall criminality as the lead offence and the aggravating features that I have identified. It is necessary for me to keep a sense of proportion.

However, as I have already stated, those who use a firearm in a public place by opening fire intending to cause really serious injury to another must expect, and will receive, severe sentences. Although I take into account that your life has been marinated in emotional instability, mental disorder and deprivation, you must be punished for this. You are plainly dangerous. The public must be protected.

My analysis is as follows:

1. The sentence on count 1 will reflect overall criminality and will be the lead sentence.
2. I have considered imposing a life sentence, but I do not feel I would be justified in imposing one in the circumstances of this case. I have given it serious consideration. It is the unpredictability of your mental state that has caused me to consider that with some care. You have narrowly avoided a life sentence.
3. Following a trial and absent any mitigation, the sentence to reflect overall criminality would have been 15 years. I am justified in moving that high due to the fact a gun was discharged three times in a public place aiming at a human being.
4. I will reduce that notional determinate sentence by 1 year to reflect your mental health problems. You lived your life in a cauldron of mental illness which affected every aspect of your humanity. There is a level of generosity in reducing the sentence by that amount, but I am conscious of the guidance of the Sentencing Council in respect of

sentencing those with a mental disorder, particularly one such as yours. It serves, up to a point, to explain your conduct.

5. At that stage your guilty plea reduction of 15% applies. That reduces the sentence by just over 25 months. I shall round the sentence to 11 years and 9 months.
6. I am entirely satisfied you are a dangerous offender. I repeat that is not a marginal decision.
7. I have no doubt whatsoever that an extended sentence is demanded in this case to provide enhanced protection to the public.
8. I shall impose the maximum extension permitted by law to 5 years.
9. I shall impose the necessary statutory charge and all consequential orders.

The Sentence will, therefore, be an Extended Sentence of 16 years and 9 months with a custodial term of 11 years and 9 months with an extension period of 5 years. That is imposed on count 1.

I impose a concurrent sentence of 6 years on count 2.

Sentence

You must now stand.

The sentence I pass upon you is an Extended Sentence of 16 years and 9 months on count 1 with a custodial term of 11 years and 9 months with an extension period of 5 years. On count 2, I impose a concurrent sentence of imprisonment of 6 years.

The necessary statutory charge and all other consequential orders are imposed.

There will come a time when you are released from custody. That will be at a stage to be determined by the Parole Board. It will be at a time when the risks you pose can be safely managed after you have served a substantial proportion of the custodial element of the sentence. If you breach the terms of that licence you may be recalled to prison to serve the entirety of the sentence.

The extension period is designed to protect the public.

Take him down.