

## **The Central Criminal Court**

### **R -v- Oguzcan Dereli Sentencing Remarks**

HHJ Sarah Whitehouse KC

22<sup>nd</sup> July 2025

1. Oguzcan Dereli. You may remain seated for the moment.

The victim surcharge will apply in this case.

2. On 18th July 2025, you were convicted by the jury of murder, and of having an offensive weapon in a public place.
3. The victim was Abdul Pouget, who was only 20 years of age. He was born on 1st August 2004. The Head of Sport and Youth Services at Coram Fields, and a colleague of his, Basil Andrews, described Mr Pouget as a highly talented footballer; they say he was kind and respectful, a great leader and role model to his peers and “with a smile that could light up the London Eye”.
4. Kawsar Pouget, Abdul’s mother, on behalf of the whole family, said that Abdul “brought warmth and laughter into every room. He connected us. He was without question his grandparents’ favourite. He was great and gentle with little kids. His younger cousins loved spending time with him. They cannot understand that they will no longer see him. Losing Abs has reminded us of the fragility of life, but this pain is different. His murder shattered the natural order of things and broke something deep in us. A young man full of life and potential should not have ended in such a violent way. Every member of our family carries this loss. His younger siblings lost their motivator. As his parents, we lost our son. No parent should have to bury their child. His friends, relatives, and community are now left with an emptiness that cannot be replaced. Birthdays, once joyful, are now marked by his absence. What was taken from us cannot be returned. We are devastated. Our family gatherings now take place at the graveyard.”

5. Abdul's brother, Badruddin, has expressed the loss in a beautifully written and very moving statement which he has read out himself in court this morning.
6. I would like to record here my admiration for, and gratitude to, the family of Abdul Pouget, who have attended every day of the trial and have travelled with Abdul through parts of his life and the last minutes of it. It must have been very painful and distressing for them but they have borne it with quiet dignity and fortitude.
7. The facts are very simple and the events were all caught on CCTV cameras.

On 18<sup>th</sup> October 2024, at just before 9.30pm, Abdul Pouget rode his moped into Back Hill, Clerkenwell, and stopped. About 50 seconds later, you, Mr Dereli, drove into Back Hill. You stopped near to Abdul Pouget, and got out of your car, leaving the engine running. You were holding a large machete. It's never been recovered but you yourself told the jury that it was about 2 feet in length.

8. You approached Abdul Pouget, at some speed, and attacked him. There were two strikes: the first did not injure Mr. Pouget, and probably didn't connect with his body at all, but the second caused a wound to his right leg which severed his iliac artery, causing massive blood loss. Mr. Pouget died as a result of complications arising from his injuries on 21 October 2024.
9. You ran back to your car and drove off. The whole incident took about 13 seconds. The next night you checked into a local hotel and were arrested at the hotel the next morning.
10. You did not answer questions in your police interview, but you gave evidence at the trial. You claimed that you had no intention of causing any injury to Mr Pouget when you got out of your car. You said that he had accused you two weeks earlier of robbing a friend of his of £1000, and demanded that you repay the money. He threatened you.
11. You said you were terrified of him, and got out of your car when you saw him that night because you wanted to tell him that you had nothing to do with the robbery. You took the machete with you to deter him from attacking you. The reason you

carried a machete in your car was to intimidate people who might try to attack you while you were out and about selling cannabis, which is what you did each night.

12. You claimed that as you ran towards him, Abdul Pouget said “are you fucking dumb, do you want me to fucking shank you?” in a very loud voice. You replied “you’re not getting your money; leave me alone”. Then you thought he was going for a knife in the handle bar cover of his bike so you swung your machete the first time. Then you say Mr Pouget produce a knife and so you stabbed him. You said that was instinctive and only to defend yourself. The jury rejected that account.

#### Antecedents

13. You were born on 8th April 1998. You are now 27 years old. You had an unhappy childhood, living in poverty in cramped conditions with 9 siblings, a mother in poor health and an unemployed father. You were excluded from school.

You have convictions for 39 offences on 17 occasions. They include two offences, which were racially aggravated, of causing harassment, alarm or distress; eight offences of theft, one offence of attempted theft, and one offence of having a bladed article in 2017; one offence of theft and two offences of attempted theft in 2018, which involved snatching mobile telephones while on a moving moped; and an offence of using threatening, abusive or insulting words or behaviour in 2024.

#### Murder

14. The sentence for murder is fixed by law and is a mandatory sentence of life imprisonment.
15. I must set a minimum term which you must serve before you can be considered for release. The aggravating and mitigating factors may result in a minimum term of any length.
16. The Prosecution suggest that there is evidence upon which I could conclude that you stabbed Mr Pouget in the course of, or in furtherance of, a robbery. That is because you have a number of previous convictions for mobile phone thefts and in this case there was evidence that you initially reached for Mr Pouget’s mobile telephone,

striking down with your machete when he resisted, which is what may have caused the cutting of the headphone cable.

17. If I were so to find, the starting point would be 30 years. However, I cannot be satisfied that this was a murder committed in the course of a robbery, for the following reasons:
  - i) You could have quite easily seized the mobile telephone and run back to your car without the need to stab Mr Pouget; and you have never used a knife in the course of committing mobile telephone thefts in the past.
  - ii) There are other possible motives for you to have stabbed Mr Pouget. We shall probably never know why you chose to get out of your car that night and run over and stab Mr Pouget. There were rumours on the streets, set out in a disclosed statement of Mr Pouget's brother, which suggested some sort of pre-existing animosity over a debt (which was your account in the trial); but some of the rumours were that you and Mr Pouget had had an altercation that very evening in which he had got the better of you; and that your friends had encouraged you to go out and seek revenge.
18. We will never know the truth, but I cannot safely conclude that the motive was theft and that this was a murder committed for gain.
19. The starting point for the minimum term is therefore 25 years because you took the machete to the scene of the murder intending to commit an offence, and to have it available for use, and you did use it to commit the murder.

#### Aggravating Features

20. The following aggravating features appear to be present:
  - i) Your previous convictions: none were for the use of physical violence but they included three involving the use of threatening and distressing or alarming words and one for carrying a knife.
  - ii) You disposed of the weapon and your clothing after the murder, and you sought to evade arrest in order to frustrate the police investigation.

### Mitigating features

21. An intention to cause serious bodily harm rather than to kill is a potential mitigating factor. I must determine this according to the evidence. I have concluded that I cannot be sure that you intended to kill. The first strike caused no injuries and may not even have made contact with Mr Pouget. The second was towards his groin and leg although it may not have been particularly well aimed. Many people are unaware that a stab wound in that area carries a great risk of death because of the presence of the iliac artery. You did not seek to inflict any further wounds.
22. While I cannot be sure that there was an intention to kill, wielding a knife of that size and inflicting a deep injury using moderate force is plainly very dangerous, and the risk of death resulting is high so the mitigation is limited.
23. It has been suggested to me that this was not pre-meditated. I agree that there was insufficient evidence to show that you followed Mr Pouget that night and deliberately tracked him down, but I am satisfied that you had formed the intention to cause him really serious harm when you stopped and got out of your car, purposefully and with speed carrying that machete.
24. You are still relatively young, and shortly before the incident you became a father. I cannot help but note, though, that although you were bold enough to continue to go out selling drugs, you had not visited your baby son because you said you were too scared to do so, and the woman who checked into the hotel with you the night after the murder was not the mother of your son. It does not appear that you had yet engaged with your son.
25. You have been a model prisoner and have given assistance to the authorities relating to the death of another prisoner. In a letter to me this morning, you have expressed your remorse for having taken Mr Pouget's life: you have repeated that you did not intend to do so. You recognise that your actions have caused incalculable distress to Abdul Pouget's family.

### Having an offensive weapon in a public place

26. The maximum sentence for having an offensive weapon in a public place is 4 years' imprisonment. This was a category A1 case with a starting point of 18 months. However, I view the possession of this weapon as being closely bound up with the aggravating and mitigating factors of the murder and I must be careful not to double count those features. The sentence will therefore be concurrent.

Stand up please Mr Dereli.

#### Sentence

27. The sentence for murder is fixed by law. This means there is only one sentence I can pass, namely a sentence of life imprisonment.
28. I must decide the minimum period that you must serve before you are first considered for release on licence.
29. The Parole Board will then decide whether you can leave custody at that stage, and if so on what terms. If you are refused parole at that time you will remain in custody, subject to regular reviews by the Parole Board. If and when you are released you will be on licence for the rest of your life. If you break the terms of your licence you will be liable to return to custody.
30. I consider the appropriate starting point is 25 years, because you brought a knife to the scene intending to commit an offence and to have it available for use and you did use it to murder Mr Pouget. Having considered all the features in this case, including the aggravating and mitigating features which I have set out, I fix the minimum term which you will serve in custody, before the Parole Board may first consider your possible release, at 23 years and 92 days.

On Count 1, Murder, I sentence you to life imprisonment with a minimum term of 23 years and 92 days, which is 24 years, less the time you have served on remand of 273 days.

On Count 2, I sentence you to a concurrent term of 2 years.

31. My thanks to all counsel for their assistance.

