

R
v
Farah Damji

SENTENCE.

1. On the 7th May 2025 the jury found you guilty all four offences on the indictment. Sentence was adjourned until today to allow you time to obtain any medical and psychiatric reports you wished to be considered by the court. These have now been provided by your solicitors.
2. I have read the recent medical report from Mr Dibendu Betel dated 25.6.25 (Clinical Lead/Consultant Oncoplastic Breast Surgery UCH) and the psychiatric report from Dr Gauruv Malhan dated 12th June 2025 (Consultant Forensic Psychiatrist).
3. In addition, I have read the several reports which were served pre-trial. These include two reports from Mr Graham Rogers, a psychologist.
4. I have also read the recently served witness statement from Susan Pease Banitt which provides her insight into your character.
5. I thank counsel for their very helpful written and oral submissions relating to sentence.
6. Dr Nigel Gould-Davis is in his late 50s. He had in the past been employed by the Foreign Office. He had been a diplomat and that included a period of two years as the British ambassador to Belarus. He then moved into the private sector and at the time we are dealing with in this trial worked for the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS). His expertise is in Russian & Central Asian affairs. He would be called upon for his opinion on matters relevant to that part of the world and, on occasion, would be interviewed in the media. At the time the offences the subject of this trial were committed by you, Dr Gould-Davis had been engaged as a witness in a court case where he was providing expert evidence against Russians in a commercial dispute.
7. You met Dr Gould-Davis online at the end of July 2023 on a dating site called Bumble. Shortly after your first meeting you started a relationship with him, seeing one another frequently and spending time at his flat, going to restaurants and the theatre with him and outwardly engaging in a normal relationship with him.
8. In your evidence you claimed that you had changed your name by Deed Poll to Noor Higham whilst you were living in Ireland between 2018 and 2020. Whether or not you had changed your name as you claimed, Noor Higham is the only name Dr Gould-Davis knew you by until the 7th February 2024, by which time he had ended your relationship. Your claim in evidence that Dr Gould-Davis was aware throughout your relationship of your true name and criminal history was a lie.
9. From September 2023 you sent, or caused to be sent, emails and messages to Dr Gould-Davis, to his employers, work colleagues and others associated with his professional life including to solicitors, to politicians, to a foreign ambassador, and to news organisations, as well as to Dr Gould-Davis's brother. These contained a torrent of abuse and lies about him. A fake Twitter account and a fake website were set up containing similar abuse and lies. When you learned he was considering making an application for an academic post in the USA, similar abuse and lies were sent to Harvard University. He was also threatened with expensive legal action in relation to what was falsely claimed had been his conduct.

10. The content of this material was designed to undermine Dr Gould-Davis's character, his professional credibility and competence. He was accused of being investigated under the Official Secrets Act. They accused his employers (IISS) and, implicitly, him too of being involved in a criminal money laundering organisation. They accused him of being violent to you, of being a serial abuser of women and a danger to women. They maligned his mother and described what was alleged were unhealthy relationships with his family. He was accused of being responsible for what was claimed to have been two suicide attempts by you. Messages expressed the desire that Dr Gould-Davis suffers and in one he was encouraged to commit suicide.
11. You were aware that Dr Gould-Davis had suffered from depression in the past. The messages, emails and false and abusive material generated by you also included false claims that he was suffering from serious mental illness such as being bipolar. When you learned that Dr Gould-Davis had consulted a solicitor with a view to taking legal action against one of the persons whose name was attached to some of the most offensive emails, you attempted to thwart this by contacting Dr Gould-Davis's solicitor, telling the solicitor that Dr Gould-Davis was mentally ill and that the solicitor should not take instructions from him.
12. You stole a sensitive document written by Dr Gould-Davis in relation to his expert evidence in the legal action against Russians and threats were made to disclose the document to the Russians. Dr Gould-Davis was obliged to inform his employers and the relevant solicitors of this loss. Because of the manner in which those in Russia may respond to persons deemed to have offended them, he believed that the threatened disclosure, if carried out, could place him in danger from retribution. He still does not know whether the document was passed to those who might wish to cause him harm.
13. All this material formed the major part of the evidence in your trial. It is unnecessary for me to elaborate further on the detail of the lies and abuse about Dr Gould-Davis contained in the material generated by you; these were explored in detail at your trial. Suffice it to say that they amounted to a very deliberate and prolonged campaign to assassinate his character and good name and to induce in him extreme anxiety and fear. The cumulative effect of this prolonged campaign by you did cause Dr Gould-Davis great fear and distress. After several months of your campaign, he decided to leave London and work from the IISS Berlin office for a period of time in the hope of bringing to an end the campaign against him. A forlorn hope, as it turned out. The stalking continued with email threats and abuse and repeated attempts to contact him by telephone.
14. Although still unaware that you were responsible for the campaign of stalking, as a result of your attempts to interfere with Dr Gould-Davis's instructions to his solicitor and other behaviour by you, the relationship ended before he left for Berlin. Before leaving for Berlin, he returned property belonging to you which was at his flat, leaving it for you at The View Café. Your claim that he included his passport amongst this property was a lie.
15. In order to conceal your identity as the person who was behind this campaign against Dr Gould-Davis, the false and offensive material was written under a variety of false names. You also used the name of a former girlfriend of Dr Gould-Davis about whom you had learned during your relationship with him. Investigations by police into the persons whose three names featured as the authors of many of the stalking emails and messages found no evidence that those persons existed.
16. You claimed during the trial that you were not responsible for setting up any false twitter account or website and you denied sending the stalking messages. You claimed that the three names the

prosecution say are false names are persons who do exist, but you declined to provide information to allow the police to trace them. You said that it was not your job to provide that information.

17. Whilst you were still in a relationship with Dr Gould-Davis you had stolen his passport. He had planned to spend Christmas 2023 in Spain with his mother who lived there. By stealing his passport you ensured that he was unable to travel to Spain and, instead, was available to spend Christmas with you.
18. During your relationship with Dr Gould-Davis and without his knowledge or consent you obtained details of his credit cards. You carried out numerous fraudulent transactions by which you made several online purchases from the fashion shop Paul Smith and made several money transfers to a bank account under your control. The value of the fraudulent purchases and money transfers together came to a total of £13,621. Your claim that these transactions were carried out with the consent of Dr Gould-Davis was rejected by the jury.
19. It was when Dr Gould-Davis was in Berlin and was seeking to find out who it was who had created a fake website in his name that he discovered the name Farah Damji for the first time and saw a photograph of you. His research revealed to him your criminal history. Until he discovered your true identity, he believed that three persons whose names signed many of the stalking messages and emails were people who existed and were responsible for generating them and for the campaign against him. He had not considered that you were the author or instigator of them. When Dr Gould-Davis finally realised that you were behind this hateful campaign against him and learned your true identity, he reported his discovery to police.
20. Although you were aware that Dr Gould-Davis had gone to Berlin, you did not know where he was staying and so you set about trying to locate him:

The camera doorbell at Dr Gould-Davis's London flat showed two occasions when men attended at the door of his flat. On one occasion your voice could be heard in the background.

You travelled to Spain to the location at or near where Dr Gould-Davis's mother lived.

You contacted or caused to be contacted Dr Gould-Davis's brother who lived in the United States.

21. You were eventually able to locate where Dr Gould-Davis was staying in Berlin from viewing a CNN television interview in which he was being interviewed about the death of a Russian prisoner. The interview was recorded in a hotel bedroom and you were able to identify the hotel in Berlin. On the 10th March, you sent or caused to be sent an email to Dr Gould-Davis which purported to come from Dr Gould-Davis's former girlfriend. It told him that "Holly", one of the false names used in stalking messages, had found him and that she was in Berlin. Such was Dr Gould-Davis's anxiety at his location having been discovered that he felt obliged to change his location in Berlin more than once.
22. The day after sending that email to Dr Gould-Davis you set off to travel to Berlin, only being prevented from doing so by being arrested at Heathrow Airport. Amongst your property with you on arrest was Dr Gould-Davis's missing passport. You also had with you a laptop and mobile phones, the passwords and PINs for which you declined to disclose.
23. You have been in custody since your arrest at Heathrow Airport on the 11th March 2024.

24. Dr Gould-Davis has provided two very moving Victim Personal Statements dated the 4th April 2024 and the 4th June 2025 which he read out in court. He described the impact your campaign of stalking has had on him. I summarise some of what he has said.
25. He describes the period in which you pursued your campaign against him as the darkest and most frightening period of his life. He said he feels manipulated and that you trapped him in a wholly believable world of controlling deception. He described the efforts he made to support you during your medical examinations and treatment following your cancer diagnosis, despite your, at times, volatile behaviour. Only later did he realise that, whilst he was seeking to support you, you were pursuing this campaign of psychological cruelty against him.
26. Dr Gould-Davis described the impact on his mental health as severe; he was obliged to take time off work, needing to see a therapist and having to take anti-anxiety medication.
27. He described the humiliation he suffered as a result of your behaviour. He described remaining acutely fearful for his safety by the threats made against him and the systematic efforts you made to destroy his career and reputation by the dissemination of your lies. He makes the point that, not only were you sending this material to colleagues and professional contacts, you copied the messages to him with the intention to induce in him acute fear and anxiety.
28. In his 4th June 2025 statement, Dr Gould Davis describe the still ongoing effect of your behaviour on him by the continuing online vilification, abuse and false allegations, as well as emails and correspondence sent directly to him. He gives as an example one document sent to him which was a copy of his first Victim Personal Statement, but which had what appeared to be defence annotations on it.
29. Whilst Dr Gould-Davis was giving evidence in your trial, he was sent an email which had attached to it a copy of a voice note which you had dictated by phone from the prison. He described suffering great distress on hearing your voice. He broke down in tears twice whilst giving his evidence and his extreme distress was obvious to all. His breakdown when in the witness box was, he said, subsequently mocked in a message on Twitter posted by your magazine, The View.
30. Dr Gould-Davis had described in his evidence his safety concerns due to opinions he has given as an expert on Russian affairs. In his 4th June statement he describes his anxiety for the safety of his mother in light of your evidence during the trial that your visit to the town in Spain where his mother lives was when accompanied by a Russian oligarch.
31. He describes you as having launched what he described as a vexatious civil complaint and criminal complaint against him, resulting in him incurring substantial legal costs. He also describes the financial loss he had incurred by having had to re-locate to Berlin for a period and for the additional security measures he felt necessary to try to ensure his safety. He continues to feel unsafe in his home and is considering moving from that home.
32. Dr Gould-Davis believes that your campaign of stalking has continued since you have been in prison and has prolonged the psychological harm generated by your conduct before your arrest. Absent any evidence that anyone else might have a motive to continue the campaign of stalking which had led to your arrest, it may be understandable that he believes you are the person responsible for generating the continuing vilification of him, but I make it clear that I sentence you only for the conduct within the dates set out in Count 1.

33. Dr Gould-Davis believes that these continued actions have prolonged the psychological harm he had suffered as a result of your behaviour prior to your arrest. In October 2024 he was diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder with symptoms of persistent nightmares, intrusive thoughts, anxiety and hypervigilance. This has affected his ability to carry out sustained work. He is currently undergoing trauma-focussed Cognitive Behaviour Therapy.

34. Dr Gould-Davis concluded his 4th April 2024 VPS statement as follows:

Although “stalking” is the correct legal term, it does not do full justice to what I have experienced. “Stalking” implies the hunting of prey. But for most of this period we were in a relationship and spending time together. Damji observed me at close quarters as I shared my most private fears and vulnerabilities with her. She then used these to refine her psychological torture of me. This was not stalking, but vivisection.

35. You are 58 years old. Your criminal record is a long and truly appalling record of committing offences of dishonesty, stalking and related offences.

- In 1995 you were sentenced to 6 months imprisonment plus 5 years’ probation in New York for theft committed in 1993.
- In 1996 you received a caution for the offence of theft from a dwelling.
- In 1997 you received a caution for two offences of obtaining property by deception.
- In 2001 you were fined for attempting to obtain property by deception.
- In 2005 you were sentenced to a total of 2 years imprisonment for 17 offences of theft and obtaining property or services by deception committed between 2002 and 2005. A further 25 offences were taken into consideration.
- At the same hearing in 2005 you were sentenced to a consecutive sentence of 18 months imprisonment for doing acts tending and intended to pervert the course of justice. Whilst your trial was awaited you took steps to try to interfere in the pending prosecution. You posed as a Home Office staff member and contacted a member of CPS staff. You also posed as a CPS employee and contacted a witness and others involved in the pending criminal prosecution.
- In 2010 you were sentenced to 15 months imprisonment for seven offences under the Fraud Act.

More recently:

- In 2016 you were convicted and sentenced to five years imprisonment for three offences of stalking involving serious alarm or distress. Those offences took place in 2013 and 2014 and you committed the second and third stalking offence when on bail in respect of the first offence. The facts of the stalking, your behaviour and methods, bear remarkable similarities to the behaviour and methods you employed in stalking Dr Gould-Davis and with the similar purpose of destroying your victims’ lives and reputations.
- As a result of those convictions, you were made the subject of a Restraining Order which restrained you from acting by the various means identified in the Order in relation to a number of persons linked to your stalking trial. Following your release from the sentence

of imprisonment for the stalking offences, you breached that Order in 2018. You then absconded during your trial for breaching the Restraining Order, fled the jurisdiction and were finally extradited from Ireland back to England in 2020. Having served your sentence for the breach of the Restraining Order you were released, but were subsequently recalled to prison due to breaching your licence conditions.

36. You were finally released from prison a few days before you made contact with Dr Gould-Davis via the Bumble dating site in July 2023 and it was within weeks that you started your campaign of stalking against him.
37. In August 2023 you noticed symptoms of what was confirmed the following month to be breast cancer. Since your arrest you have undergone surgery whilst in custody. I have taken note of the report from Mr Betal and, in particular, your current prognosis which suggests your life-expectancy may be considerably shortened. You have missed what Mr Betal described as the windows for chemotherapy and radiotherapy treatment. The defence has, this morning, uploaded what they say is chemotherapy and radiotherapy chronology of events
38. I have also taken account of the very comprehensive report from Dr Malhan. I note, however, that Dr Malhan placed considerable reliance on your account of your history which, given your long history of dishonesty, I cannot regard as entirely reliable unless corroborated by other evidence. Nevertheless, I accept Dr Malhan's assessment that, at the time of his recent examination, you presented with features consistent with:
 - Generalised Anxiety Disorder.
 - Depression.
 - Complex Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.
 - Borderline Pattern aka Emotionally Unstable Personality Disorder.
39. Dr Malhan also noted your previous history of benzodiazepine dependency and harmful misuse of cocaine, though this appears may have been some years ago.
40. Dr Malhan observed that custody was likely to precipitate and perpetuate your symptoms. He concluded that you had experienced a number of psychosocial stressors at material times, including previous court proceedings, being in and out of prison, the breast cancer diagnosis and the relationship as you described it with your victim in the current case.
41. I am invited by your counsel to pay particular attention to Paragraph 43.7 of Dr Malham's report in which he outlines the manifestation of a Borderline Pattern disorder and explains symptoms, some of which seem to accord with your diagnosis. But your psychiatric/psychological history cannot in my view explain why it is you chose to behave in the cruel way you behaved towards Dr Gould-Davis and indeed towards your previous victims. I accept that prison is likely to perpetuate and may even exacerbate the features of your mental health identified by Dr Malhan, but your behaviour was entirely yours to control and it was your decision and choice to conduct this wholly unjustified and appalling campaign against Dr Gould-Davis.
42. I regard your medical prognosis as providing some mitigation in this case; however, given your history of similar offending, it is difficult to see how it can provide more than some limited mitigation.

43. **Sentencing Council Guidelines:**

44. I will address the issue of totality in the sentences I pass and whether there should be concurrent or consecutive sentences.

Count 1 Stalking:

45. It is the prosecution submission that this is a Category A1 offence. The defence disagrees and submits it is a B1 offence.
46. I am in no doubt that the culpability for this offence falls into Category A. Your conduct and the various means by which you pursued your campaign of stalking was intended to maximise Dr Gould-Davis's fear and distress. Your conduct was intended to and succeeded in maximising Dr Gold-Davis's fear and distress and it persisted over a lengthy period.
47. I am in no doubt that the threats made to disclose the Russia document to those against whom Dr Gould-Davis was giving expert evidence were designed by you with the intention of causing him maximum fear that he may become the subject of violent retribution by those who would be displeased by what was contained in the document you stole. And you succeeded in achieving that.
48. The persistent false accusations and threats made against Dr Gould-Davis about all aspects of his private and professional life in the very many emails, messages and material sent to him and its disseminated to others was designed to and succeeded in causing the maximum distress to him, as was apparent when he gave evidence during the trial. I am in no doubt that this was your intention.
49. The way in which you went about pursuing this stalking campaign demonstrates a high degree of planning and use of sophisticated means by which to pursue it.
50. This offending was not a brief episode but it persisted over several months between September 2023 and March 2024 when you were arrested.
51. These are factors of high culpability of an extreme nature when examined against this type of offence. Taken together together it makes this a Category A very high culpability offence.
52. I do not accept the submission by the defence which seems to suggest that, because it is now commonplace for this sort of electronic stalking to take place, it somehow lessens the culpability of the perpetrator or the distress caused to the victim.
53. This cannot be regarded as other than an offence falling into Category 1 harm. You caused very serious fear and distress to your victim and significant psychological harm to him.
54. In assessing the level of harm caused by your campaign against Dr Gould-Davis, I have taken account of what he has said in his two Victim Personal Statements. These included that your behaviour caused him to suffer from PTSD and his need to seek psychological treatment. I have also taken into account that he was obliged to leave the UK for a period to try to escape the campaign. He continues to consider whether he should move from his current home to protect his safety.
55. The starting point for a category A1 offence before taking into account aggravating and mitigating factors is 5 years imprisonment, with a range of between 3 ½ years and 8 years. The

nature of your conduct makes this an offence that would attract a sentence very considerably above the starting point sentence.

56. A significant aggravating factor is also your criminal record for very similar behaviour perpetrated against three victims.

Count 2 Theft:

57. This is a Category B medium culpability offence:
58. There are no Category A or C factors present. There was, arguably, some degree of planning as the offence was likely designed to prevent Dr Gould- Davis travelling to visit his mother.
59. The harm you caused falls into Category 4. The monetary value of the passport was low, but its loss caused inconvenience.
60. The starting point for a category B4 offence before taking into account aggravating and mitigating factors is a low level community order, with a range of between a fine and a medium level community order.
61. A significant aggravating factor is your criminal record of committing a great many offences of theft and dishonesty.

Count 3 & 4 Fraud:

62. These two offences involved many fraudulent financial transactions where the potential loss was to Dr Gould-Davis and/or two financial institutions. The offending took place over some 3 months. That makes them, when taken together a Category A high culpability offence. You must have used the opportunity of having access to Dr Gould-Davis's flat and his personal belongings in order to acquire the necessary credit card details to make these purchases and money transfers and so it involved some planning and sophistication, but I agree with the defence that the offences do not amount to a breach of trust in the sense I believe is envisaged in the Sentencing Council Guidelines.
63. The harm you caused for the two offences together falls into Category 4, the value of the potential loss being between £5,000 and £20,000
64. For a loss of £12,500, the Sentencing Council starting point for a category A4 offence before taking into account aggravating and mitigating factors would be 18 months imprisonment, with a range of between a 6 months and 3 years imprisonment.
65. As with Count 2, a significant aggravating factor is your criminal record of committing a great many offences of theft and dishonesty.

Sentences:

66. You were convicted of the stalking and the other charges on overwhelming evidence which took the jury very little time to assess before returning guilty verdicts. It is difficult to comprehend why you should have embarked on this dreadful campaign of stalking and dishonesty against Dr Gould-Davis. One can only speculate as to the reasons for your behaviour, but what you did to Dr Gould Davis was callously and deliberately to set about destroying his life and reputation for no better reason than you were able to do so by employing methods with which, from your

history, you are experienced. Given your history of committing criminal offences of harassments and dishonesty, one conclusion about your behaviour is that it may be explained by nothing more nor less than wickedness and greed.

67. Alongside your many years of criminal activity, you have published a memoir which purported to explain your life and lifestyle. You also participated in setting up a magazine called The View, together with producing podcasts. The magazine and podcasts were vehicles for campaigning on issues addressing the position of women in the criminal justice system, female oppression and violence against women. You were able to recruit prominent people to participate and, in the case of Dr Gould-Davis, persuade him to conduct interviews for the podcasts. After meeting Dr Gould-Davis you also set up the View Café as a centre for the promotion of your legitimate campaigning issues.
68. You are an intelligent woman with, it appears, some talent for writing, painting and engaging in campaigns designed to improve the lot of disadvantaged women. Instead of pursuing a law-abiding life developing and pursuing your talents, you have spent much of your life in the pursuit of crime and in harming others. You may not have used physical violence against Dr Gould-Davis, but you engaged in a campaign of what can only be described as psychological torture which was just as harmful; it is harm from which he continues to suffer. Even following your cancer diagnosis, when Dr Gould-Davis had attempted to provide you with sympathy and moral support, all the while, undeterred, you were pursuing your campaign against him.
69. For reasons of your own, you set about trying to destroy the life and reputation of Dr Gould-Davis and you have shown not an iota of remorse for your behaviour or the harm that you have done. Your behaviour in committing these crimes appears to be a continuation of the life and lifestyle you have adopted over many years. You have reached your late 50s and in my opinion have shown no desire to change your ways and to lead an honest and law-abiding life.
70. The only matter which I treat as providing any mitigation of substance in this case is your ongoing physical ill health which I recognise is serious and potentially life-shortening. Given the gravity of your offending, however, an immediate custodial sentence is inevitable and a sentence of some length is demanded. That is so even after reducing the sentence that I would otherwise have passed by taking into account the only mitigation that I have found, namely your ill-health.
71. In order that the total sentence not unjustly long, I will also reduce substantially the sentences I would otherwise have passed on Counts 3 and 4, but the sentences on those counts, whilst concurrent with each other, must be consecutive to the sentence on Count 1.

COUNT 1: 5 ½ years' imprisonment.

COUNT 2: 1 day's imprisonment to run concurrently.

COUNTS 3 & 4: 6 months' imprisonment on each Count to run concurrently with each other but consecutively to the sentences on Counts 1 and 2.

Total sentence: 6 years imprisonment.

Victim surcharge.

72. You will serve up to one half of that 6 year term in custody. You will then serve the remainder on licence. You must keep to the terms of your licence and commit no further offence or you will be liable to be recalled to prison and you may then serve the rest of your sentence in custody.

Restraining Order:

73. Pending a full hearing of the prosecution application for a Restraining Order in the terms of the draft at T9 on the DCS, an interim Order in the following terms is made:

Until further Order: Not to contact Nigel Gould-Davis, Guy Gould-Davis or David Mayes directly or indirectly.

Timetable for the hearing of the application at T9.

27.7.25: Prosecution to provide a detailed basis for the application of the wider Order sought in T9, together with any supporting evidence.

15.8.25: Defence response.

18.8.25: Hearing (T/E) 1 hour

Defendant via PVL

Counsel in person.

HHJ Joanna Greenberg KC

11th July 2025