

IN THE CENTRAL CRIMINAL COURT

BETWEEN

R

V

RUMARNI TUITT

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SENTENCING REMARKS

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*Please remain seated.*

*These sentencing remarks will be uploaded after the hearing.*

**Introduction**

1. Rumarni Tuitt, on 8<sup>th</sup> May 2025, you were convicted of attempted murder. You pleaded guilty to having a bladed article at your first appearance in the Magistrates' Court on 29<sup>th</sup> August 2024. Sentence was adjourned for the preparation of a pre-sentence report. I have received helpful notes on sentence from counsel. I have reviewed reports from an intermediary and a forensic psychologist, including a further addendum psychological report, and I have considered a number of character references and a letter written by you and submitted to the court today.
2. I will now turn to the facts of the case. I make it clear that where I make any finding of fact, I do so on the basis that I am sure of that fact.

**Facts**

3. Shortly before 8pm on Monday 26<sup>th</sup> August 2024, officers were on duty in Ladbroke Grove during the Notting Hill Carnival when their attention was drawn to you. It was your demeanour and the fact that you were shouting at someone in the crowd that caused Police Constable Horton to turn and watch you. He saw you reach behind and to your right-hand

side and produce a zombie knife. You were then seen lunging with the knife in your hand towards the crowd. Police Constable Price described seeing the knife going into a person. That person was Kamani Spooner. Mr Spooner had little recollection of events leading up to him being stabbed, although, at the time of making his statement, he recalled being in the middle of a fight with three people throwing punches around him. One of the wounds that you inflicted exposed Mr Spooner's intestines, and he had to hold on to his stomach to keep them in place as he ran away from the scene. He collapsed nearby and was given first aid by police officers and paramedics before being taken to hospital. But for that immediate medical attention, Mr Spooner would have died.

4. You were apprehended by officers at the scene. Your zombie knife was seized, as was the sheath which was found in your waistband.
5. You were taken to the police station, but a decision was taken not to interview you because you required medication for autism and ADHD, which you had not taken for some days, and there was no medication available for you at home. You were charged without being interviewed.

### **Kamani Spooner**

6. Kamani Spooner was 18 years old at the time of the incident. He sustained five penetrating stab wounds to his torso and a deep laceration to his arm. Four of his wounds were life threatening, two of them had a track depth of more than 10 cm. During surgery, a number of internal injuries were identified, including transection of the duodenum (small intestine), an incision to the pancreas, an incision to the liver, small bowel perforation and an incision to the lining of the small bowel. He remained in hospital for just short of a month.
7. Mr Spooner declined to provide a victim personal statement, so the day to day physical and psychological challenges that he faces as a result of his injuries remain unknown. However, his injuries were extremely grave and it is likely that they will have a significant and lasting impact on him.

### **Antecedents**

8. You were 18 years old at the time of this offence and you are now 19 years old (DOB 1.12.05). You have five convictions for fifteen offences. Ten of those offences relate to assaults on emergency workers. In August 2022, you were sentenced to a youth rehabilitation order for offences including affray. Most significantly, on 11<sup>th</sup> June 2024, you were sentenced to a community order for an offence of having a bladed article on 27<sup>th</sup>

August 2023. That offence relates to you having a 'Rambo' knife with you at Notting Hill Carnival. You became involved in an argument with a male and produced the Rambo knife, which you swung back and forth. It is said that you were threatened and produced the knife defensively. Fortunately, no one was harmed on that occasion.

### **Sentencing Council Guidelines**

9. I have considered and applied the Sentencing Council Guidelines on the following:
  - a. Attempted murder;
  - b. Bladed articles and offensive weapons;
  - c. Sentencing children and young people;
  - d. Sentencing offenders with mental disorders, developmental disorders, or neurological impairments.
10. The maximum sentence for attempted murder is life imprisonment or detention for life. Turning to the guidelines for the offence itself:

### **Culpability**

11. This offence falls into category 'B' - 'high culpability', on the basis that you took a knife to the scene intending to have it available to use as a weapon, and you used that knife in the commission of this offence. Although you claim to have carried the knife in order to use it defensively, there can be no justification for carrying a knife of that nature onto the streets, far less into a crowded carnival. This is particularly the case bearing in mind your conviction for doing precisely that, and in the same location, only one year earlier. Indeed, you were serving your community order for that offence when you committed this attempted murder.
12. I have been addressed on the possibility of there being an element of self-defence involved in your actions. It is unclear how or why this incident arose. However, Mr Spooner did not know you and there is no basis for concluding that he was armed. Furthermore, there is no suggestion of you sustaining any injuries, and the police officers who saw some of the events did not describe seeing you being attacked. Whatever your perception of the events unfolding around you, the use of a zombie knife to inflict multiple, life-threatening wounds could not be justified on the basis of self-defence and the jury rejected that defence. In short, your actions were not carried out in necessary but excessive self-defence.
13. Having said that, I accept that there is no basis for concluding that you planned or premeditated a murder and you will be sentenced on the basis that the incident and your actions arose spontaneously. This is a category C culpability factor, to which I will return.

## **Harm**

14. As agreed by the parties, the offence falls into category 2 for harm, because serious physical harm resulted from your actions.

## **Category of offence**

15. A category 2B offence has a starting point of 25 years' custody with a category range of 20 - 30 years' custody.
16. A category 2C offence has a starting point of 20 years' custody and a category range of 15 - 25 years' custody. There is, therefore, an overlap between the two categories.
17. I approach the case on the basis that it falls into category 2B, which has a starting point of 25 years' custody. There will be an adjustment downwards to take into account the category C factor.

## **Aggravating and Mitigating factors**

18. The following aggravating factors apply:
- a. Your previous convictions, which involve violence, albeit not serious violence. The offence was committed during the currency of a community order for the bladed article offence. That is an aggravating factor rather than a matter that requires separate sentence.
  - b. The offence took place in a public place, at the Notting Hill Carnival, in the presence and sight of a substantial crowd of people.
  - c. Others were put at risk of harm by this offence. A young woman, Gift Arthur, was injured at the scene, but she did not attribute her injury to you, and I do not sentence you on that basis. However, lunging out with a knife in a crowded environment clearly puts others at risk of sustaining a knife wound.
19. I have considered and taken into account the community impact statement of Detective Superintendent Lexton-Jones. He details the extent of knife crime at the carnival and the impact of that offending. He observes that, *"Every knife related crime has a significant impact on the victim and creates wide scale fear and anxiety within the community."*
20. As I have already stated, the location and circumstances of the offence, and the attendant risk to others, are already aggravating features and I must not double-count those aspects.

21. The following mitigating factors apply:

- a. You were 18 years and 9 months old at the time of the offence and you are now 19. You are still very young and immature;
- b. You have been diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder and ADHD. You have also exhibited symptoms of PTSD, having been stabbed in 2022. I have applied the guidelines on sentencing offenders with mental disorders, developmental disorders, or neurological impairments. I note that Dr Corson, the forensic psychologist opines that, *“the interaction between [your] neurodevelopmental vulnerabilities and unresolved trauma, likely contributed to a state of chronic dysregulation and perceived threat, heightening [your] propensity to respond to stress with aggression.”* In light of that conclusion, your culpability is reduced, albeit to a very limited extent.
- c. The many character references before the court suggest that there is a very different side to your character.

22. In relation to your age, I have considered the Sentencing Council Guidelines on sentencing children and young people. I have also had regard to the many Court of Appeal cases dealing with the approach to be taken when sentencing young offenders, including those set out in the defence note, and the guidance in *R v ZA [2023] EWCA Crim 596*. I accept that reaching the age of 18 is not a ‘cliff edge’; you were still an immature young man at the time of the offence.

### **Dangerousness**

23. The author of your pre-sentence report has formed the view that you pose a “high” risk of causing serious harm to members of the public by the commission by you of further specified offences. “High” risk equates to a “significant” risk. That assessment is partly based on the nature of the offence itself and your antecedents. She also concludes that your behaviour, linked to your neurodiversity, involves clear issues of impulsivity, poor decision making, poor problem solving and lack of consequential thinking. She states that, *“These are significant risk factors in your behaviour and are linked to the risk of serious harm and likelihood of further offending”*.

24. I have given this issue very careful consideration. I have borne in mind the comments of the author of the pre-sentence report. Balanced against that, I have reminded myself of the guidance in *R v Lang [2005] EWCA Crim 2864*, and the difficulty of predicting future risk in young defendants who may have a greater capacity for rehabilitation.

25. In my view, although you do meet the test for dangerousness, a sentence of custody for life is not justified. Furthermore, I do not consider it necessary or proportionate to impose an extended sentence. The determinate sentence to be imposed will be very substantial in the context of your young life and, in my view, will provide adequate protection in relation to future risk.

26. For completeness' sake, I have considered the guidelines on bladed articles. As this is your second such offence, it carries a 6-month minimum term; in any event, the parties agree that the offence falls into category 1A, so that the starting point is 1 year and 6 months' custody with a range of 1 year to 2 years and 6 months' custody. There must be a one third discount for the early plea. As this offence has already been taken into account in determining the category of the attempted murder, the sentence will be ordered to run concurrently.

### **Sentence**

27. This was a particularly serious offence committed in the heart of Europe's biggest street festival; an event that celebrates the vibrancy of our capital city and, indeed, the wider country. It is not the first time that you have travelled to the carnival armed with a fearsome weapon. On this occasion you used it with devastating effect. It is fortunate for Mr Spooner that he escaped with his life; that is a matter of good fortune on his part rather than intention on yours. By the jury's verdict, you intended to kill him. The cause of the conflict that arose that day did not emerge at the trial and may never be known. It is immaterial, because there can be no excuse for committing an offence of this gravity. It was a brutal and wholly unjustifiable attack.

28. The starting point for the offence is 25 years' custody. There will be a downward adjustment to 22 and a half years' custody to reflect the category C culpability factor. The aggravating factors are such that the right sentence for a mature, adult offender would be 27 years' custody. However, in light of your neurological conditions and personal mitigation, I will reduce that. I will also allow a further significant discount to reflect your youth and immaturity. If you were 17 years' old at the time that discount would be approximately one third, but that will be adjusted to reflect the fact that you were a little older and more mature.

### *Stand up please*

29. For attempted murder, the shortest possible sentence I can impose having regard to the seriousness of the offence is one of 18 years' detention. The sentence for the bladed article offence is 1 year detention. That will run concurrently so that the overall sentence is 18 years' detention. You will be released on license no later than two thirds of the way through

that sentence, that is, after 12 years. You must comply with the terms of your licence when you are released, otherwise you will be recalled to custody and may serve the remainder of your sentence in custody. The time served on remand will automatically count towards this sentence.

30. I order forfeiture and destruction of the knife.

31. The victim surcharge applies and an appropriate order will be drawn up.

HHJ Judy Khan KC  
Central Criminal Court  
1<sup>st</sup> August 2025