



Judiciary of England and Wales

THE HONOURABLE MR JUSTICE MURRAY

In the Central Criminal Court

R v Shaine MARCH – Sentencing Remarks

31 October 2025

1. Shaine March, it falls to me to sentence you today for the murder of Alana Odysseos.
2. Today we have heard the powerfully moving and, indeed, heart-breaking personal statements of Alana’s father, Alan, her mother, Karen, and her three sisters, Lorraine, Tara, and Jasmine.
3. Tara described Alana as a kind, caring, funny, and deeply protective person. Jasmine, who also gave evidence during your trial, told us that Alana was “a bright, loud, loving woman who filled a room with music and laughter”. She loved to dance, she loved music, she loved her little daughter, Victoria, and, at one time, tragically for her, she loved you, too. Each of Alana’s mother, father, and three sisters spoke of Alana’s deep love for her daughter.
4. The depth of the pain and grief that they have suffered as a result of your crime cannot be fathomed by those who have not experienced the horror of such a tragedy. No sentence that I pass today can possibly reflect the value of Alana’s life or in any way to offset the depth of grief and sense of loss of Alana’s family and everyone else who loved her.
5. Before turning to the sentence that I must impose, it is necessary to say something about the facts of this case in order to make clear the factual basis on which you are sentenced. Except where I have indicated otherwise, I am sure to the criminal standard about the following matters of fact. In relation to certain matters where I may express a view on the facts, but I am not sure to the criminal standard, I make clear now that I sentence you, as I must, on the factual basis most favourable to you.
6. At about 3:00am on Monday morning, 22 July 2024, neighbours found Alana outside her home on Lynmouth Road in Walthamstow, London E17. She was bleeding from multiple stab wounds. Two of the neighbours rang 999. When first discovered, Alana was still able to shout, “Shaine stabbed me, he stabbed me”. She pointed at you as you walked away, while her neighbours began to try to help her.

7. Alana lived at 58 The Grange, Lynmouth Road, with Victoria, who was then a little over two years old. Alana had been in a relationship with you for about four months. She had recently discovered she was pregnant. She was a vulnerable young woman, who had suffered serious personal losses, including the loss of her former partner, Ruslan, Victoria's father, who had committed suicide.
8. During your trial, we heard evidence that Alana had confided in family and friends about your controlling and abusive behaviour towards her, including physical assaults and emotional manipulation.
9. In her evidence at trial, Jasmine told us about an exchange of WhatsApp messages with her sister on the evening of 21 July, just hours before she died. Alana told Jasmine about feeling unwell, about your "acting up", about her own pain and your indifference to it, and about her need to protect Victoria. Alana said to her sister, "Can't help who u love but he don't love any of us". She was afraid of you, but she loved you still, and she hoped that you would change.
10. Later that evening, neighbours heard a prolonged row between a man and a woman at Alana's address. During the trial the jury saw and heard video evidence of at least part of that row because you were video-recording it on your phone. What the neighbours heard appeared to be a dispute about a pair of trainers. You were heard shouting abuse, and Alana was heard apologising to you. Neighbours heard references to her pregnancy during your row.
11. At some point the row moved outside. Alana had forgotten her keys, but you refused to let her back into her flat, where her daughter was sleeping. During the trial we saw a CCTV clip of Alana outside in her dressing gown, walking along Station Road towards Lynmouth Road on her own shortly before half past midnight.
12. At some point a couple of hours later, Alana was in her flat. You picked up a knife, stabbed her at least 19 times, and slashed her with the knife at least five times. A number of the wounds were defensive injuries, caused as she tried to protect herself. The stab wounds that you inflicted to her legs were consistent with her being on the ground and kicking out. Alana's blood was found both inside and outside her flat.
13. Just before 3.00am, neighbours found Alana outside, bleeding and repeatedly naming you as her attacker. Two of the neighbours rang 999, seconds apart, at 2:58am. Despite the efforts of her neighbours and then the emergency services, who arrived within minutes of the 999 calls, Alana's condition rapidly deteriorated. She was pronounced dead at 3:52am.
14. Victoria was found unharmed inside the flat. She was now an orphan.
15. After the attack, you were seen by neighbours and on CCTV walking away, disposing as you went of the knife, of clothing, of a small rucksack, and of items from Alana's flat. The knife, which was a kitchen knife measuring 24 cm in length

and 2.8 cm at its widest point, was found abandoned nearby in front of a neighbour's door. It was heavily stained with Alana's blood.

16. The police later discovered that you had put three mobile phones down a drain in a road near Lynmouth Road. Only one of those phones was eventually recovered. On the recovered phone, the police found two voice notes that you had recorded, in which you admitted the killing. One voice note was apparently intended for your probation officer. The other was intended for your mother. Neither voice note was sent.
17. After wandering around Walthamstow for a while, you entered Creams Café on Church Hill at about 4:20am. The man working there at that time on his own remembers you saying to him something about stabbing or killing your wife "who has baby". The man rang the police. They arrived shortly before 5:00am and arrested you at Creams Café. You made several admissions at the time, including "I did it, I killed her" and "I stabbed her to death." On the way to the police station, you made further comments to police officers, caught on body-worn video, about the incident and about your relationship with Alana.
18. Later that day, you were interviewed by the police, in the presence of a solicitor and an appropriate adult. You answered "no comment" to all questions put to you.
19. On the following morning, 23 July, you were charged with the murder of Alana Odysseos. You were cautioned and made no reply. You appeared at Barkingside Magistrates' Court, where you were remanded in custody and taken to HMP Belmarsh.
20. Within 48 hours, you were required to appear for a bail hearing before a judge of this court, which you did via a video-link from HMP Belmarsh. There was a lengthy delay before your hearing, during all of which time you were with a prison officer. That prison officer gave evidence at the trial. He told the jury that at some point, while you were waiting for your bail hearing to begin, you began to talk to him about the murder, telling him that you had killed your partner and giving him a detailed account of what happened that evening. You told him about putting three phones down a drain, one of which, as I have already said, was later recovered by police as a result of this admission. You also told him that you had been arguing with Alana about your trainers. You found yourself in the kitchen with Alana, you "saw red", you grabbed the knife, and you stabbed her. You told the prison officer that she said, "please stop, please stop, you have murdered me".
21. Dr Matthew Cieka, the consultant forensic pathologist, who conducted the post-mortem examination of Alana's body on 23 July, the day after she died, found 23 sharp force injuries to her body, including 19 stab wounds and five slashed or incised wounds. A number of the stab wounds had been inflicted with a high degree of force approaching severe force, as evidenced by the fact that three of the stab wounds involved the knife penetrating through bone, including

one that passed through Alana's shoulder blade. Dr Cieka found that there were five separate stab wounds, each of which, on its own, would have been fatal. There was a sixth stab wound that, on its own, might have been fatal. Some of the wounds appeared to be defensive injuries to her arms and legs, resulting from her efforts to protect herself.

22. Dr Cieka confirmed that Alana was in the early stages of pregnancy at the time of her death. He estimated that she was about 7 to 8 weeks pregnant. He gave the formal cause of Alana's death as stab wounds to her chest.
23. You were 46 years old at the time you killed Alana. You are 47 years old now.
24. When you were 17 years old, you suffered a traumatic brain injury, as a result of which you suffered some permanent deterioration in your cognitive function.
25. On 22 February 1995, when you were 17 years old, you were convicted of assault on police and criminal damage. Later that year, on 16 August, you were convicted of assault occasioning actual bodily harm and criminal damage. I note that the first of these offences occurred before your traumatic brain injury and the second afterwards.
26. On 19 January 2000, when you were 21 years old, you stabbed a 17-year-old boy named Andre Drummond in the neck outside a McDonald's on Denmark Hill. The injury was fatal. You had travelled there to confront some boys, including the victim, whom you considered had been involved in robbing some friends of yours.
27. On 17 July 2000, the jury at your trial at this court rejected your defence of self-defence and convicted you of murder. You were sentenced to life imprisonment, with a minimum term of 13 years.
28. On 29 January 2013, you were released from custody on life licence, but you were recalled to prison later that year on 17 July after committing an offence of common assault on your then-partner, who was pregnant, and a related offence of criminal damage. The assault involved your stamping on your then-partner's belly.
29. Just under five years later, on 5 February 2018, you were again released from custody on life licence. For the next nearly six years and five months, you were living in the community on your life licence without committing any further offences until you attacked and killed Alana on 22 July 2024.
30. On 8 October 2025, the first day of your trial for the murder of Alana Odysseos, you pleaded guilty to manslaughter on the basis of diminished responsibility. This meant that you formally admitted that you had killed Alana unlawfully and had done so intending to kill her or to cause her really serious bodily harm.
31. On 17 October 2025, after the prosecution had completed the presentation of its evidence against you and had closed its case, you asked to be re-arraigned in the

presence of the jury and then pleaded guilty to murder. Upon hearing that plea, the jury duly returned a verdict against you of guilty of murder.

32. The sentence for murder fixed by law is imprisonment for life. The first question I must decide is whether it is necessary in this case to impose a whole life order, meaning that the early release provisions would not apply, and you could never be released from prison, other than by order of the Home Secretary on compassionate grounds.
33. I can only impose a whole life order if I conclude that I must. It is an exceptional sentence, rarely imposed, reserved for cases of the most extreme gravity. The Court of Appeal has given guidance on the imposition of whole life orders in the case of *R v Stewart* [2022] EWCA Crim 1063, in particular at [19].
34. Under para 2(1) of Schedule 21 to the SA 2020, the appropriate starting point for sentence for the offence of murder is a whole life order if the offender is aged 21 or over when the offence was committed and the court considers that the seriousness of the offence is exceptionally high. Para 2(2)(e) indicates that cases that would normally be considered cases of exceptionally high seriousness include a case, such as this one, where the offender was previously convicted of murder.
35. Applying the principles in *Stewart*, however, I do not consider this to be one of those “rarest and clearest cases” where the need for lifelong imprisonment is “clear beyond doubt”. In reaching this conclusion, I have taken into account a number of factors, including the following:
 - a. You suffered a traumatic brain injury when you were 17 years old, which has affected your cognitive ability and your ability to regulate your emotions and your behaviour.
 - b. Both the murder you committed in 2000 and the murder of Alana were apparently spontaneous attacks, not premeditated, although I do note the following:
 - i. In relation to the murder of Andre Drummond, you may not have planned to kill any of boys you suspected of robbing your friends, but you travelled to the place where you expected to find them, armed with a knife, prepared for violence in what you knew would be a confrontational situation.
 - ii. The murder of Alana involved prolonged and excessive violence. That is a significant aggravating factor that I must take into account in determining your sentence and to which, therefore, I will return.
 - c. There is a gap of over 24 years between the two murders, and prior to the murder of Alana you had lived for almost six and a half years in the community on life licence without committing any offences.

- d. You ultimately pleaded guilty to Alana's murder, after the close of the prosecution case, when Dr Marzio Ascione, the expert neuropsychologist on whose evidence you intended to rely to establish a partial defence of diminished responsibility, after a further review of the evidence, revised his opinion and concluded that at the time of Alana's murder you were not suffering an abnormality of mental functioning sufficient to meet the legal threshold for the partial defence.
- 36. I must therefore impose a minimum term order. This is clearly a case where the seriousness of the offence is particularly high within the meaning of paragraph 3(1) of Schedule 21. In reaching that view, I take into account the following factors, which I am permitted to do, even though they are not expressly set out in paragraph 3(2) of Schedule 21:
 - a. You have a prior conviction for murder, namely, the murder of Andre Drummond in 2000 for which you were subject to a life sentence at the time you killed Alana, while you were out on life licence.
 - b. You killed Alana knowing that she was pregnant. It appears that at least one of the stab wounds was aimed towards her reproductive organs. In any event, it was clear that you intended to kill her and that her baby would therefore, at that early stage of pregnancy, have no chance of surviving the attack.
- 37. The statutory starting point is therefore a minimum term of 30 years.
- 38. There are a number of aggravating features. As to statutory aggravating features, I take into account:
 - a. the fact that you repeatedly or continuously engaged in behaviour towards Alana that was controlling or coercive while you were in an intimate relationship with her; and
 - b. in committing the offence, you used sustained and excessive violence towards Alana.
- 39. In relation to the first of these two statutory aggravating facts, I base this conclusion on unchallenged witness evidence at the trial from family and friends, which included not only what the witnesses were told by Alana (which is hearsay evidence) but also their own observations of Alana's presentation and conduct and of your interactions with her when you were present, for example, at the other end of a phone. I have also had regard to the Sentencing Council overarching guideline on domestic abuse, and so I take into account in relation to this factor the fact that this murder was committed during the course of a domestic relationship, where trust should have existed between you, and in Alana's own home, where she was entitled to feel safe.
- 40. The second of the two statutory aggravating factors is one of particularly high seriousness. You did not just grab a knife in a moment of anger, stab Alana, and

then drop it, horrified by what you had done. You stabbed again and again and again in various parts of her body. There were nineteen stab wounds and at least five more incised knife wounds. At least five of the wounds would individually have been fatal and a sixth wound possibly also fatal on its own. Several of these stab wounds were delivered with severe force.

41. Additional serious aggravating features include the following, although I must be careful to avoid double-counting:
 - a. The prolonged nature of your assault on Alana would have caused her considerable mental as well as physical suffering before her death, with the violence starting inside her flat and continuing outside. It is clear from a number of things that she said that she was fully conscious that you had subjected her to a lethal attack.
 - b. You used a knife to kill her.
 - c. Your murderous attack on Alana occurred in the flat where Victoria was present nearby, sleeping.
42. There is additional aggravation given your other offending history, including your assault on your then pregnant partner in 2013, and the efforts you made after your attack on Alana to dispose of evidence.
43. In terms of mitigation, the only statutory mitigating factor is your lack of premeditation. I have, however, already taken this into account in deciding that a whole life order is not required in your case.
44. Similarly, I have already taken into account the following factors in deciding that a whole life order is not required in your case:
 - a. your plea of guilty, made after the close of the prosecution case;
 - b. your traumatic brain injury at the age of 17; and
 - c. your lack of offending between the time of your second release from custody on your life sentence in February 2018 and the murder of Alana in July 2024.
45. Given the number, severity and location of the stab wounds that you inflicted on Alana, as well as the intensity of your attack on her, I am sure that you intended to kill her. Your intention to kill is not an aggravating factor, but it means there is no mitigation for your having a lesser intent.
46. I have read the references that have been provided for you, but they cannot and do not carry any real weight in mitigation in a case such as this.
47. The only other mitigation available to you is some evidence of mental ill health, namely, an antisocial personality disorder and diagnosed depression. Ultimately, the expert witnesses agreed that a categorical diagnosis of post-traumatic stress

disorder could not be made out, despite some symptoms of hyperarousal and an exaggerated sense of threat. I have had regard to the Sentencing Council guideline on sentencing offenders with mental disorders, developmental disorders, or neurological impairments. In assessing the degree to which this factor mitigates your offence, I have had regard to all of the evidence adduced at trial.

48. Accordingly, I must now set the minimum term that you will serve before the Parole Board can consider you for release, having regard to the statutory starting point for the minimum term that I have identified and taking into account the aggravating features and the mitigation that I have also identified. The aggravating features very heavily outweigh the available mitigation.
49. You and everyone else in court should understand three things about the minimum term that I am about to impose. First, you must serve every day of it before the Parole Board can even consider releasing you. Secondly, even then the Parole Board will only release you if it is satisfied that it is safe and appropriate to release you. Otherwise, you will remain in custody for the rest of your life. Thirdly, if you are ever released from custody, you will remain subject to the life sentence for the remainder of your life, which means that, if necessary, you can be returned to custody at any time.
50. The truth of the matter is that, given your age and the length of the minimum term I must impose, it may be that you will never be released from prison. But the chance exists.
51. Following your arrest for the murder of Alana, you were recalled to prison to continue serving your life sentence for the murder of Andre Drummond. There are, therefore, no days on remand in custody to be deducted from the minimum term that I must impose.
52. The statutory surcharge applies to this sentence.
53. Shaine March, in the early hours of 22 July 2024, you stabbed Alana Odysseos to death, killing her when she was pregnant with your child, leaving her then two-year-old daughter an orphan, and devastating the lives of her family forever.
54. In determining the appropriate minimum term, I have had regard to all of the evidence presented at your trial, I have a careful assessment of the culpability factors leading to my conclusion that the seriousness of your offence was particularly high, and I have taken into account the applicable aggravating factors and the available mitigation.
55. For the murder of Alana Odysseos, I sentence you to life imprisonment with a minimum term to serve of 42 years.
56. You may go down.