

## **REX -v- IMRI DOUE and MARKO BALAZ**

### **SENTENCING REMARKS**

At shortly after 1830 on Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2024 in broad daylight, the life of 15 year old Dejaun Campbell was snuffed out when he was stabbed to death on a street in Woolwich.

His fatal wounds were inflicted by you Imri Doue with a large machete with which you had quite deliberately armed yourself as you admitted to the jury that you had done hundreds of times before. You were convicted of Dejaun's murder by the jury who rejected your false assertion that you were acting in self-defence.

You, Marko Balaz, were convicted of manslaughter on the basis that you encouraged and or assisted Imri Doue to stab Dejaun but without the requisite intent for murder. There is no question but that that was the jury's findings because that was how I directed them in the Route to Verdict.

You are both here today to be sentenced for your involvement in Dejaun's killing.

You Imri Doue for possession of the machete (which was the murder weapon).

You Marco Balaz are also to be sentenced for drugs offences.

Dejaun Campbell was, in his mother's words, "an incredible human being; son, brother, cousin and friend. He was loyal to a fault, caring, compassionate, helpful, understanding and a brilliant communicator. He excelled at sport."

The grief which his violent death has caused is immeasurable. It is felt most keenly by his mother but also by his grandmother, siblings, other family members and friends. The impact of Dejaun's death reaches far and wide and his death has left behind a huge void.

His mother who has behaved throughout this case with dignity asks herself the same question that we ask on a daily basis in this court: when will this knife crime epidemic end? As she rightly says enough young lives have been lost already and nothing that I can do today can bring Dejaun back or, it seems, stop others from behaving as you two did.

Dejaun was himself a victim of local gang culture and had clearly been groomed and sucked into a life of class A drug dealing as so many young disaffected teenagers in this city are. He had entered a world where the carrying of lethal knives was the norm. In his naivety he no doubt believed that carrying a knife would protect him.

His mother truly believes that he was on the very brink of giving up his criminal lifestyle and he was due to go back to school the day after he was murdered. Thanks to the actions of you two he will never do so. He will never be able to capitalise on all the positive attributes which he clearly had.

Before turning to the facts I make it clear that where I make findings adverse to either of you I do so to the criminal standard.

On 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2024, the 2 of you met up (together with Jacob Losiewicz who was acquitted of any offence). Jacob Losiewicz drove you to an address to which he had access in Eglington Rd in Woolwich. You had been to the address before. From that address could be seen a well-trodden path where you knew you might find local boys such as Dejaun Campbell, who, for some reason no doubt related to some sort of pathetic gang rivalry was a target of your aggression and needed to be "G-checked". Perhaps you didn't bargain for the fact that Dejaun would be armed with a knife himself or that he would try to stand his ground.

As you saw Dejaun head up the path, you ambushed him. You had your heads and faces covered. You Imri Doue had a large zombie style machete in a sheath. When you reached the top of the path you confronted Dejaun who quickly dropped his knife. His knife broke and from that moment he was defenceless. I completely reject the assertion that he had a second knife.

As you told the jury, Imri Doue, adrenaline kicked in and the 2 of you chased Dejaun as he tried to run away. You, Imri Doue, stabbed him a total of 8 times. One wound was to his head and other injuries to his arm and hands were caused when he tried to protect his head from further injury. You also stabbed his thigh and ankle. The fatal injury was delivered with at least moderate force as Dejaun was running away: the machete cut the femoral vein in his leg and penetrated to such a depth that the knife hit the pelvic bone. You may not have intended to kill Dejaun but there was an extremely high likelihood of death bearing in mind the location of that fatal wound and the nature of the weapon which you used.

You Marko Balaz were right there. You provided back up, knowing that ID had drawn his machete and as the jury found you encouraged ID to stab Dejaun intending that Dejaun suffer significant albeit not really serious harm from stab wounds.

A local resident Tasha Collins heard Dejaun's screams and compassionately tended to him until the emergency services arrived. Dejaun was begging her "Don't let me die I'm only 15". She tried to persuade Dejaun's supposed friend to stay at the scene but he headed off before the police arrived not wanting to get involved.

As DC lay bleeding to death and calling for his mother, you 2 ran off taking the machete with you.

You went back to the Eglington Rd address where you both laid low for some hours.

You MB had to be home by 2100 to comply with the curfew which was one of the bail conditions for the drugs offences. You ordered a taxi in a false name and having been collected some distance away from Eglington Rd you headed home.

You told a pack of lies in your interview.

### **Doue**

You ID did not go home, you told the jury you enlisted the help of a caring friend who was clearly a fellow criminal who helped you to get rid of your phone, blood-stained clothing and the murder weapon. I have no doubt that there was incriminating material on your phone which would have shown the motive for and the plan to attack.

You obtained a new phone, changed your clothes and went home much later that night.

DC was pronounced dead at the scene. He had bled out from a major femoral vessel injury.

The messages between you, ID, and your girlfriend show that you recognised what you had done and that you were facing a long sentence. You described it as karma.

When in custody following your arrest you were clearly distressed and owned up to being responsible but you did not have the courage to plead guilty.

During and since the trial you have begun to realise the enormity of what you did.

### **Balaz:**

You MB recorded images of the scene and of Dejaun. Whilst in custody you boasted to your cousin and girlfriend that you had been responsible for the killing and that you had stabbed Dejaun. Listening to those calls increased the distress of Dejaun's mother who had to hear you showing off about her son's death, your involvement in it and your complete dismissal that a young boy had died.

In the light of the jury's verdict, however, I cannot be sure that you had a knife and I will not sentence you on that basis despite the contents of the prison calls. On the other hand you did know that Doue was armed with a machete.

The 2 of you are no strangers to the carrying of knives.

You Imri Doue are now 18. You were 17 at the date of the murder. You told the jury that you have regularly carried knives including machetes since you were 13. You have a caution from 28<sup>th</sup> October 2020 for possession of a knife when you were only 13. You have a conviction for possession of another knife 3 days later for which a referral order was imposed. You have yet another conviction for possession of a knife less than 8 months later in June 2021. That weapon was a large kukri knife. Less than a year before the murder you were convicted of possession of a machete and affray. For those offences you received a 12 month YRO with intensive supervision and curfew.

The murder was committed during the currency of that order and it is quite clear to me that all attempts at helping you to leave that way of life behind you had failed despite intensive intervention.

You Marko Balaz are now 19. You were 18 at the date of the killing. You have 2 separate convictions for possession of knives in 2023. You too failed to respond to intensive supervision.

At the time of the killing you were on bail (with an electronically monitored curfew) for PWITS cocaine, heroin and cannabis and possession of the criminal proceeds of your drug dealing.

Those offences to which you very recently pleaded guilty occurred on 8<sup>th</sup> July 2024. At 1915 that evening, you were stopped by police and found to have over £500 in cash, £60 worth of cannabis and 17 wraps of crack cocaine. When you were searched more thoroughly 13 more packages of cocaine and 5 of heroin were found hidden in your underwear. Examination of your phone revealed that you were advertising drugs for sale back to January of 2023.

## **SENTENCE**

### **IMRI DOUE**

You are now aged 18. At the date of the offence you had recently turned 17.

I begin with the murder which carries a mandatory life sentence. As you were 17 at the date of the offence I must order you to be detained during His Majesty's Pleasure.

I then have to determine the minimum term that you must serve before you can be considered for release by the parole board.

You took a knife to the scene and had it available to use as a weapon and used it to commit the murder. Therefore, Paragraph 5A of Schedule 21 of the Sentencing Act 2020 applies. That gives a starting point for the minimum term of 23 years based on your age at the time of the offence. I bear in mind that had you been 16 the starting point for the minimum would have been 17 years.

I then have to consider aggravating and mitigating factors.

The relevant aggravating factors are:

- (i) your numerous previous offences of knife possession; and the fact that you told the jury that you had regularly carried a knife since the age of 13.
- (ii) the obvious planning to confront Dejaun or someone else from the area including the use of disguises although to some extent the planning is reflected in the starting point and I do not add significantly to the minimum term to reflect planning further;
- (iii) your actions after the murder of disposing of your clothing, phone and the murder weapon;
- (iv) the fact that you committed the offence during the currency of a youth rehabilitation order which had been imposed for knife possession and violence.

Those matters would justify a significant increase in the minimum term.

Turning to mitigation I have read the intermediary report, the psychological report and the Pre-sentence report.

It is extremely depressing to note that despite a loving home to which your mother refers in a statement which I have also read, with a caring and responsible mother where you grew up as a well-behaved child with enormous potential, in 2020 when your mother was out of the country you were groomed by older boys and, like Dejaun, sucked into the world of gangs and knife crime. In August 2024 you were declared to have been a victim of Child Criminal Exploitation. By September 2024, your life consisted of smoking cannabis with your friends and wandering the streets of Woolwich with a lethal weapon.

You have made good progress while on remand and, sadly, now, I think you are finally beginning to understand the dangers of carrying knives and the fact that young teenagers are being killed and others locked up for large parts of their lives. I accept that you now regret your actions and are to some extent remorseful.

Your youth is already reflected in the reduced minimum term. I am prepared to find that you did not intend to kill Dejaun but there was a very high risk of death so that that fact justifies little reduction in the minimum term.

Having considered everything in the reports including your immaturity and naivety as well as your limited intelligence and understanding of what you were doing and the remorse you are now demonstrating I have decided that the mitigating factors outweigh the aggravating factors due, not least, to your youth. The minimum term I have finally decided upon is **21 years**.

There will be a short concurrent sentence for the knife offence which will be reduced by 33% to reflect your guilty plea.

I will spell out the precise sentence at the end of these sentencing remarks

### **MARCO BALAZ**

You are now 19. I begin with the manslaughter. I sentence you on the basis that you encouraged ID to stab DC as part of a planned and targeted attack but, of course I recognise that you didn't intend that D should be killed or hurt very seriously though you clearly intended significant injury.

Having considered the sentencing guideline I have concluded that this offence falls within culpability B due to the fact that death was caused in the course of an unlawful act which must have involved an intention to cause harm just short of GBH and which carried a high risk of death or GBH which ought to have been obvious to you.

That gives a SP of 12 years and a range of 8-16 years.

However, your responsibility is reduced to some extent due to your significant learning disability which I will treat as an important mitigating factor

The aggravating factors are:

- (i) your previous convictions for knife possession which are in my view relevant and sufficiently recent;
- (ii) the fact that the offence was committed when you were on bail for serious drug offences
- (iii) and the fact that you were the subject to a YRO at the date of the offence.

I have read the PSR which accurately sets out your background and your future risk.

The mitigation is your youth, lack of maturity and, most importantly, your very significant learning disability which means that you have an extremely low level of intellectual functioning and a very real mental impairment which I am sure makes you the more susceptible to negative influences and impulsive acts.

Subject to the question of totality to which I will return I have concluded that the least sentence which is appropriate for the manslaughter on its own would have been one of **10 years**.

### **Dangerousness**

I also have to consider whether you qualify as a dangerous offender. The Senior Probation Officer

Whilst I have concluded that you do qualify as a dangerous offender, in the light of the sentence which I am going to pass upon you I do not consider that it would be appropriate further to extend the licence period and I therefore propose to pass a determinate sentence upon you.

## **Drugs**

I turn then have to the drugs matters;

Your offending falls within significant role category 3 of the relevant guideline which for the class A drugs gives a SP of 4 ½ years and a range of 3 ½ to 7 years.

Concurrent short sentences are appropriate for the cannabis and criminal property offences.

The aggravating factor is your failure to comply with earlier orders.

The mitigation is the same as for the manslaughter..

The sentence prior to consideration of your late pleas would be 42 months. That would be reduced to **34 months** to reflect just under 20% credit before I deal with totality.

## **Ancillary matters**

Before I deal with the final sentences I deal with ancillary matters:

The YRO for MB will be revoked and I take no action on the breach of the conditional discharge

The phone and money seized from MB will be forfeited and the drugs destroyed.

You will both pay the statutory surcharge

## **FINAL SENTENCES**

Would you both please stand up.

## **IMRI DOUE**

For the planned murder of 15 year old Dejaun whom you targeted and stabbed to death with a lethal machete when he was defenceless and posed no threat to you, the sentence is Detention at His Majesty's Pleasure for a minimum term of **21 years** to punish you for what you did. That is the term you will serve before being considered for parole and you will not be released unless it is determined that you no longer pose a significant risk of harm to the public.

For the possession of the knife there will be a concurrent term of **8 months'** custody.

You have spent 370 days on remand which reduces the minimum term to one of **19 years and 360 days and that is the term which I impose.**

### **MARCO BALAZ**

In order to reflect totality I do intend to reduce the sentence for the manslaughter in respect of which you participated in a fatal attack upon Dejaun with Imri Doue who you knew was armed with a machete and who you encouraged to stab him. The sentence for that offence is **9 years' detention**

I reduce the sentence on Counts 1 and 2 [the class A drug offences] from 34 months to **2 years** on each to run concurrently to each other but consecutively to the 9 years' giving a total of **11 years' detention reduced to 10 years and 328 days to reflect the qualifying curfew.**

For the cannabis offence [Count 3]; **3 months concurrent**

For the possession of the criminal property; [Count 4] **3 months concurrent**

Should my calculation of the days on remand or the qualifying curfew be incorrect then the parties must notify the court before 1630 today and I will have the case called back on and adjust the term.

### **COMMENDATIONS**