



**IN THE CROWN COURT AT READING**

**R -v- JAKUB NOWICKI**

**SENTENCING REMARKS**

**The Honourable Mr Justice Eyre**

**17<sup>th</sup> November 2025.**

**Preamble.**

1. You may remain seated until I tell you to stand up.
2. In the printed version of these sentencing remarks there will be headings for ease of reference.
3. These sentencing remarks will be made available to you, your lawyers, the press, and the public a short while after the conclusion of this hearing.
4. I also direct that the printed version of these remarks be placed within the relevant section of the Digital Case System. These sentencing remarks will also be placed upon the Judiciary website for the public to read.

**Tomasz Kopec**

5. On 25<sup>th</sup> April 2025 Tomasz Kopec was aged 46. He was living with your estranged wife, Karolina Nowicka. He was a loved and a loving father, brother, and grandfather. He played a big part in the lives of his children and grandchildren. Tomasz Kopec had done you no harm. You killed him in a cowardly attack in his home. Your cowardice continued during your trial. You

said that Tomasz Kopec had been violent towards Karolina Nowicka. I make it clear that was an entirely false allegation. Not only was it denied by Miss Nowicka but the true position is shown by the evidence from Kelly Scales. Miss Scales lived next door to Karolina and to Tomasz Kopec. She said that Mr Kopec was kind and polite and that he made Karolina very happy. That was the man you killed in a cowardly attack driven by anger, jealousy, and self-pity.

6. Your actions robbed Tomasz Kopec's family – his brother and sister, his four children, and his grandchildren of the man they loved. Tomasz Kopec was taken before his time and his family must now live every day with that loss. Even now you have not shown any shred of remorse for your actions nor for the harm you have done.

#### **The Circumstances of the Offences.**

7. You are now aged 40. Until October 2021 you had led a law-abiding life. You worked and you lived with your wife, Karolina Nowicka, and your four children. On 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2021 you committed the offences of driving with excess alcohol, causing serious injury by dangerous driving, and of assaulting an emergency worker and you were also in possession of cannabis.
8. On 17<sup>th</sup> June 2022 you were sent to prison for those offences. You were subsequently released on licence. However, instead of taking the opportunity of that release to pull yourself together, you took drugs and drank heavily. You were recalled to prison. Your wife had stood by you the first time you went to prison but when you were recalled she said that enough was enough and ended your relationship. Unfortunately, she then had problems of her own with alcohol and your children were taken into care.
9. I accept that you love your children and that you still love Karolina. You deeply regret the loss of your family life. You have responded to that loss with feelings of anger and self-pity. You blame others for that loss and in particular your wife and the further partners she has had. You are unable to accept that it was your actions which caused the end of your family life. You saw the house in Grant Avenue as your property and Karolina Nowicka as your wife. You resented the man who was living with your wife and whom you felt was in the place which

was yours by right. It was, however, a place which you had lost through your own actions.

10. You spent the evening of 24<sup>th</sup> April 2025 and the early hours of 25<sup>th</sup> April drinking heavily and in search of sexual encounters. I accept that until about 6.14am you had not intended to attack Tomasz Kopec. However, when you realised that that your search for sex had come to nothing you went to your wife's home. You were full of self-pity, of alcohol, of anger, and of jealousy towards your wife and towards Tomasz Kopec.
11. You forced your way into the house and launched an attack on Tomasz Kopec and Karolina Nowicka as soon as you had arrived. Tomasz Kopec and Karolina Nowicka tried to avoid any violence but you could not be placated. I am satisfied that you went to the house in anger and intending violence. Initially, there was a struggle but there came a time very quickly when you had knocked Tomasz Kopec to the ground and he lay there helpless and semi-conscious.
12. You could have stopped then and walked away. Instead, you chose to rain blows on Mr Kopec's defenceless head in a sustained and violent attack. It was a cowardly attack on a helpless man who could no longer defend himself.
13. Karolina Nowicka put herself between you and Tomasz Kopec's defenceless body. You could have stopped then but instead you punched her and pulled her aside so that you could continue your attack. You broke her phone to stop her summoning help.
14. Miss Nowicka begged you to stop and said that you would kill Mr Kopec. You could have listened to her pleas and stopped at that stage. Instead, you continued the attack and replied to Miss Nowicka with the chilling words that you had come to the house to do that and that she would be next.
15. Your blows caused a traumatic brain injury from which Mr Kopec had no prospect of recovery.
16. In your anger and jealousy you removed Tomasz Kopec's trousers and underwear and punched his penis and genitalia.

17. You could also have stopped your actions when Karolina ran out trying to escape to the neighbours and to get help. Instead, twice you went after her and dragged her back before she could reach safety. You did that to stop her getting help and so that you could continue beating and kicking Mr Kopec. Your suggestion that you did so in order to talk to her is simply fantastical.
18. You only stopped your attacks when Miss Nowicka had escaped the third time. It was then that you left leaving Mr Kopec lying on the floor fatally wounded.
19. You have no remorse and seemingly little understanding of the enormity of your actions. It was clear from your evidence during the trial that you remain consumed by self-pity, anger, and jealousy.

**The Application of Schedule 21 to the Sentencing Act 2020.**

20. By law, the only sentence for murder is a life sentence.
21. Schedule 21 to the Sentencing Act 2020, requires me to consider the length of the minimum term you must serve before you can be considered for release.
22. It is important that you and the public understand that the minimum term which I am about to impose is just that. It is a minimum period which cannot be reduced in any way. It is the minimum period which you must serve in prison before you are entitled to apply for parole. It is, therefore, the least time which you will serve in prison. After that is served, there is no guarantee that you will be released then or at all. Whether and when you are released will be decided by the Parole Board. You will only be released when the Parole Board is satisfied that you do not pose a risk to the public. If and when you are released, you will be subject to licence conditions. Those conditions will be set rules which you will have to obey for the rest of your life. If you breach those conditions, you may be recalled to prison. It is in this way that a life sentence protects the public.
23. This case falls within paragraph 5 of Schedule 21 and the starting point for the minimum term is 15 years.

24. Your responsibility and the seriousness of your actions are aggravated by the fact that this was a sustained attack on a defenceless man. It was an attack in which you persisted despite having repeated chances to halt your blows and walk away. I am satisfied that the fact this was an attack on Mr Kopec and Miss Nowicka in their home is an aggravating factor. They were attacked in the place where they were entitled to feel safe and when they were off guard. A further aggravating feature is the fact that you combined your attack on Tomasz Kopec with blows to Karolina Nowicka when she tried to stop you. In addition, you gratuitously sought to humiliate Mr Kopec by removing his clothes and striking his penis when he was semi-naked.
25. On your behalf it is submitted that this offence was not planned and that you did not intend to kill Tomasz Kopec. I accept that it may be that you had not intended to kill Tomasz Kopec when you were travelling to Grant Avenue and also that you may not have had that intention when you first entered the house. However, I am satisfied that you travelled there full of anger. I am satisfied that as you travelled there you were determined to vent your anger on the man whom you thought was in your place. I am also satisfied that you were intending to do that by a violent attack. That is shown not least by the fact that you started an attack as soon as you arrived. At the time when Tomasz Kopec was defenceless and semi-conscious on the ground you kept up your sustained and brutal attack. At that time you expressly said that you had come to kill him.
26. In light of those matters the fact that Tomasz Kopec was still alive when you left the house does not show that you did not intend to kill him when you were attacking him as he lay on the ground. You left him fatally injured and so badly beaten as to be barely recognizable. I am satisfied that you intended to keep beating him until either you felt you had had your revenge or he was dead. I am also satisfied that you left because you realised that Miss Nowicka had escaped and that you were at risk of being caught. In those particular circumstances the facts either that you did not intend to kill Tomasz Kopec or that you had only formed that intention at a late stage cannot provide any mitigation.

27. I accept that you had led a productive life up to 2021 and that you have, at times, made genuine efforts to get free of alcohol and drugs. I also accept that you have tried to be a good father to your children. But those matters can only provide very limited mitigation in the circumstances of this case.

28. I am told that you have spent 203 days on remand, I shall take those into account in setting the minimum term. The court will also draw up a victim surcharge in the required amount.

### **The Other Charges.**

29. There will be concurrent sentences for the offences of assault occasioning actual bodily harm and of criminal damage. I have taken them into account as factors aggravating your responsibility for the murder of Tomasz Kopec. That is because they show the determination with which you pursued your attack and your use of force to overcome any obstacle placed in your way.

30. You will now stand up.

### **The Sentence to be passed.**

31. Jakub Nowicki, the aggravating factors which I have listed together with the fact that your killing of Tomasz Kopec was associated with an assault on Karolina Nowicka mean that there must be an increase in the minimum term from the starting point of 15 years. I have taken account of the limited mitigation which there is on your behalf and have kept that increase as low as possible. There must, nonetheless, be an increase. For the murder of Tomasz Kopec there will be a life sentence with a minimum term of 19 years, less the 203 days you have spent on remand, namely 18 years and 162 days.

32. For the offence of assault occasioning actual bodily harm there will be a concurrent sentence of 18 months imprisonment. Your culpability was at the upper end of the medium culpability category and the harm caused was at the upper end of category 2. The offence was aggravated by the facts that you committed it in drink; that you attacked Karolina Nowicka in her home; that you did so in the context of your attack on Tomasz Kopec; and that you repeatedly stopped Karolina Nowicka seeking help.

33. For the offence of criminal damage there will be a concurrent sentence of 1 month's imprisonment.