



IN THE CROWN COURT AT BRISTOL

THE KING

V.

(1) ZACHARIAH TALBERT YOUNG

(2) PAUL ELIJAH HAYDEN

25 NOVEMBER 2025

**SENTENCING REMARKS OF
THE HON. MR JUSTICE PEPPERALL**

1. North-east Bristol is scarred by a violent feud between two gangs of youths; the 1-6s from the Fishponds, Hillfields and Oldbury Court areas of the city and the 2-4s from the St Paul's and St Jude's areas. Many gang members are involved in the illegal supply of drugs and carry machetes, zombie knives and other fearsome weapons on the streets. These are weapons that can be and all too often are used to settle petty scores, deter those who seek to deal drugs on the other gang's territory or to wreak revenge for earlier attacks. The feud has come at an appalling human cost leaving heartbroken parents to bury their young sons who are violently cut down in a senseless round of tit-for-tat murders. It has led to no fewer than fifty violent or weapons-related incidents since the end of 2018 including four murders, two attempted murders, and nineteen further incidents when wounds have been inflicted using weapons, most commonly knives and machetes.
2. This tragic case is part of that series. The savage murder of Eddie Kinuthia – who was associated with the 2-4s – makes no sense unless it is explicable as a revenge attack for the 2022 murder of Takayo Nembhard, a prominent figure in the 1-6s and a close associate of Zachariah Talbert Young. Likewise, the horrific stabbing of Nathan Williams makes no sense unless it was a punishment for his transgressions in dealing drugs on 1-6 territory or for failing to pay a drug debt.
3. Fear and a misplaced sense of community loyalty to those responsible for these terrible crimes makes the prosecution of these cases extremely difficult. This case has been no exception. There are, I am sure, witnesses who knew full well the identity of the two men on the e-bike who killed Eddie Kinuthia, or the men in the Volkswagen Golf who tried to murder Nathan Williams. Few have, however, been brave enough to help the police with their investigation or to attend court and tell the jury the truth of what happened on 21 July 2023 and 2 February 2024. Rather than help the police, someone knows what happened to the e-bike, the weapons used and the clothes worn in these very serious crimes which simply disappeared as if they had never existed. The fact that you have been brought to justice at all is a testament to the diligence of the investigative work carried out by the police and

the bravery of the small number of witnesses from the community who have spoken out, but would not thank me for being named in these public sentencing remarks.

4. When the jury returned their verdicts last week, I made clear that I did not consider that pre-sentence reports were necessary in this case. No counsel urged a different course. In the course of mitigation, it appeared that Paul Mendelle KC, who represents Mr Hayden together with Nadeem Aullybocus, was under the misunderstanding that I had therefore determined that I would not be making a finding of dangerousness. I corrected that misunderstanding of the position. Quite simply, having presided over this trial I concluded that it was unnecessary to adjourn for pre-sentence reports either generally or specifically to address the issue of dangerousness. I have ample material before me to make that assessment upon the evidence called at the trial.
5. Eddie Kintuhia was murdered in the park area of the Grosvenor Road triangle in the St Paul's area of Bristol just before 11pm on 21 July 2023. He was then just 19 years old. The fatal injury was a stab wound to the front of Eddie Kinuthia's left thigh. That wound was 5 inches wide and more than 5 inches deep. It completely severed the femoral artery and was virtually unsurvivable given the inevitable catastrophic loss of blood before the injury could be treated. There were further stab wounds to Eddie's chin, to his back with the knife being plunged over 5 inches into his body, to his left buttock that punctured all the way to Eddie's large bowel, and to his right thigh.
6. Upon the verdict of the jury, you, Zachariah Talbert Young, were one of the two masked men who arrived in that park on an e-bike and savagely murdered Eddie Kinuthia before making good your escape. The other man has not been brought to justice.
7. While the jury's verdict resolves the central issue at your trial as to the identity of at least one of the two killers, it now falls to me to make any further necessary findings of fact. I do so solely on the basis of the evidence called at your trial and remind myself that I must not make any finding adverse to your case unless I am sure of that matter to the criminal standard:
 - (a) First, I am sure that this was not a spontaneous act of violence but a carefully planned attack on Eddie Kinuthia. It was not, in my judgment, a matter of pure coincidence that you started using a new mobile phone number a few hours before this offence, or that you happened to be out on an e-bike on a summer's evening with another man wearing heavy dark clothes and balaclavas. Nor was it pure chance that Eddie happened to walk into the park within seconds of your arrival. You and your accomplice had, I am sure, made arrangements to lure him into the park so that he could be ambushed.
 - (b) Secondly, I am sure from the CCTV evidence and the evidence of the pathologist that either a machete or another large knife was brought to the scene with the intention of stabbing Eddie Kinuthia. Further, that highly dangerous weapon was used mercilessly and with significant force to inflict multiple stab wounds.

- (c) Thirdly, I sentence you on the basis that you were the rider of the e-bike and not the knifeman. I take that approach because it is not possible to be sure from the evidence at trial as to whether you were the person who rode the e-bike or the knifeman who rode pillion. Furthermore, it had throughout been the prosecution's own case theory that you were the rider.
 - (d) Fourthly, while the jury's verdict only establishes that you intended that Eddie Kinuthia be caused at least really serious bodily harm, I am sure that you and your accomplice intended to kill him. The murder of Eddie Kinuthia was, as I have already found, a carefully planned attack in which severe violence was used with a large knife upon your unsuspecting victim. I also take into account the jury's conclusion on count 3 that you intended that Nathan Williams be killed when you drove Paul Elijah Hayden and others to the scene of that crime six months later. I am sure upon all of the evidence that you participated in the attack on Eddie Kinuthia with the same murderous intent.
 - (e) Fifthly, I am sure from the telephone evidence that you were central to organising the disappearance of the e-bike that would have linked you and your accomplice to this crime.
8. Eddie's mother, Irene Muthemba, spoke bravely and movingly of her son in her powerful tribute to his memory. She rightly said that the community has seen enough bloodshed on the city's streets and spoke of the depth of her despair at the tragic and untimely loss of her son. Eddie's cousin, Fiona Muthemba, also spoke lovingly of him. He was a kind, funny and loving young man with a smile that could truly light up a room. We saw that even on the short video clips of Eddie in the minutes and hours before his death. He was very much loved by his family and his many friends. Eddie was just starting out on adult life when he was so cruelly murdered on that night in July 2023.
9. Nathan Williams was also just 19 when he too was savagely attacked with one or more machetes or other large knives at around 11pm on 2 February 2024. He suffered multiple stab wounds to his neck, shoulder blades, armpits, back, right flank, right thigh and left hand. Stab wounds that fractured two ribs and a shoulder blade and damaged both his liver and one of his kidneys. Two wounds were particularly dangerous:
- (a) One wound punctured Mr Williams' chest wall causing both lungs to collapse and fill with air and blood. Such bilateral haemopneumothorax was potentially fatal.
 - (b) The second particularly dangerous stab wound was to Mr Williams' right flank and passed straight into the abdominal cavity and through the abdominal wall caused his bowel to prolapse.
10. Upon the jury's verdicts, both you, Zachariah Talbert Young, and you, Paul Elijah Hayden, were responsible for this determined and brutal attempt on Nathan Williams' life and intended that he should also die. It was a matter only of good fortune and prompt and skilful medical intervention that he survived.

11. While the jury's verdicts again resolve the central issue at your trial as to the identity of at least two of those responsible for this murderous attack on Nathan Williams, it falls to me to make any further necessary findings of fact. On the basis of the evidence called at your trial, I make the following findings:
 - (a) First, I am sure that you, Paul Hayden, were the principal knifeman responsible for this very violent attack. Despite Mr Williams' failure to identify you when taking part in the identification procedure, I am sure upon the jury's verdicts, Mr Williams' evidence and the DNA found on Mr Williams' outer coat that you were accurately identified by Nathan Williams as his principal assailant directly responsible for the majority of these stab wounds.
 - (b) Secondly, I cannot be sure that you, Zachariah Talbert Young, played any direct role in the stabbing. Indeed, it was again the prosecution's case that you were the driver responsible for transporting others to and away from the scene of this crime. Nevertheless, on the verdict of the jury, you did so intending that Nathan Williams should be killed.
 - (c) Thirdly, I am sure that this was not a random or spontaneous act of violence but a carefully planned attack to murder a young man for failing to pay his drug debts and/or for dealing in drugs on 1-6 territory.
12. I have read Nathan Williams' statement. At the age of just 19, he was stabbed with such severity that he believed – with good cause – that he was going to die in the road. He thanks the three young men who pulled over and who summoned emergency assistance and the attending police officers. Without their kindness and professionalism, he believes that he would indeed have died.
13. Mr Williams' physical injuries have healed well although he has not regained his full strength. Unsurprisingly, he continues to suffer with his mental health. Nathan describes the inner turmoil in deciding whether to support a police investigation and his understandable fear at doing so.
14. Nathan's sister, Naomi Thompson, has also made a statement. She describes the very real and lasting impact of this brutal offence.
15. Before passing sentence, I wish publicly to commend Andrew Tappin, Max McKenzie and Tavis Hitchcock for their quick-thinking actions in coming to Nathan's assistance and for their bravery in doing so shortly after a serious stabbing without concern for their own safety. As Nathan Williams himself appreciates, he owes his life to them, to the attending police officers and to the skill of the doctors and nurses at Southmead Hospital.
16. I must therefore sentence you, Zachariah Talbert Young, for the murder of Eddie Kinuthia and the attempted murder of Nathan Williams. You were not a knifeman

in respect of either offence but I should make plain that that makes no real difference. You were an integral member of the two-man team that murdered Eddie Kinuthia and the slightly larger team that attempted to murder Nathan Williams. You each had your role to play, and your job was in each case to ensure that the knifemen would be safely and anonymously delivered to the scene of the crime and quickly spirited away.

17. There is only one sentence for the offence of murder; that is a sentence of life imprisonment. In setting the minimum term that an offender must serve, Parliament has provided that the court must have regard to the principles set out in Schedule 21 to the Sentencing Act 2020. Paragraph 4 of Schedule 21 provides that the appropriate starting point for an adult offender who commits an offence of murder using a knife taken to the scene with the intention that it be available for use as a weapon is 25 years. I must then consider the aggravating and mitigating features of your case.
18. In my judgment, there are a number of aggravating features of your case in respect of the murder of Eddie Kinuthia:
 - (a) First, you have previous convictions for a number of offences including the possession of a loaded handgun.
 - (b) Secondly, this was a carefully planned murder.
 - (c) Thirdly, this offence was committed in furtherance of the interests of a criminal gang.
 - (d) Fourthly, this offence was committed by two men in a public place at night.
19. I must then consider the guidelines issued by the Sentencing Council for offences of attempted murder. I agree with counsel that this was a high culpability offence, in that it was a planned attempt on Mr Williams' life committed with a knife taken to the scene, that caused serious physical injury within category 2 harm. The starting point for such an offence is therefore a sentence of imprisonment of 25 years with a category range of 20 to 30 years. There are again a number of aggravating features applicable in both of your cases:
 - (a) First, your joint previous conviction for possession of a loaded firearm, and in Mr Talbert Young's case further previous convictions.
 - (b) Secondly, you both committed this offence while on bail for an offence of possessing a loaded firearm and having been released under investigation for the murder of Eddie Kinuthia.
 - (c) Thirdly, the offence was committed to punish a man for his outstanding drug debt and/or for dealing in drugs on your gang's territory.
 - (d) Fourthly, this was group offending committed in a public place at night.

20. I must then to consider the mitigating factors applicable in each of your cases. Zachariah Talbert Young, you were 25 at time of these offences. Your counsel argues that you remained a young man somewhat lacking in maturity. Further, it is said that you have no previous convictions for violence against the person. You have an 8-year-old daughter who, I am told, you have not seen since you were imprisoned. She will suffer from the very long sentence that is now inevitable. In addition, a number of character references are placed before me.
21. Paul Elijah Hayden, you were 20 years old at the time that you attempted to murder Nathan Williams. Your counsel argues that your age and lack of maturity provide significant mitigation. Further, he too relies on character references and the fact that you only have one previous conviction.
22. While you were both adult men at the time of these offences, it has been increasingly recognised in recent years that the human brain continues to develop – particularly in the areas of the frontal cortex and hippocampus - until about the age of 25 and that young adults may be less able than older adults to evaluate the consequences of their actions; limit impulsivity; and limit risk taking. Young adults are also more susceptible to peer pressure and more likely to take risks and behave impulsively when in the company of their peers. Of course, all of us develop at different rates and maturity is not just a matter of chronological age. Nevertheless, while I take into account in both of your cases your relative youth and immaturity, this is obviously a more significant mitigating factor in the case of the younger Paul Hayden.
23. The character references demonstrate that there is another side to both of you, but that cannot provide any real mitigation for such serious offences.
24. Zachariah Talbert Young, had I been sentencing you for count 1 alone, I should have imposed a minimum term of 28 years. Equally, if sentencing you for count 3 alone, the appropriate determinate sentence of imprisonment would have been 30 years' imprisonment.
25. Paul Elijah Hayden, you were the knifeman who inflicted the appalling injuries upon Nathan Williams. You were, however, more lightly convicted than your co-defendant and, at 20, were some five years younger when you committed this offence. The appropriate determinate sentence in your case is therefore 27 years' imprisonment.
26. Having determined the proper determinate sentences for attempted murder, I return to the careful stepped approach in the attempted murder guideline. I am next required to consider the issue of dangerousness. Taking into account the facts of this case, Zachariah Talbert Young's convictions for both murder and attempted murder, Paul Hayden's extreme violence in stabbing Nathan Williams, and your

joint previous conviction for possession of a loaded handgun, I have no doubt whatever that you are both very dangerous men and that you pose a significant risk to members of the public of serious harm occasioned by the commission of further specified offences. Further, I consider that the seriousness of the offence of attempted murder is such as not simply to justify but demand the passing of sentences of life imprisonment in this case. The risk to the public cannot, in my judgment, be adequately met by extended determinate sentences. I am therefore required by s.285 of the Sentencing Act 2020 to pass sentences of life imprisonment in both of your cases in respect of the offence of attempted murder.

27. I am then required by law to fix the minimum term, being the period that must be served in custody before you can apply to the Parole Board to be considered for release. In view of the fact that I am imposing life sentences, I must reduce the notional determinate sentences for the attempted murder of Nathan Williams by one-third in order to reflect the fact that there will be no early release. Further, I must consider the principle of totality in order to ensure that the overall sentence should both reflect the totality of your offending while also being just and proportionate.

28. In the case of Zachariah Talbert Young, several aspects of the principle of totality are engaged:

- (a) First, I will impose a life sentence on count 1 that reflects the overall seriousness of your offending on this indictment and a shorter concurrent life sentence on count 3. In fixing that total sentence, it is appropriate to reflect on what the sentence might have been had you and your accomplices succeeded in killing Nathan Williams. Paragraph 3 of Schedule 21 provides that the appropriate starting point for the murder of two or more people is 30 years although such sentence does not reflect the many additional aggravating features that would have applied. Indeed, in extreme cases of double homicide involving a substantial degree of premeditation or planning, Parliament has provided that judges should take a starting point of a whole-life order. This case would have fallen between those two extremes, but where the second murder was also a planned group offence committed in a public place at night for criminal purposes with a knife taken to the scene while on bail for a firearm offence and having been released under investigation for a murder, the minimum term would have substantially exceeded 30 years. Fortunately, Nathan Williams survived; but that was down to his pure good fortune and was certainly not your intended outcome.
- (b) Secondly, if this were not a case in which the court was passing life sentences, I would be considering consecutive sentences for these two convictions. They were entirely separate offences and the attempted murder of Nathan Williams was committed while released under investigation for the murder of Eddie Kinuthia. Plainly I must pass concurrent life sentences but it is important that I take this factor into account when fixing the total minimum term.
- (c) Thirdly, you are still serving the sentence of 5½ years' imprisonment imposed for the firearms offence. Since the sentences that I impose will take effect

immediately, it is appropriate to order that they should be served concurrently with your existing sentence but then to consider whether to adjust the minimum term to reflect the remaining period to be served for the firearms offence after taking into account the early release provisions of about 12 months.

29. The last of those factors is also relevant in the case of Paul Hayden in that the remaining period to be served before he might be released from his current custodial sentence is about 9 months.
30. Finally, I must consider the time that you have spent on remand waiting for trial. In this case, I therefore reduce the minimum term that you will each serve by 229 days being the days between your arrest for the attempted murder of Nathan Williams and the date when you were sentenced for the firearm offence. I do not give you credit for the further time that you have spent as a serving prisoner, but equally I do not increase the minimum terms that you should now serve by reason of the outstanding periods of imprisonment for that matter.
31. Zachariah Talbert Young, taking into account all of the aggravating and mitigating features of your case, the appropriate minimum term to reflect the totality of your offending in your case is 34 years. It is then necessary to reduce that minimum term to reflect the period that you have been remanded in custody. Accordingly, for the murder of Eddie Kinuthia, I sentence you to life imprisonment and direct that you will serve a minimum term of 33 years 136 days before you are eligible for parole. Further, for the attempted murder of Nathan Williams, I sentence you to life imprisonment and direct that you will serve a minimum term of 20 years. Such sentences will run concurrently with each other and concurrently with the sentence that you are still serving.
32. Paul Elijah Hayden, the total minimum term in your case is 18 years. Again, it is necessary to reduce the minimum term to reflect the period that you have been remanded in custody. Accordingly, for the attempted murder of Nathan Williams, I sentence you to life imprisonment and direct that you will serve a minimum term of 17 years 136 days. Such sentence will run concurrently with the sentence that you are still serving.
33. While it is well known that offenders sentenced to a determinate sentence of imprisonment are released early and serve the balance of their sentence in the community, it is important that both you and the public understand that when a judge imposes a sentence of life imprisonment, the offender must serve every single day of the minimum term. Furthermore, even after serving the minimum term, the offender will only be released from prison when the Parole Board decides that further imprisonment is no longer necessary for public protection. Upon eventual release, the offender will remain under supervision on licence for the rest of his life, and may be recalled to prison at any time.

34. Further, I order that you should each pay the appropriate statutory surcharge; that you should be deprived of the knives seized in these investigations; and that such knives should then be destroyed. Take them down.