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V

DEREK MARTIN

Brighton Crown Court

6th November 2025

Sentencing remarks of Mrs Justice Thornton DBE

1. Derek Martin. You have been convicted by a jury of the murders of Chloe and Joshua Bashford on 9 June 2023. I must now sentence you.
2. Chloe Bashford was 30 when she died and Joshua Bashford was 33. They were married and lived together in Newhaven.
3. There were four children in the family. At the time of their parents' deaths, they were aged 15, 12, 7 and 4. You were 64 years old then and you are 67 now.
4. You had known Chloe since she was a baby. She is the daughter of your former wife, Elaine Sturges.
5. You knew the Bashford family well. You had become close to them, and you spent a lot of time with Chloe and the children. You helped her with them, and you did jobs around the family home. One of the children described you as like a grandad and said you and his mum got on well and you would joke together. Chloe described you to others as her stepdad.
6. There was nothing out of the ordinary about the start of the day on 9 June 2023.
7. You bought Chloe a coffee from Costa Coffee, as you often did, before arriving at the Bashford family home in time to drive Chloe and the younger children to school. Having dropped the children off at school you and Chloe had breakfast together at the local carvery before you drove her to Sainsburys. She did some shopping whilst you waited in the car park. After, you drove you both back to the Bashford family home, arriving at approximately 10.30 am. You did some jobs around the house.

8. Then shortly after 12.16pm that day you launched a ferocious attack on Chloe.
9. You hit her on the head with a hammer, doing so multiple times. Whilst she was, no doubt, incapacitated by the blows to her head, you put down the hammer and took a knife from the kitchen and stabbed her eight times, five times to her upper back and three times to her abdomen. Two of the stab wounds penetrated to a depth of approximately 20 cm.
10. Photographs of the room in which her body was found show extensive blood staining on the floor and furniture. The cause of Chloe's death was multiple stab wounds which led to un-survivable blood loss.
11. Joshua arrived home from work a few minutes later at approximately 12.20pm because the three of you had made a plan to look at a new car. You chased Joshua upstairs, slashing his back with a knife. Then in the master bedroom you stabbed him four times to the front of his body. One of the stab wounds penetrated to a depth of 12 cm. As he was dying from the stab wounds you put down the knife, took up a rope and strangled him. The cause of Joshua's death was stab wounds and compression of the neck.
12. After the fatal attacks you cleaned up the knife and some of the bloodstains. You took the door handles off the doors of the rooms where the bodies were. You later explained that this was to ensure the children could not see what had happened to their parents.
13. Then you went to pick up the younger children from school and told the older children to meet you at Costa Coffee. You bought them drinks. Then you took them to MacDonalds for food before dropping them off at their grandmother's house. Their grandmother Elaine Sturges was surprised to see them.
14. At 18.11pm that evening you sent Elaine Sturges a cryptic text saying you were sorry for what you'd done, and you were about to walk into the police station. You asked her to look after the children.
15. At approximately 18.50pm you walked into the police station and told the police officer at the desk that you had murdered two people.
16. At 19.12pm that evening you were arrested on suspicion of murder after a police search had located the bodies of Chloe and Joshua.
17. It has never been disputed that you intended to kill Chloe and Joshua.
18. In August 2023 you pleaded Not Guilty to murder but Guilty to Manslaughter on grounds of Diminished Responsibility. This is a partial defence to the charge of murder. Where it applies it reduces what would otherwise be an offence of murder to an offence of manslaughter.
19. Your plea was not, ultimately, accepted by the prosecution and you stood trial for the murders of Chloe and Joshua.

20. During the course of your trial the jury heard evidence from five consultant forensic psychiatrists, Dr Cumming, Dr Roy, Dr Short, Professor Blackwood and Professor Fazal. They gave evidence over the course of five days to help the jury decide whether you were entitled to the defence of diminished responsibility.
21. Dr Cumming and Professor Fazal told the Court that your case is particularly complex.
22. All the psychiatrists agreed you have a recurrent depressive disorder, and you were suffering from mild to moderate depression at the time of the killings, the effects of which were exacerbated by your underlying personality difficulties.
23. Dr Roy and Dr Short considered you were entitled to the defence of diminished responsibility. Professor Blackwood did not think your depression came close to entitling you to rely on the defence. Dr Cumming and Professor Fazal were uncertain whether you were entitled to the defence.
24. All the psychiatrists agreed that any loss of self-control on your part was hard to reconcile with your use of different weapons during both attacks and with the second killing – that of Joshua.
25. By their verdicts the jury rejected the partial defence of diminished responsibility as available to you and considered you should bear full responsibility for your actions.
26. By their verdicts the jury must be taken to have accepted the psychiatric evidence of Professor Blackwood. He told the Court that the precise motivation for your attacks on Chloe and Joshua is known only to you. You, yourself, have spoken of a row between you and Chloe about money which culminated in her telling you to leave. However, this is your account and cannot be verified.
27. Professor Blackwood went on to tell the Court that something happened on the morning of 9 June 2023 that was intolerable to you and enraged you and caused you to fatally assault two adults using different weapons. Your attacks were driven by rage and resentment.
28. The murders of Chloe and Joshua have caused profound grief to their families.
29. The Court has heard very moving statements from Brooklyn Bashford, Elaine Sturges, Jason Godden, Simon Glenn, Sharon Bashford, Andrew Bashford, Natasha Bashford, Billy Bashford and David Hyder.
30. It is clear from what they have said that Chloe and Joshua were loving and loved. As a result of your actions, their families will suffer for the rest of their lives.
31. There is only one sentence for murder and that is imprisonment for life.

32. I must also state the minimum amount of time you should serve before the Parole Board can first consider your release.
33. It is important that you and everyone concerned with this case should understand what the minimum term means. It is not a fixed term after which you will be automatically released. It is an initial term that must be served before the Parole Board can undertake their first review of the case. They will review the risk you then present and consider whether you can leave custody at that stage, and if so on what terms. If you are refused parole you will remain in custody, subject to regular review. If and when you are released, you will be on licence for the rest of your life.
34. In deciding the minimum term, I must look at the seriousness of your offending and the information I have about you. I must follow the principles set out in Schedule 21 of the Sentencing Act. I have also considered the Sentencing Council Guideline on sentencing offenders with a mental disorder.
35. For the murder of two people, the starting point is 30 years. I then have to consider aggravating and mitigating factors.
36. Starting with the aggravating factors. Chloe and Joshua were killed in their home where they were entitled to feel safe. In her victim impact statement Elaine Sturges said that Chloe would have felt safe with you. As she and Joshua's brother, Billy Bashford said, you were in Chloe and Joshua's home because they had welcomed you into their lives.
37. You used multiple weapons in your assaults. Chloe was hit first with a hammer. Then, whilst she was still alive, you stabbed her with a knife. You stabbed Joshua. Then whilst he was still alive you switched to a ligature which you used to strangle him.
38. Turning to the mitigating factors. There is no evidence you planned the attacks. You handed yourself into police the same day and admitted killing Chloe and Joshua. After the killings you took steps to protect Chloe and Joshua's children from seeing the horror of what you had done to their parents.
39. I consider your culpability is reduced to a limited extent because, at the time, you were suffering from a depressive episode, the effects of which were exacerbated by your personality difficulties. The psychiatrists were agreed that your personality difficulties stem from the abuse you suffered as a child and not from your own actions.
40. The psychiatrists were also agreed that your abusive childhood was a risk factor for the depression you developed in later life. You have a history of contact with mental health services including hospitalisation and several serious attempts at suicide.

41. Whilst you have been in and out of prison for much of your life, mainly for thieving, you have no previous convictions for violence.
42. I give very limited weight to your age. The lengthy prison sentence you face is a consequence of your own actions in killing two people in your sixties.
43. Having assessed the aggravating and mitigating factors in the round, I have concluded that the mitigating factors somewhat outweigh the aggravating factors and justify a slight reduction to the starting point.
44. Derek Martin - Please stand up
45. The sentence for murder is fixed by law. This means there is only one sentence I can pass.
46. On each count of murder, the sentence is life imprisonment.
47. The minimum term will be 29 years, reduced by 878 days, to reflect the days you have spent on remand in custody, to a minimum term of 26 years, 7 months and 7 days.
48. You will also pay the statutory charge in the appropriate amount, which will be entered on the Court Record, and I make a collection order to this effect.
49. Please go with the dock officer.
50. I wish to thank the police for their work on the investigation and bringing this difficult case to trial. I also thank Counsel, solicitors and the court staff. Finally, I pay tribute to the families of Chloe and Joshua Bashford for their dignity during what must have been a harrowing trial.

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