



# **Judiciary of England and Wales**

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**R v Kevin Weetman, Kylie Maynard and Lee Owens  
At Liverpool Crown Court**

**The Sentencing Remarks of Mr Justice Jay**

**Please remain seated until I ask you to stand.**

**Kevin Weetman and Kylie Maynard: you have been found guilty on the jury's unanimous verdict of the manslaughter of Sheila Jackson and Eric Greener. You have also pleaded guilty to conspiracy to supply class A drugs, namely cocaine.**

**Lee Owens: you have pleaded guilty to the manslaughter of Sheila Jackson and Eric Greener.**

**This is an appalling case involving the untimely deaths of two innocent, elderly people who were, entirely unbeknownst to them, caught up in the often brutal and dangerous world of drug dealing and drug addiction which all three of you inhabited in your different ways.**

**Given that the Court heard so many lies during this trial, it is difficult to reach sure conclusions about all the facts of this case. I must apply the criminal standard of proof to all findings of fact which might increase the length of your sentences.**

**Kevin Weetman, you are now 34 years old and have been a dealer in class A drugs for many years. Kylie Maynard, you are now 37 years old and have been for many years an addict in class A drugs, including cocaine and heroin. In order to feed that addiction, you have been Kevin Weetman's loyal lieutenant since at least November 2024 which is the start date of the admitted conspiracy to supply cocaine. I believe that you were working for him for much longer than that, but I will not hold that belief against you. In that role Kevin Weetman provided you with cocaine for onward sale on at least a daily basis, you then supplied cocaine to other addicts from drugs houses and probably also on the**

streets, and you collected the proceeds for his benefit. Lee Owens, you are now 46 years old and have been addicted to class A drugs including heroin and cocaine for at least 25 years. There is no evidence that you dealt in drugs. Instead, you funded your addiction by thefts from shops whenever the opportunity arose.

In early June 2025 you, Kevin Weetman, decided to expand your drugs business from its base in the Anfield area of Liverpool to St Helens, which is Kylie Maynard's home town. You sent her down there to pitch her tent by the canal and see if she could begin to form a network of contacts. George Jackson, Sheila's son, came into contact with you, Kylie Maynard, in circumstances which are not entirely clear although I am sure that the account the jury heard from him was closer to the truth than the version the jury received from you, which was not remotely credible. Whatever the truth may be, the detail here does not impact on the length of your sentence. I am satisfied that you were robbed of drugs and money by other drug dealers in unpleasant but not unpredictable circumstances. George Jackson took pity on you in your distressed and dishevelled state and brought you back to where he lived, 44 South John

Street, St Helens. That was also the home address of Sheila Jackson and Eric Greener.

Sheila Jackson was not there when this happened, which was 7 June last year. She was in hospital recovering from respiratory difficulties. There is no direct evidence about whether George Jackson told you about Eric Greener or whether you were otherwise aware of his existence. George Jackson's evidence to the jury was simply that Eric did not see you. For most of the time you Kylie Maynard remained somewhat hidden in that small box room. In my view, it is inconceivable that, one way or another, you did come to realise that a man lived at that house, and you admitted that you knew about Sheila Jackson and that she would be returning home soon.

After you left St Helens early in the morning of 8 June to return to Liverpool, you and George Jackson made contact and on 10 June there was a brief telephone conversation between you, Kevin Weetman, and George Jackson. During that call he was offered by you half an ounce of cocaine apparently for his kindness, and that gift was made later that evening in the area of the underpass under the East Lancs Road. I have

concluded that this gift was offered as a form of bait, to entice George Jackson into working under you, Kevin Weetman in the St Helens area.

Subsequently, there was a further telephone call in which you offered George Jackson work. You said to him, “what about my dough”. The latter declined, either because – as he told the jury - this was not the sort of thing that he was prepared to do, or because he was already a drug dealer on his own account and did not want to encourage competition. I am unable to reach a sure conclusion as to which version is the truth, but for the purposes of this sentencing exercise it matters not. What is clear is that you, Kevin Weetman, now harboured an irrational grudge against George Jackson which you would not let go.

The best evidence about that grudge and the strength of feeling which accompanied it comes from the audio recording made either by you, Kylie Maynard, or your partner, Peter Johnston, on 13 June. More specifically, this was a conversation recorded on a telephone for a reason or motive that has not been explained. I understand that the police came to interrogate that phone only shortly before the trial and it became powerful evidence in the case.

During the course of a nasty, sordid conversation involving those whom I have mentioned, you Kevin Weetman, said that you would just “burn Jacko out”. When you, Kylie Maynard pointed out that his mum was out of hospital, you Kevin Weetman said, “sound, I’ll burn her”. Kylie Maynard’s subsequent remark, “that’s why I asked” was intended to make you aware what the risks if not the highly likely consequences of “burning Jacko out” would be.

The tone of this recorded conversation is as relevant as its content. One can hear you, Kylie Maynard, congratulating Kevin Weetman for his deserved success, for all his hard work. Although you, Kevin Weetman, exuded a sinister menace, the same menace that was apparent when you were giving evidence, you Kylie Maynard can be heard to hold your own and you do not sound like any downtrodden subordinate.

The recorded conversation is also revealing for what happened between you, Kevin Weetman, and a former associate of yours known as “Snogger”. You had been looking for Snogger for weeks. He had been disloyal in some way that you were not prepared to explain to the jury.

For you, Kevin Weetman, disloyalty is completely unacceptable and fully justifies the taking of violent measures. When you eventually found him, you had to jump over a fence to reach him and then whacked him so hard with your hand or not fully clenched fist that it was still extremely painful even some time later.

The plan to “burn out Jacko” was not implemented immediately. You Kevin Weetman, needed to find someone biddable or desperate enough to do it. That person was Paul Smith, known as “Smigga”, who had worked for you in the past. Paul Smith was unstable and unreliable, and could not be trusted with your drugs or anyone else’s. As Sarah Dunne told the jury in her ABE interview, Paul Smith was also someone who used violence himself to rob other drug dealers and drug users, sometimes using a knife.

In July last year it came about that Paul Smith also had to be punished for some act of disloyalty, but the punishment he ended up receiving was far worse than Snogger’s. Precisely what he had done wrong in your eyes is not clear and does not matter for present purposes. You eventually caught up with him on 12 July at 61 Coniston Street. You and

two others battered Paul Smith with an iron bar leaving him with serious injuries to the jaw, eye socket and face. That was a serious offence of grievous bodily harm with intent. Of course, you did not believe for one moment that Paul Smith or anyone else for that matter would grass on you. I am not sentencing you for that offence, but I will take it into as part of the background and as highly relevant to your level of dangerousness. You then video-recorded Paul Smith in his wretched, desperate condition. You threatened him with breaking his fucking neck, arms and legs. We can then hear Paul Smith saying, "I know you. I know what you're like, Red". The reason why you made this video which ended up becoming highly incriminating evidence in the case was to send it to those whom you wished to terrify, to warn them of what you are like when you deem it appropriate.

Paul Smith was now the ideal person to carry out the arson. He was terrified of you and would do almost anything to avoid further violence. Paul Smith discharged himself from hospital in the early hours of 13 July, and over the next day or so you, Kevin Weetman, initiated the necessary arrangements. These involved intimidating Paul Smith into doing your bidding – exactly what promises or threats were made or issued to him

will never be known – and procuring a motorbike so that he could travel to and from the scene. Those arrangements also involved you, Kylie Maynard.

Paul Smith was with you, Kylie Maynard, at 56 Thirlmere Road between about 3am and 7pm on 14 July. He needed to be kept under your wing because he was so unstable and unreliable. You provided the address of the target as well as a photograph of George Jackson downloaded from Facebook. I do not believe your evidence to the jury that you did that in June. You were in frequent contact with Kevin Weetman and were effectively the bridge between him and Paul Smith. I have no doubt that you, Kylie Maynard, played a key role in this arson and, furthermore, without Paul Smith being with you at 56 Thirlmere Road there was a high risk that he would not end up doing Kevin Weetman's bidding.

Paul Smith left 56 Thirlmere Road on that white motorbike before 7:32pm on 14 July. He decided on his own initiative to recruit you, Lee Owens, very late in the day. You had just left police custody and were preparing for a night of extravagant drug and alcohol consumption. Paul Smith believed that he needed help that night and I am satisfied that

probably before 9pm and during the course of the telephone calls that we know took place, he persuaded you to provide that assistance. I am satisfied that he told you about “Jacko” but it is not clear how much detail he gave. Your involvement was limited to navigating the route to St Helens using google maps and then standing as a look-out by the parked motorbike after it arrived at the scene.

Although the jury was told many lies during the course of this trial, I am satisfied that your account as to what happened at the scene has an important kernel of truth. Your evidence to the jury as to where the motorbike was parked was not true – George Jackson was right about that, and the front door was in vision. However, and crucially, I am satisfied that Paul Smith did see the light on in an upstairs bedroom and that caused him to withdraw. I have no real doubt on all the evidence that it was George Jackson who turned on that light, looking for his bank card. Why Paul Smith returned to the motorbike rather than set fire to the house there and then is something that we will never know. Maybe he lost his nerve and had second thoughts. However, the fact that he withdrew as he did is not something that begins to avail either you Kevin Weetman or you Kylie Maynard.

**You, Lee Owens and Paul Smith then smoked a cigarette waiting for the situation to develop. Paul Smith saw George Jackson leave, and shortly afterwards the fire was set by him. Why Paul Smith lit that match when he knew that the target was outside the property is another mystery, although he knew that he could not return to Liverpool without having done anything. A witness heard you, Lee Owen shout “do it then” which could only have been intended to speed things up. This must have acted as a form of encouragement but it would not be right for me to conclude that without it Paul Smith would simply have driven away from the scene.**

**With the petrol that Paul Smith had splashed over the front door, the fire took hold very quickly and the house was soon filled with smoke and toxic fumes. Fire fighters managed to carry Sheila Jackson and Eric Greener out of the property but they had suffered such burns and smoke inhalation damage that they could not be saved. They died about 48 hours later and for much of that period they were conscious and suffered, although I have no doubt that they received appropriate medical treatment. They died a horrible death.**

It is clear from the jury's verdict and in light of two notes that I received from them that they could not be sure that Paul Smith had murderous intent. That was a fair verdict on all the evidence, in particular Paul Smith's hesitation at the critical moment and his knowledge that George Jackson had departed. Further, it is not at all clear what Paul Smith knew about other potential occupants. You, Kevin Weetman and you, Kylie Maynard both knew, but there was no need to tell Paul Smith.

Although I am sure that Paul Smith did not tell you, Lee Owens in terms that the house was empty, I cannot properly infer that you knew that other occupants were there. On the other hand, this sort of property was unlikely to be in single occupation, and any reasonable person in your position would have realised that there was a high risk that others would be on the premises at half-past midnight. For sentencing purposes I consider that there is a distinction to be drawn between what you actually knew, and what you should have realised if you had only started to think about it.

Both you, Kevin Weetman, and you, Kylie Maynard, are in a different position. First of all, there can be no doubt whatsoever that you knew that Sheila Jackson, an elderly woman, would be at home in bed at this time. I have reflected very carefully about whether you both knew about Eric Greener. As I have said, I draw the irresistible inference that you, Kylie Maynard, did know that he lived there and I also draw the same inference that she communicated that fact to you, Kevin Weetman, at some stage during the lead up to the arson. There was a tight bond of trust between you involving almost unquestioning loyalty on Kylie Maynard's part the display of which continued throughout this trial.

The Crown's case has been hampered by the untimely death of Paul Smith. He died seven days after the arson from a massive drugs overdose. The circumstances are still being investigated. It is clear from Sarah Dunne's evidence that he was full of remorse for what he had done. The plan had gone wrong; it was not to "get" the two elderly occupants. Had he been alive and tried as a co-defendant, the issue of his intent could have been more fully explored.

What happened after the arson is not relevant to sentence, save in one respect. Both you Kevin Weetman and you Kylie Maynard were involved in the destruction of evidence, namely the “burning” on 16 July of Lee Owens’ phone which had fallen out of his pocket the day before. Kevin Weetman’s role in that suppression of evidence was greater than Kylie Maynard’s.

I have paid very close attention to the Victim Personal Statements of Stacey Tinsley, Sharon Jackson and Alison Greener. These provide powerful and moving testimony both as to the final days of the lives of Sheila and Eric, and the long-lasting emotional consequences on the family of what you three did.

The statutory surcharges will apply in the cases of Kylie Maynard and Lee Owens. For Kevin Weetman, I proceed under section 6 of the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 and set the timetable outlined in the Crown’s sentencing note.

I confirm that for none of the defendants is a pre-sentence report necessary. I have had the opportunity of observing them throughout this trial.

I intend to sentence the defendants in reverse-indictment order.

You, Lee Owens, have a very lengthy criminal record mainly for offences of theft and dishonesty. That record is a very modest aggravating factor. You do not have convictions for serious crimes of violence. These offences of manslaughter were committed under the influence of drugs and alcohol, and that is a significant aggravating factor. You are a habituated drug addict who live from one hour to the next, from one fix to the next, paying next to no regard to the consequences of your actions. You are also someone of limited intelligence and education, who acts impulsively and with little or no care for the interests of others or wider society. You told the jury that you regret what you did that night as being the stupidest thing you have ever done. That much may well be true, but the real reason why you feel that regret is because you understand what the consequences to you are likely to be rather than any true remorse for your actions, still less any empathy for the family.

Other aggravating factors in your case include the age and vulnerability of the victims, their suffering before their deaths and the fact that you put others at risk.

There is little mitigation in your case but having seen you give evidence for some hours, I am not satisfied that you are a dangerous offender. The aggravating factors I have mentioned are somewhat tempered by the fact that you were not aware that there were elderly people living at the property.

You pleaded guilty to the offence of manslaughter when arraigned on 15 December 2025. At police interview and before the Magistrates you denied any involvement. In my judgment, you are entitled to 25% credit for your plea.

I have considered the terms of the Sentencing Council's Manslaughter Guideline. In my judgment, for your purposes this is a case which falls under Category B because "death was caused in the course of an unlawful act which carried a high risk of death or grievous bodily harm

which was or ought to have been obvious to the offender". In my view, your case falls towards the middle of this category because, although cases of arson are always particularly serious, this high risk was not obvious to you. Anyone who chose to give the matter just a moment's thought would realise that setting fire to someone's front door at this time of the night and in this way, using petrol as an accelerant, would be putting any occupant at a high risk of at least serious physical harm, and that it was highly likely that a house of this type would not be occupied by just one person, that is to say, George Jackson.

The sentence I am imposing must reflect the fact that there were two deaths and not just one. For a Category B case involving one deceased, the starting-point is 12 years custody with a range up to 16 years. Given that two people died, the sentence in your case, before credit for plea, must go above the sentencing range specified in the guideline to 18 years' imprisonment. Further, you will have to serve in custody two-thirds of the sentence I am about to specify, but if you re-offend when released on licence you will likely be recalled to prison to serve the remainder of this sentence in custody.

Lee Owens, please stand: for the manslaughter of Sheila Jackson and Eric Greener, the sentence in your case on both Counts 2 and 4 is 13 years 6 months' imprisonment, these sentences to run concurrently. You will receive credit for the time spent in custody on remand, which is 205 days.

Lee Owens, you may go down to begin serving your sentence.

Kylie Maynard, you have a relatively modest criminal record which is not relevant to sentence in your case. What is relevant, and it operates in your favour, is that you have not previously served a period of imprisonment.

For the purposes of sentence, I treat you as having been involved in this successful drugs conspiracy between 27 November 2024 and 16 September 2025. The conspiracy therefore continued after you were first arrested and released on bail. Kevin Weetman told the Court that he sold about 12 oz. a week, which equates to a wholesale value in this part of the country of over £8,000. The resale value was correspondingly higher. I agree with the Crown's arithmetic, carried out on a

conservative basis, that over the duration of the conspiracy the total amount involved was in the region of 14 kgs. The correct classification of this drugs conspiracy for the purposes of the Sentencing Council's drugs guideline is, therefore, Category 1. The financial reward for you has not been explained, but as Kevin Weetman's trusted lieutenant it could not have been insignificant. You were paid both in kind and in cash. Overall, I have concluded that you had a significant role in this conspiracy although that role fell close to the bottom end of the relevant bracket. The starting point under the guideline is 11 years' custody with a range starting at 9 years.

There is relevant mitigation in your case. I have no doubt that there was a degree of pressure and intimidation exerted by Kevin Weetman. Your vulnerability was exploited. Further, you have no relevant previous convictions for drug-related offences, and you were involved in this conspiracy to feed your own addiction. Finally, I accept your counsel's submission that you have had a difficult personal life involving the two suicides of those close to you, domestic violence and having your three children taken into care.

**Giving the timing of your guilty plea to the drugs conspiracy which was one week after the PTPH, the available credit is, in my opinion, 20%. Overall, before account is taken of totality, the concurrent sentence you should receive for the drugs conspiracy is one of 7 years.**

**As for the two manslaughter counts, I have already explained the key role you played in bringing about this arson. You were the only person who had been to this property and who could provide information about it. You were the linchpin between Paul Smith and Kevin Weetman. You have shown no remorse for your actions and your drug addiction over many years has brought about a complete loss of your moral compass.**

**I have thought long and hard about the nature of your intention in relation to this arson. For the purposes of the Manslaughter guideline, it is quite clear to me that you participated in an act leading to death which carried a high risk of death or at least grievous bodily harm. You knew that two elderly people were highly likely to be in bed asleep at this time of the night, and in that knowledge you lent your assistance to Kevin Weetman's plan. However, although I am sure that there was a high degree of recklessness of your part, I am giving you the benefit of**

the doubt and do not find as a sure fact that you had murderous intent or that your intention was to cause harm just falling short of grievous bodily harm. It follows that for you this is a Category B case where the starting point for one offence of manslaughter is 12 years' custody with a range up to 16 years.

In your case there are a number of aggravating factors which must be considered cumulatively. These offences were planned and premeditated. The victims were particularly vulnerable and suffered both physically and mentally during and after the fire. Other properties were put at risk and you were involved in the taking of steps to conceal evidence. It follows that had I been sentencing you for just one death, the sentence would have been near the top of the range for a Category B case.

My overall approach to sentence in your case must be as follows. I am not satisfied that you are dangerous. I impose concurrent sentences for the two manslaughters on Counts 2 and 4, and a further concurrent sentence for the drugs conspiracy. However, that last concurrent sentence must operate to increase the overall sentence I am duty-bound

to impose on Counts 2 and 4, albeit account must be paid to totality. Spelling this out, the concurrent sentences on Counts 2 and 4 viewed in isolation would have been 20 years' imprisonment, but to those sentences must be added a further 3 years for the drugs conspiracy. It may thus be seen that the discount for totality on the drugs conspiracy count is 4 years, over 50% in your case.

Further, you will have to serve in custody two-thirds of the sentence I am about to specify, but if you re-offend when released in licence to serve the remaining one-third of your sentence in the community you will likely be recalled to prison to serve the remainder of this sentence in custody.

Kylie Maynard, please stand. For the manslaughter of Sheila Jackson and Eric Greener on Counts 2 and 4, your sentences are 23 years' imprisonment, to run concurrently with each other. For the drugs conspiracy, your sentence is 8 years' imprisonment, to run concurrently with the sentences imposed on Counts 2 and 4. So that you completely understand what I have just said, that means that your total sentence is 23 years' imprisonment and you will be released on licence after 15

years and 4 months less the XXX days spent on remand which will count towards your sentence.

Kylie Maynard, you may now go down to begin serving your sentence.

I turn, finally, to you Kevin Weetman. In your sordid and brutal way, you have been a successful drug dealer over what you have admitted to be many years. True, you do not enforce all the debts owed to you, particularly by female subordinates and addicts, but that is your way of keeping them under your thumb. When it comes to people like Snogger and Paul Smith, you dispense with any such subtlety and exert your rule by the use of fists and iron bars.

You have an appalling criminal record which includes many offences of theft, burglary and the breach of court orders. In 2003, when aged 12, you were convicted of two offences of battery. In 2007, when you were 15, you were convicted of an offence of causing grievous bodily harm with intent and sentenced to a detention and training order of 8 months, together with another matter. In 2022 you were convicted of assault of an emergency worker and sentenced to 12 weeks' imprisonment. I take

these matters into account, in particular the offence of GBH committed when you were admittedly still a child.

In 2011 you were convicted of the offence of conspiracy to supply class A drugs, heroin and cocaine. In 2020 you were convicted of the offence of conspiracy to supply class B drugs. You therefore qualify for a minimum sentence of at least 7 years' imprisonment for the drugs conspiracy to which you have pleaded guilty, but that is rather academic as I will soon be coming to explain.

You are a man with an entirely warped moral code. I am completely satisfied that you feel no remorse for what you did. For much of this trial, you have shown respect for the process and to me, but there have been notable lapses, in particular after the jury's verdicts were announced. You smiled and laughed inappropriately in full sight of the victims' family. I have not overlooked that.

For the drugs conspiracy you must be sentenced on the basis of leading role, Category 1. The starting point under the guideline is 14 years' custody with a range up to 16 years. I have no hesitation in concluding

that if I were sentencing you for the drugs conspiracy alone, I would have had in mind a sentence well above the relevant bracket, namely slightly over 18 years' custody. There are so many aggravating factors including your previous convictions for drugs offences, your admitted drug dealing with most of your adult life, the exploitation of vulnerable persons, the fact that you continued to offend after you were released on bail at the end of July, and your systematic use of violence to enforce your rule. In this last respect I will need to avoid double-counting.

The credit for plea in your case will be 20%. It follows that the notional sentence for the drugs conspiracy taken in isolation would have been 15 years' imprisonment.

On the two manslaughter counts, the issue of your intent is not straightforward, and I have pondered this very carefully indeed. The lies you told during the trial have added to the difficulty, although I am not making the mistake of concluding that because you brazenly lied you must have had murderous intent. I infer that your intention was to "burn out Jacko" as a punishment for him not doing your bidding. Paul Smith interpreted that as an intention to "get" George Jackson. I cannot

be sure that it was your aim or purpose to cause at the very least serious physical harm: terrorising him may have been sufficient. Had George Jackson been inside the property when the fire was set, there was a realistic chance that he might get out somehow, through the back door. However, you also knew that two elderly people were almost certain to be at home in bed that night, and that it was highly unlikely that they could escape. I have absolutely no doubt that this is an extreme case of you procuring an act which you knew carried a very high risk of death or at the very least really serious physical harm. Although I am not satisfied to the criminal standard that you had murderous intent, I am sure that this is also an extreme case of an intention falling just short of that.

In reaching a conclusion that you did have murderous intent, I would have to be satisfied to the criminal standard that you knew that it was virtually certain that these victims would either die or at the very least suffer really serious physical harm. I am not quite persuaded that was the case, albeit only by a narrow margin. In reality, I have to say that this conclusion, respectful as it is to the criminal standard of proof and giving you the benefit of the doubt, makes little difference to the overall sentence.

**It follows that for you this is a culpability A case with a starting point of 18 years' custody and a range up to 24 years.**

**There are numerous aggravating features. This arson was entirely your idea: you, therefore, played a leading role. You intimidated Paul Smith into committing it having brutally assaulted him on 12 July, and you knew that Kylie Maynard would act as your loyal subordinate in making the necessary arrangements. I need not repeat the aggravating factors also applicable to Kylie Maynard; you heard those and they apply with even greater force to you. I do not conclude that you anticipated that Paul Smith would recruit Lee Owens to this enterprise, but through your malevolence you involved two others, Paul Smith and Kylie Maynard, in this wicked scheme.**

**It follows that were I sentencing you for one manslaughter alone, the determinate sentence would have been in the region of 24 years' custody. However, that two people died means that the determinate sentence would have been in the region of 30 years' custody. Taking totality into account, the overall determinate sentence would have been**

**37½ years' imprisonment because I am reducing the notional sentence of 15 years on the drugs conspiracy by 50%.**

**The law requires me to consider whether I should be imposing an extended sentence or what used to be called a discretionary life sentence (I used that term after the jury handed down their verdicts) but what should be more accurately described as a “required life sentence” under section 285 of the Sentencing Code. In that context the first issue is whether, for the purposes of s. 285(1)(d), I am driven to conclude that there is a significant risk to members of the public of serious harm occasioned by the commission by you of further specified offences. I am entirely satisfied that you pose such a risk. I take into account my observations of you during this trial, in particular when giving evidence; your lifestyle; your previous convictions; the violent assault on “Snogger” and, in particular, Paul Smith; your ruthlessness and absence of any remorse; the evidence you freely gave to the jury about the necessity to use violence to conduct a successful drugs business; and, in particular, the circumstances of these offences themselves. That you were prepared to use arson as a weapon against George Jackson when on any objective view he had done you no wrong**

**demonstrates that in and of itself you constitute a significant risk to the public of causing serious harm from further specified offences.**

**Section 285(3) of the Sentencing Code provides as follows:**

**“(3) If the court considers that the seriousness of—**

**(a) the offence, or**

**(b) the offence and one or more offences associated with it,**

**is such as to justify the imposition of a sentence of imprisonment for life,**

**the court must impose a sentence of imprisonment for life.”**

**An issue arises as to whether the decision of the Court of Appeal in *R v Burinskas* [2014] EWCA Crim 334; [2014] 1 WLR 4209 has been overtaken by section 285(3). According to that authority, I am required to consider the seriousness of the offences themselves, either taken in isolation or in combination with others; the level of danger you pose to the public and whether there can be a reliable assessment of the length of time you will remain a danger; and any available, alternative sentences.**

There may be a subtle difference between section 285(3) and *Burinskas* which was a case decided on different statutory wording, but that difference need not be resolved in the circumstances of this case. Although the statute now uses the word “required”, it seems to me that I must still consider whether a life sentence is justified and, in particular, whether an extended sentence may be sufficient to address the risk.

For the reasons I have already given, these two manslaughterers are of the highest degree of seriousness with your intent falling just short of murderous intent. In my judgment, you are an extremely violent and dangerous individual in relation to whom no reliable assessment can be made as to the length of time that you will remain a danger to the public. It is possible that prison will, over time, soften and reform you, but I am not particularly optimistic about that and consider that it is more likely that you will remain a danger for the rest of your life at least until you reach old age. Unless you persuade the Parole Board to reach a contrary view after having served the minimum term I am required to specify, that means that you may never be released.

**It must be clear from what I have already said that an extended sentence is insufficient in this case to protect the public. A life sentence under section 285 of the Sentencing Code is the only appropriate option taking into account always that it is a sentence of last resort.**

**The law requires me to take two-thirds of the notional determinate sentence of 37½ years to arrive at the minimum term. It follows that the minimum term in your case must be one of 25 years' imprisonment.**

**I must also explain that if you are released from prison because the Parole Board decides after the minimum term has been served that it is safe to do so at the relevant time, you will remain on licence for the rest of your life and be liable to be recalled to prison if you breach the terms of your licence.**

**Finally, I am required to specify the period already spent in custody of 155 days to be counted against the sentence I must impose and to reduce the minimum term accordingly.**

**Kevin Weetman, please stand. For the manslaughter of Sheila Jackson and Eric Greener, I impose a life sentence under section 285 of the Sentencing Code with a minimum term of 24 years 210 days. The sentence on the drugs conspiracy is 16 years' imprisonment to run concurrently.**

**You may now go down to begin serving your sentence.**