

MOLD CROWN COURT.

Wednesday March 25th 2026.

His Honour Judge ROWLANDS.

Rex –v- TRISTAN ROBERTS.

SENTENCING REMARKS :

1. Tristan Roberts, at this court on the 5th February when the case was listed for a Plea and Trial Preparation Hearing, you pleaded guilty to the murder of your mother, Angela Shellis who was killed by you in the early hours of Friday the 24th October last year. You first attacked her inside the home she shared with you on Coniston Drive in Prestatyn and then some hours later managed to persuade to leave the house with you, only for you to attack her again, this time at the Coed y Morfa nature reserve, a short distance away. Once there, when she was alone with you in the dark, injured and in no position to defend herself, you produced a hammer and struck her a number of times to the back of her head. It was, on any view, a truly awful way for anyone to die, made all the more dreadful by the fact that her attacker was her own son, someone who, it is clear, she both cared for and worried about in the weeks leading up to her death.
2. Angela Shellis was only 45 years old when she was killed by you last October, a much-loved mother and sibling and a respected teacher with much of her life still ahead of her. She'd moved back to live in North Wales with you and your brother Ethan a few years earlier, but, as of last October last year, after your brother had moved out to attend university, she was left alone in the house with you. As of last autumn she was plainly vulnerable with only limited mobility having injured her knee such that she walked with assistance of a crutch.
3. Your behaviour concerned your mother, with your having been diagnosed as having autism and ADHD as a child. You were behaving in a disruptive and aggressive fashion with neighbours often hearing you shout within the house and you'd appeared in court a matter of months earlier for having a knife with you in a public place. Your behaviour was such that family members became concerned for your mother's safety, to include your brother who didn't want to leave her alone with you in the house when he returned to university, a month or so before the fatal attack. Your mother had tried to obtain assistance for you and had expressed concerns as to your behaviour and

your having a knife and a hammer with you in your bedroom. Poignantly, on the 18th October she wrote a note querying whether she would be safe in her room that night.

4. Tragically, her concerns were well-founded as you'd planned to kill her, posting messages on the Discord app on social media to that effect, blaming your mother for your perceived problems. You messaged that you had a hatred of women and felt abandoned, betrayed and bullied by your mother, saying that you were going to kill her for '*revenge, justice and vengeance*'. In the weeks leading up to her death you bought a number of weapons online together with protective clothing and spent several hours on the internet researching methods of how to kill, the use of weapons, how to remove traces of blood and DNA, and how to dispose of a body. This continued in the week leading up to the 23rd October with your buying the heavy lump hammer which was used to inflict the fatal blows on the 18th October.
5. This fortunately, is an extremely unusual case, inasmuch as it is clear to me that you both looked forward to inflicting pain and ultimately death upon your mother and that, in recording what you did on a dictaphone over several hours, you enjoyed what you were doing, exercising control over you mother in her last hours, no doubt revelling in what you did as you attacked her, ignoring her pleas for you to stop and to obtain assistance.

THE KILLING/INCIDENT ITSELF:

6. Late on the evening of Thursday the 23rd October you began to attack her inside her home, an assault which began at around 11 pm on the Thursday evening and ended with your killing her on the nature reserve some 4 ½ hours later in the early hours of the Friday morning. The attack in the house began with your hitting her with a hammer you'd bought and strangling her such that she sustained a number of injuries to her face. No doubt, she would have been in pain and terrified from that time onwards, realising what you were planning to do and she can be heard on the recording, shouting that you were hurting her. She can also be heard pleading with you to call 999, to get help for her and asking you to let her go, this off and on over a period of some 2 hours, whilst you were asking her to lie down and to put a bag over her head. Callously, you ignored her pleas, instead eventually managing to persuade her to leave the house with you, on the pretext that you would walk with her into town centre in order to get medical assistance.
7. Before leaving the house you made her wear a balaclava helmet, something she was still wearing when the final assault took place. She must have been truly terrified in these the last minutes of her life as you led her across the railway line and into the nature reserve with your telling her that this was a short cut to the town centre and her realising that you were lying and telling you that she didn't want to be there. You then told her to sit down on a bench, at which she started to scream, pleading with

you not to hurt her. Instead, you produced a heavy hammer which you'd carried with you from the house in a ruck sack. You then struck her with it to the back of head a number of times, there being at least 4 blows to the back of her head, causing catastrophic injuries which proved fatal. Having killed you mother you then dragged her body a significant distance away from the bench where you'd killed her, leaving it in undergrowth whilst you walked back home, only to go out a 2nd time, a short time later, seemingly with a view of hiding evidence of what you'd done. After an hour or so you went back to your home where you boasted on the Discord app about what you'd just done and then later you messaged your brother pretending to be your mother and seeking to reassure him that all was well.

8. In the meantime your mother's body had been found where you had left her hidden in undergrowth about 20 feet from the nearest footpath.

THE EFFECT UPON THE FAMILY/OTHERS:

9. In behaving as you did that day you not only ended your mother, Angela Shellis' life but of course, also caused dreadful anguish to the whole family (in particular your brother Ethan) and her many friends who have had to cope with their loss. I have listened to the moving Victim Personal Statements made by the victim's sister, your Sarah Gunther and your brother, Ethan Roberts. The statements describe the effect of this brutal murder on the whole family as being quite devastating. I have seen their anguish this morning and readily accept that their lives have been devastated and that they have been traumatised as a result of what you did that night last October. Plainly, no sentence I can pass will adequately reflect either their loss or the value of Ms Shellis' life.

THE SENTENCE:

10. There is only one sentence that can be passed in law for the offence of murder. That is a mandatory sentence of Custody for Life. I am required to specify the minimum term that you will have to serve, assessing the seriousness of what you did pursuant to section 322 and Schedule 21 of the Sentencing Act 2020. That involves 3 stages: The court has first to identify the starting point; then apply the aggravating and mitigating factors before finally reflecting any relevant convictions and to give credit (if appropriate, as is the case here) for a plea of guilty.
11. Having identified the starting point for the minimum term Schedule 21 sets out a number of Aggravating and Mitigating factors which the court has to take account of. These are not exhaustive, and nor are they meant to be applied in an inflexible or mechanical way but the court has to take care not to double count an aggravating feature which is already reflected in the starting-point for the minimum sentence. Ultimately, the court's task is to reflect your overall culpability: reflecting both what

you did; the circumstances in which you behaved as you did; and your background. In doing so I have reminded myself of the guidelines issued by the Sentencing Council in respect of cases which involve Domestic Violence; and the sentencing of Children and Young People (as you were only just 18 at the time) and that which relates to the sentencing of those with mental disorders and developmental disorders.

12. The starting point under Schedule 21 : As regards the starting point – you took the hammer with you to the nature reserve where you used it to kill your mother. That being the case, as a young man of 18 the starting-off point for the minimum term is one of 25 years, albeit I note that at the time of the killing you were only just 18, your 18th birthday falling on the 13th October, some 10 days before the killing you. It is a feature that, had you killed your mother a fortnight or so earlier when still aged 17 then the starting point would have been less, at 23 years.

13. Aggravating Features:

- [a.] This case involves a very significant degree of premeditation, planning on your part over a period of some weeks;
- [b.] the attack which preceded the final blows being struck in the nature reserve, began in your mother’s home where she ought to have been safe, this being an episode of domestic violence;
- [c.] The victim was particularly vulnerable in view of her limited mobility at the time;
- [d.] The incident was protracted in nature, beginning with the serious assault which took place in the house, such that I have no doubt that mental and real physical suffering was inflicted upon the victim before her death;
- [d.] your behaviour cannot be said to be out of character inasmuch as you have a finding of guilt for Having a Bladed Article in a Public Place (so taking a weapon out onto the streets) dealt with by way of a Referral Order on the 6th February of last year at the Youth Court at Llandudno.

14. Mitigation: I have read the Psychiatric Report dated 2nd February by Dr Tom Wynne and am obliged to Mr David Elias KC for his submissions which I have considered with care.

- [a.] As I indicated previously, you pleaded guilty, this after the Psychiatric report had been received which establishes that there was no abnormality of mental functioning as at the time you killed your mother. I accept that such a report was necessary in your case and as such you are entitled to credit for having pleaded guilty, albeit this being a plea to murder the maximum reduction available in the length of the minimum term you will have to serve before being able to apply for parole is modest, no more than one sixth;

- [b.] It is a feature that you are still very young, only just 18 when you killed your mother. That is something which I reflect, young people do develop over time, albeit (as here) there are occasions when the planning and the sheer cruelty involved in your behaviour are such as would be expected ordinarily in someone much older than your chronological age;
- [c] You have been diagnosed as having ADHD and Autism and have a history of self harm being referred to Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services as a child. It is clear that in the months which led up to your attacking your mother you were behaving in an obsessive and aggressive way, aggression which at times was directed towards your mother and concerns were being expressed both by your mother and by other family members. Whilst there is no formal diagnosis Dr Wynne is of the view that potentially you were exhibiting signs of an emerging personality disorder and plainly members of your family believe that it ought to have been picked up and addressed. Whether that be right or not, Dr Wynne is of the opinion that you were not suffering from any significant mental disorder such as would have had a substantial impact upon your behaviour as at the time you killed your mother. Rather you would have known what you were doing and been able to exercise self control. As such, whilst I don't discount or ignore your mental health, it is a feature and does mitigate your behaviour it is not something that can reduce your culpability to any great degree.
- 15.** Having identified the relevant starting point the court, guided by the broad principles laid down by parliament in Schedule 21, and your antecedent history has to assess the seriousness of the offence. That, in my judgment, dictates a significant uplift to the 25 year starting point. I have come to the conclusion that overall the aggravating features which I have sought to identify, particularly the planning; the protracted nature of the incident, such that you appear to have revelled in the control you exerted over your own mother; far out-weigh the mitigation available to you in this case.
- 16.** In view of what you did, I take the view that, ... as of this time, ... and it may be for quite some time in the future, you clearly are a very dangerous individual who until your plea was entered has shown little or no remorse for what you did. But, I make it clear that, my view of you as a dangerous individual, has not formed any part of my assessment of the minimum term you will have to serve, as dangerousness is addressed by the nature of the LIFE SENTENCE itself and the involvement of the Parole Board before you are ever able to be released.
- 17.** Please stand: Tristan Roberts for the murder of Angela Shellis on the 24th October of last year I sentence you to CUSTODY FOR LIFE. You will serve a MINIMUM TERM of 22 ½ years and 22 years and 6 months, a reduction from the period of 27 years which would have been imposed had you not pleaded guilty. From that period will be deducted the period of time since your arrest last October when you have been

remanded in custody. I understand that to be 148 days. That being the case, the minimum term becomes one of 22 Years and 34 days.

- 18.** It is important that you, and indeed others, understand what the sentence means. The minimum term is just that, the minimum period of time that you will have to spend in prison before your case can be considered by the Parole Board. Thereafter, the Parole Board will have to consider whether or not you can safely be released, but you will continue to remain in custody if it is thought necessary for the protection of the public. It does not follow that you will be released immediately after the minimum term has expired, or as a matter of course. If and when you are released you will be subject to licence for the rest of your life. That means that your licence could be revoked and you recalled to prison to continue to serve your life sentence.
- 19.** If the Statutory Surcharge applies it will be collected by the authorities in due course.