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-v-

**LIAM DONLIN
JOANNE MAXWELL
AMIE CLEGG**

**Preston Crown Court
Sentencing Remarks of The Hon. Mr Justice Bryan
20 March 2026**

1. Liam Donlin, Joanne Maxwell and Amie Clegg you have each been found guilty of the murder of Paul Scott after trial (you Liam Donlin having pleaded guilty to manslaughter before trial and you Joanne Maxwell having pleaded guilty to manslaughter during the trial), whilst you Liam Donlin also pleaded guilty to possession of a bladed article in a public place before trial, and you Joanne Maxwell and Amie Clegg were each found guilty after trial of possession of a bladed article in a public place (in each case bladed Scoville kitchen knives taken from your shared home address). I must now sentence you for these offences.
2. When I make factual findings in these sentencing remarks I am satisfied so that I am sure of such facts having presided over your trial and heard all the evidence against you.
3. You, Liam and Amie, are brother and sister and you lived together with your mother Joanne at 100 Lynwood Avenue, Darwin. Paul Scott was a relative to both of you, Paul Scott being the cousin of your respective fathers, Paul Donlin and David Clegg with each of whom you, Joanne, had had a relationship.
4. In the middle of the night on Sunday 22 June 2025, and after the three of you had first returned to Lynwood Avenue and collected at least 3 (and in all probability 4) kitchen knives from a kitchen block in the kitchen, you, Joanne, drove Liam and Amie, in your black Hyundai car, to 21 Peridot Close, Blackburn, the address of Paul Scott, where you all proceeded to Paul Scott's door at around 3.30am with the common intention of causing him at least really serious harm, and when Paul Scott opened the door, you, Liam, immediately stabbed him with one of the knives (a kitchen knife with a 20cm blade) into the left side of his chest, which penetrated his heart, and resulted in him bleeding to death soon thereafter.
5. Your role, Amie, was four-fold:-
 - (1) First, to identify where Paul Scott lived, as you knew, or knew best, where Paul Scott lived, as you were, to an extent, friends (though you were to overstate how much contact you had recently had with Paul Scott).
 - (2) Secondly, there was bad blood between Joanne and Paul Scott and, in consequence, Paul Scott would never have opened his door to Joanne and Liam, not least in the middle of the night, and so you were needed to persuade him to open the door. In this regard

Joanne had made previous threats against Paul Scott including a threat as to what Liam would do to him once Liam got out of prison. The bad blood was at least in part due to a previous incident at a party where you Joanne, and your partner James Joyce (“Tubsy”) considered you had been assaulted by Charlie Elliot, and Paul Scott was blamed for not assisting you, and for what had occurred.

- (3) Thirdly, Amie, you were at Paul Scott’s door to lend support and encouragement to your brother and mother, as part of your common intention. You were found guilty of possession of a bladed article by the jury, but an issue arises, which I address in due course below, as to whether you had a knife in your possession in Peridot Close or only in Lynwood Avenue. In any event, and in the course of your common intention when outside 21 Peridot Close, you knew that Liam had a knife in his hand at Paul Scott’s door, not least given that you are heard to say, “Don’t, don’t actually stab him”.
 - (4) Fourthly, and incredibly, Amie, you had agreed to film the attack on Paul Scott on your brother’s phone, the intention being to post the video on social media to frighten and intimidate Charlie Elliot (whom your brother had been unable to locate in the lead up to events at Peridot Close, and upon whom it was also intended to exact revenge for the perceived slight upon Joanne). The video was Liam’s idea, Liam telling the jury that he had seen a video of a guy who had stolen something and had been thrown into a canal which he regarded as “impactful”, and he wanted to make an “impactful video” that would get back to Charlie Elliot, and which he considered would “deter him and everyone else from bullying his mum”. You, Amie, did indeed film events at the door of 21 Peridot Close and, chillingly, your footage, which was played to the jury, captures the murder itself.
6. Joanne, you were the slighted, and vengeful, matriarch who bears responsibility for encouraging your own son and daughter to go with you to Peridot Close, armed with knives, to exact revenge upon Paul Scott for what was, in reality, a trivial perceived slight, which you had allowed to fester and grow, culminating in the fatal events on the night in question. What you should have done, as a mature woman, when you were out with your daughter and met up with your son, was diffuse the situation, go home, and sleep off whatever feelings you had. Far from doing so, you were instrumental in the attack taking place. In this regard you told Liam what had occurred in relation to Charlie Elliot and Paul Scott (which you knew would, and did, enrage him), and far from calming him and Amie down, you returned with them to Lynwood Avenue, not to end the evening, but to equip yourselves with knives, before you drove everyone to 21 Peridot Close. Once there the three of you proceeded to Paul Scott’s front door with you lending encouragement and support as part of your common intention. In this regard, I am sure that you, yourself, were holding the second largest kitchen knife (with its 19cm blade), a knife which you were to discard in the bowl in the kitchen sink at 21 Peridot Close, together with the murder weapon used by your son.
 7. Liam, it was you who went with your sister and mother to 21 Peridot Close intending to cause at least really serious harm to Paul Scott, and it was you who fatally stabbed Paul Scott through the chest into his heart the very moment that he opened the door to the three of you. I consider below whether you actually intended to kill Paul Scott given what you

had said to others earlier that night about what you were going to do including, “I’m going to fucking stab the fuck out of him now” (at a time before you collected the knives), and “I’m going to fucking chop this kid up bro” (whilst enroute to Peridot Close), and what you actually said and did at the door (whilst Amie was filming the same).

8. In this regard you can be heard saying, “Go on you fucking little rat” and you stabbed Paul Scott to the left centre of his chest with a 20cm bladed kitchen knife, the stab wound tract passing through skin, subcutaneous tissue, the muscle of the chest wall, through the intercostal muscle between the left 4th and 5th ribs damaging the bony part of a rib, and continuing into the heart, the full depth of the stab wound tract being at least 8.6 cm, with the full depth of the stab wound tract into the heart alone being 5 cm. Due to the bony rib injury the forensic pathologist Dr Tracey Sorokin’s evidence, which I accept, is that “severe” force would have been required to inflict such injuries. Immediately after stabbing Paul Scott, you can be heard saying a series of “no, no, no”. You were to be found at the scene with blood on your hands, you saying this was as a result of you attempting CPR, a matter to which I will return.
9. So how was it, that a perceived slight escalated, on the night in question, to the three of you going to Paul Scott’s house each of you intending to cause him at least really serious harm? For that it is necessary to recount events as they unfolded that night.
10. Throughout the afternoon and evening of Saturday 21 June 2025 and into the early hours of Sunday 22 June 2025 you Joanne were drinking with your daughter Amie in a number of pubs in Blackburn Town Centre, including the Gate Bar and Grill where you arrived soon after 9pm. You were subsequently involved in an altercation there with two individuals, Tyler Preston and Charlie Elliot, soon after 1am which was captured on CCTV. Following this you were both trying to contact Liam, but he did not receive the calls at the time as his phone was dead. By this stage, you had each consumed a large amount of alcohol over an extended period of time although I am satisfied that you, Joanne, were to overplay just how much alcohol you had consumed, for a reason that I will come on to.
11. For your part Liam, you had only recently been released from prison, and you passed your evening dealing the Class A drug, cocaine, in the vicinity of the Bee Hive Inn and Station Pub in Blackburn, an activity you had taken up since the second week after your release from prison. You had yourself taken cocaine earlier in the evening, and a time came that evening when you had sold all your supply of drugs. It was your own evidence that you were “coming down” from such cocaine consumption. At the end of the evening you took a taxi to Darwin town centre.
12. Meanwhile, at just after 2am, Joanne and Amie themselves left the Gate Bar and Grill in Blackburn, and also took a taxi to Church Street Darwen town centre, where they encountered you, Liam, who happened to be chatting to a girl and her friends and the girl pointed out to you that “your mum’s just over there”, at which point all three of you were reunited.

13. All three of you then got a taxi for the short journey back to your home address at 100 Lynwood Avenue Darwin. The jury learned much about your demeanour, state of mind, and intentions from the evidence of the taxi driver Mr Ali. As he pulled up to pick you up he heard you having a heated argument, which was something to do with a brawl in a pub earlier in the evening to which you were linked, and you were saying that you needed to go to “Pedro Place” (that is Peridot Close).
14. You, Joanne, were sat in the front of the taxi, with Amie behind you and Liam behind the driver. Mr Ali thought you were all arguing over something with the man (that is you Liam) saying things like, “ok, this lad’s gonna get it” and “he doesn’t know what’s coming to him” and “what I’m gonna do, I’m gonna teach him a lesson that he’s never gonna forget”. You Liam accepted in evidence that you probably said things like this other than about “teach him a lesson” for, as you said, that was not how you speak and you would have said something more like, “I will smash his fucking head in”, this from a person who, when you were 18, was number two in the world at kick boxing.
15. Mr Ali said the lady in the front (i.e. Joanna) was encouraging the man in the back (i.e. Liam) saying, “you know we need to sort this out tonight, yeah, and it has to be sorted out tonight”, and the young lady in the back (i.e. Amie) was saying, “yes he’s at the address”, “he’s definitely there at Pedro Place” and “he needs to be sorted”. As Mr Ali described matters, you, Liam, were getting charged up in a bad way, you were very angry not just physically angry, but also emotionally angry, and as Mr Ali said in evidence, you were being provoked to do something, and the woman in the front (Joanne) and the girl in the back (Amie) were encouraging you to do something and were not calming you down. That something was to attack Paul Scott and Charlie Elliot (who luckily for him could not be found). Your own evidence to the jury, Liam, was that “you would not lie, you were fuming” when Joanne told you that night about what had happened at a house party in September 2024 when Tubsy and Joanne had been attacked by Charlie Elliot.
16. In contrast you, Joanne, were described by the taxi driver, Mr Ali, as quite calm, which I am sure you were that night, calm and calculating, the time to exact your revenge having finally come. Your actions that night were not some impulsive act or outburst of emotion on your part, but what I am satisfied was the culmination of what was clearly a slow burn, and desire for revenge, following the attack upon your then partner Tubsy by Charlie Elliot at Victoria and Ellie Clegg’s house that had followed Amie’s 21st birthday party at a restaurant in September 2024 (so some 8 months earlier), and for which you blamed both Charlie Elliot and Paul Scott. That night had showed another side to your personality that your own counsel had put to Ellie Clegg and with which she agreed, namely that you were quite volatile, and would erupt a bit, and were at times quite verbal, swearing and shouting.
17. It is clear that you were not going to let events of that night drop, with you making threats towards both Charlie and Paul saying that those who had not helped were going to get “twatted”, and Victoria Clegg’s evidence was that Paul Scott had told her before his death that Joanne had told him that Liam was going to twat him. This is consistent with contemporaneous messages that were before the jury.

18. The taxi had been booked to your home address Lynwood Avenue, but enroute you, Joanne, indicated that you wanted to go on to "Pedro Place" (that is Peridot Close) which Mr Ali said was fine. Then when you got to Lynwood Avenue, you Liam were keen to go straight to Pedro Place, saying that you would only be a minute inside, but Joanne said no, they would be more than 5 minutes, there was no point for Mr Ali waiting and they would get another taxi. No doubt you, Joanne, realised that with what you were all about to do, it would be best to go in your own car, and not a taxi.
19. I am in no doubt whatsoever that the purpose of returning to Lynwood Avenue was two-fold, firstly for you Liam to try and find out the whereabouts of Charlie Elliot and secondly (and in the event) for all three of you to arm yourselves with knives before going to Paul Scott's flat. In this regard, and as to the former, whilst at Lynwood Avenue you, Liam, messaged Kay Gee, saying "Bro some kid ... has put it on my mum" and "I need a ting now cash g" and "Let me borrow that dinger g". The jury heard evidence from a Gary Keogh, a force control drug liaison officer previously with the Met Police, now with Lancashire Constabulary, who had spent some 30 years investigating serious organised crime. His evidence was that a "ting" was a reference to a firearm or weapon and that "cash g" was a reference to the person being willing to pay for what was being supplied. Whilst a "ting" could be a knife, given that knives were fairly readily available in households with the result that you would, perhaps, not offer cash for a knife, this led him towards the firearm side of things. A "dinger" was an unregistered and uninsured car which could be used whilst committing criminal acts. In contrast you, Liam, suggested that a "ting" meant a ting of cocaine, 1.75 oz of cocaine, which you were looking for as you were out of drugs, and you were not looking to purchase a gun, and the reference to "dinger" was just to grab Kay Gee's attention.
20. Ultimately it does not matter (given that you, Liam, were to go on and stab Paul Scott with a knife taken from your house), but I am sure that you were indeed looking to source a gun, and an untraceable car, not for the purpose of killing Paul Scott, but for what you were planning to do when you found Charlie Elliot, namely to go round and blast the front of the house where Charlie Elliot was believed to be, to "blast his gaff", which was consistent with a message you sent whilst en-route to Peridot Close, to "S.panish" that "Bro I'm going to fuckin absolutely chop this kid up now and then I'm going to Macey Preston's house so Danny Coker better fuckin sort some fuckin thing out right now mate 'cos I'll just absolutely blast her gaff to bits mate". The kid you were going to "fuckin absolutely chop" being Paul Scott. I make clear, however, that I sentence you all for what occurred at Peridot Close, not for what you intended to do to Charlie Elliot.
21. And so it was, of which I am sure, that whilst at Lynwood Avenue the three of you, between you, removed 4 out of the 5 Scoville branded knives from the Scoville knife block in the kitchen (leaving behind the less useful serrated bread knife) and, between you, took them out of the property to Joanne's car. What is clear from Liam's guilty plea in respect of the same, and Joanne and Amie being found guilty by the jury of having a bladed article in a public place), is that each of you had at least one knife in your possession either as you are shown on CCTV covering the front of your house, exiting your house at Lynwood Avenue

and getting into Joanne's car and/or in Peridot Close. I am also satisfied, so that I am sure, that each of you knew that the others were also taking knives from Lynwood Avenue to Peridot Close and you each had the intention that one or more of those knives would be used to commit an offence (upon Paul Scott) or have it available to use as a weapon, and one of those knives was used to commit the murder. It defies belief that any of you could have got the knives to the car, or out of the car at Peridot Close, or to the Paul Scott's door, without the others seeing the same, given that you were all together, and all in it together.

22. As the CCTV footage does not show any of you having a knife in your hands at Lynwood Avenue only you will ever know precisely how each (and all) of the knives get to the car, though you all knew that knives were being taken into the car. I reject as wholly incredible your evidence Liam that you somehow managed to get the largest knife (the murder weapon), with its 20cm blade, down the waist band of your shorts, or in the pockets of your shorts, as you came out of 100 Lynwood Avenue and before (per your evidence) placing it in the footwell of the car, you being seen to have walked, unhindered and unimpaired, to the car. I also reject your evidence that you had the smallest knife in your back pocket which you felt when you patted your back pocket on arrival at Peridot Close, and threw that smaller knife onto the back seat (where the smaller knife was found). That is a transparently contrived attempt to exculpate your sister Amie who had been sitting on the back seat (and which also provided a convenient explanation for why that knife was found on the back seat immediately after Paul Scott's killing).
23. That of course, does not account for the 19cm bladed kitchen knife also discarded by Joanne into the sink at Peridot Close in addition to the 20cm bladed murder weapon, nor the fourth (missing) knife. The most likely explanation as to how the knives got to Peridot Close is that at least some of them were carried by you Amie, in your bag/purse, as Mr Hayton KC accepted in the course of his oral submissions. In this regard on the CCTV footage at Lynwood Avenue, you Liam can be heard to say, "(inaudible) ... well wrap them in your purse, innit", Amie being the only one with a bag/purse, and there was nothing other than knives to be wrapped in your purse. I am sure that you had at least one of the knives in your possession when you came out of the house at Lynwood Avenue (in all probability more in your purse). What is clear beyond per adventure is that you (and the others) also knew that knives were being taken to Peridot Close with the intention that one or more of those knives would be used to commit an offence (upon Paul Scott) or have it available to use as a weapon, and one of those knives was used to commit the murder.
24. As I am sure that each of you Liam, and you Joanne, had a knife at Peridot Close (the murder weapon in Liam's case) and the second 19cm bladed knife (in the case of Joanne) both of which you, Joanne, subsequently placed in the washing up bowl in Paul Scott's sink, your evidence about the knives, Liam, was, I am sure, all about you trying to distance Amie, in particular, from any knives at Peridot Close in circumstances in which each of Joanne and Amie chose not to give evidence before the jury. As you, Amie, were the only one to leave the scene before the police arrived, when you were on the 999 call being directed by the operator to go and find a defibrillator, you were also the only one who had the opportunity to deal with any knives that were in your possession.

25. Whilst on the 21 minute journey from Lynwood Avenue to Peridot Close there is dashcam footage within the car that was before the jury. Whilst not covering the whole journey it does catch some of Liam's audio messages, and various messages were also sent on that journey. In advance of trial (but not before the jury) there was some suggestion by you, Joanne, that you may not have heard what was said as it was advanced on your behalf that you were so drunk that you had to concentrate all your attention on the driving. I reject any such suggestion. It is inconsistent with Mr Ali's evidence that whilst it was clear to him that you and Amie had been drinking, neither of you appeared drunk. As for you Amie, and whilst at times you looked to be either close to sleep or asleep, at other times you were clearly awake and talking.
26. Why does any of this matter? Because during the 21 minute journey from Lynwood Avenue to Peridot Close you Liam sent various audio messages including one to Azz Egan (Aaron) in which female voices can be heard in the background (and so you Amie and Joanne would have heard what was being said), which was, "Listen Aaron I'm just gonna go, I'm going to fucking chop this kid up bro and then I am gonna come and grab you", as well as one to "S.panish" which included the words, "Bro. I'm going to fuckin absolutely chop this kid up now..." The context, of course, was that all three of you were travelling together in the car with knives which could be used to chop up Paul Scott. No one in the car could have failed to make that connection (or have failed to have that common intention).
27. On arrival at Peridot Close, Joanne turned her car around (so it was facing out of Peridot Close) which would have facilitated a speedy exit, were that to prove necessary. All three of you then went to Paul Scott's door on foot. After there is an exchange of words between Paul Scott and you Amie, which no doubt persuaded him to open the door, Paul opens the door whereupon you Liam say, "Go on you fuckin' little rat" and immediately stab him to the chest. It is clear that the enormity of what you have done is immediately apparent to everyone as you Joanne can be heard saying, "What've ye done wi'im" and "Why's he done that? He's just killed him", whereupon Paul Scott falls to the floor, and you Liam say, "no" repeated eight times.
28. I am satisfied that your intention Amie and Joanne was not that Paul be killed, but that he be "chopped up" and caused serious bodily harm with a knife. That is consistent with the jury's murder verdicts and what you each say, in Amie's case immediately before the stabbing, and Joanne's case immediately after the stabbing. In your case Liam I have to consider whether your intention, at the door of 21 Peridot Close was to kill Paul Scott. I address that in due course below.
29. Amie, you called 999 to the emergency services using Liam's phone shortly after the fatal injury was suffered. You were not immediately honest in what you said to the call handler. You initially said you did not know what street you were on despite knowing perfectly well where you were, and knowing that the ambulance needed the address, though you did give the correct address about two and a half minutes into the call. You also lied saying that your name was Emily and the person who you said was attempting CPR (said to be Liam) was called Callum.

30. An issue arises as to whether you, Liam, did actually perform any CPR. The evidence of the blood spatter evidence Mr Brian Haggett in this regard was that if true CPR was being performed you would need to be knelt down by the body, and if force was being applied to the chest he would expect a large volume of blood to be transferred/deposited upon the person performing it, both on their top and their shorts. You had very little blood on your clothing. Your account that you did attempt CPR whilst standing over Paul Scott is inherently improbable, and I am sure that you did not do so. No one's arms would be long enough to do CPR standing over a prostrate victim, and had you performed CPR, however badly, you would have been kneeling down close to the victim, and far more blood would have been transferred onto your clothing. Your blooded hands were no more than part of a charade carried out by you in the immediate aftermath of the murder.

31. In this regard, far from the three of you owning up to what had just happened when the police officers arrived, the impression that you gave was that you had simply come upon the body of Paul Scott a few minutes earlier. You Liam were also seen outside Paul Scott's door, just after you had stabbed him, calmly drinking from a can. The body worn footage of PC Broughton of her interaction with you Amie, shows you giving the misleading impression that you had come to 21 Peridot Close because you had not heard from your friend Paul Scott for a number of days, when the reality was that you had had little telephone contact with him over an extended period of time, and the real reason you had all attended Peridot Close was very different, namely in order that really serious harm be inflicted on Paul Scott.

32. The death of Paul Scott is a needless tragedy, the senseless taking of a life, over a perceived trivial slight. The lifelong impact on all of Paul's family is vividly shown by the moving victim impact statements that were read to the Court. I commend Paul's family for the dignified manner in which they have conducted themselves at Court throughout this trial. It is clear that Paul was a kind and compassionate man with all of his life ahead of him. As a result of your truly cruel and evil actions he will never have the possibility of having a wife and children or growing old in the company of those he loved, and who loved him. You have left a life long hole in the lives of so many family members that nothing can ever compensate for. I can only hope that the sentences that I will pass will at least give the family some closure, as they attempt to rebuild their lives as best they can.

33. Liam, at the time of your offending you were 24. There is no suggestion that you were immature for your age. You are not of previous good character, and you have a number of previous convictions including for drugs offences and violence (assaults occasioning actual bodily harm and affray). Joanne, at the time of your offending you were 43. You too are not of previous good character and have a number of previous convictions including for affray and possession of a bladed article. Amie, at the time of your offending you were 21, and there are features of your offending suggestive of immaturity. You are of previous good character.

34. There is only one sentence that the law allows to be passed for the offence of murder, and that is a mandatory sentence of imprisonment for life. I am, however, required to specify

the minimum term, pursuant to Schedule 21 to the Sentencing Act 2020, which must elapse before each of you can be released on licence.

35. Under paragraph 4(2) if the offender takes a knife to the scene intending to commit any offence or have it available to use as a weapon and used that knife in committing the murder then the offence is normally regarded as sufficiently serious for the appropriate starting point, in determining the minimum term, to be 25 years.
36. In the present case each of you Liam and you Joanne accept, in your respective defence sentencing notes, that the appropriate starting point is 25 years, and I am satisfied that your offending is sufficiently serious for the appropriate starting point to be 25 years for two reasons. First you Liam and Joanne each took a knife to 21 Peridot Close intending to commit an offence or to have it available to use as a weapon and, in the event one of those knives was then used to commit the murder. Secondly this was an attack, in the middle of the night, involving large knives taken to the scene, against a defenceless homeowner whose home you had gone to, to attack him with such knives intending that at least really serious injury be caused.
37. At least in the written sentencing note on your behalf, I was urged to take a different starting point in the case of you, Amie, on the basis that I could not be sure that you took a knife to the door of 21 Peridot Close. I consider it highly likely that you did have a knife with you at the door, namely one of the small knives, no doubt secreted in your purse in case it was needed in support of Liam and Joanne, in circumstances where you were filming events on Liam's phone and so unlikely to have had a knife in your hand. You alone, also had the opportunity to dispose of the fourth (missing) knife, and you may also have had interaction with the third knife on the rear seat of the car at Peridot Close. Nevertheless, I cannot be sure, Amie, that you had a knife in your possession at the door to Paul Scott's flat.
38. However, that does not reduce the seriousness of your offending, or render the appropriate starting point to be 15 years rather than 25 years. This was a joint enterprise stabbing involving knives. All three of you went to 21 Peridot Close knowing and intending that violence with knives would be used to inflict really serious injury upon Paul Scott, that being your common intention, and whilst at the door of Paul Scott's house you, Amie, knew that Liam had a knife in his hand (as Liam confirmed in his evidence viz your knowledge) and as would be obvious to you in any event, given that you were filming what was occurring. This was no more than the continuum of your common intent ever since you left the house at Lynwood Avenue all equipped with knives as you got into the car and all intending that serious harm be inflicted upon Paul Scott upon arrival at Peridot Close.
39. Yet further, Amie, you can be heard saying "Don't, don't actually stab him". Whilst I consider that this was a transparent, and disingenuous, attempt to distance yourself from what you knew was about to occur (the infliction of serious violence upon Paul Scott) it shows, beyond per adventure, that you knew that Liam had a knife, and you were offering your support and encouragement through presence of numbers and the filming of the same with the common intention that really serious harm be inflicted with a knife upon him.

40. I am satisfied, so that I am sure, that you did take part in, and were party to, the taking of the knife, which was the murder weapon, to the scene. I am sure that you knew that Liam took a knife to the scene, and you knew that he intended to inflict at least really serious harm with it, and that was your common intention as it was Joanne's and Liam's. Indeed, more than that, you were party to all the knives being taken to the scene in commune with both Liam and Joanne, and with such intention. It is well established that paragraph 4(2) applies in such circumstances – see what was said in this regard by the Lord Chief Justice in *R v Kelly (Marlon)* [2011] EWHC Crim 1462 at [16] in relation to those in a multi-handed knife murder who did take part or were party to the taking of the knife to the scene. In such circumstances, and also having regard to the overall circumstances, I am in no doubt that your offending was sufficiently serious to merit a 25 year starting point.
41. In this regard I have also had regard to *R v Jones* [2005] EWCA Crim 3115 and *R v Beddoes* [2018] EWCA Crim 2599, and the fact that the starting points are not to be used mechanistically, and I have had full regard to the facts of this case so as to truly reflect the seriousness of your offending and to do justice in this case. The present case is one of a brutal murder involving multiple knives which ended, all too predictably, in the death of an innocent person, and which demonstrates all too graphically the seriousness of such offending and the horrific injuries that can be caused by knives taken to the scene, such as occurred in the present case. A 25 year starting point is appropriate in each of your cases. However a starting point is just that, it does not dictate the end point or imply that a different end point will be reached whatever starting point is chosen.
42. In this regard a 25 year starting point already factors in that what is involved is a murder with a knife (which would otherwise be a very serious aggravating factor – see *R v K, AM and Kika* [2010] 2 Cr App R(S) 19 at [7]), and a murder where a knife or knives is/are taken to the scene is a further serious aggravating factor. If, contrary to my conclusion above, reached for the reasons I have given, a 15 year starting point were to be appropriate for Amie, each of these aggravating factors would require a very significant upward adjustment to reflect the seriousness of the offending, before considering other aggravating and mitigating factors. I do not consider that the end point would be any different whichever starting point is chosen (as to which see also *R v Saurini (Federico)* [2023] EWCA Crim 1572 at [34]).
43. After having identified the appropriate starting point, it is then necessary to consider any aggravating factors (or, if applicable, any aggravating factors other than the use of a knife and taking of a knife to the scene – which are inherent in a 25 year starting point). Whilst there was some planning and pre-meditation, I do not consider that it amounted to a significant degree of planning or premeditation, and I am careful to avoid double counting given that there is always likely to be some premeditation when a knife is taken to the scene. Accordingly, I do not treat premeditation as a separate aggravating factor. There are, however, a number of aggravating factors. First, this was an offence at least partially motivated by a desire to punish the deceased and to intimidate others, as evidenced by the stated intention to record the violence and publish the violence on social media, and the actual recording of the fatal violence. Secondly, the offending took place on the threshold of Paul Scott's home, a place where he was entitled to feel safe, with the attack taking place in the middle of the night with Paul Scott being in a position of vulnerability. Thirdly, each

of you were intoxicated, in the case of Joanne and Amie with alcohol, and in the case of Liam with alcohol and with the effects of cocaine consumption from which you were “coming down”. The aggravating factors require an increase from the starting point.

44. Turning to each of you, and your available mitigation. Liam, the first question that arises is whether you intended to kill Paul Scott. Whilst that would not be an aggravating factor an intention to only inflict really serious harm would be a mitigating factor. It is said on your behalf that the messages you sent before arriving at the scene are more consistent with an intention to “chop up” Paul Scott and cause him really serious harm, rather than to kill him, which is consistent with your desire that the event be filmed. However, I am concerned with your intention when, undoubtably fired up with anger and rage, and as the door opened, you thrust a kitchen knife with a 20 cm blade with severe force into the left side of Paul Scott’s chest whilst being heard to say, “Go on you fucking little rat”.
45. As juries are routinely directed and as the jury was directed in this case, an intention need not be a long-standing one, borne of long consideration or pre-meditation, it can equally be one that is formed in moments, as it was in this case, and I am sure that you did intend to kill Paul Scott when you thrust a 20cm bladed kitchen knife into the left side of his chest where his heart lay, that being very much more than the foreseeable consequence of your actions. Your subsequent repetition of the word “no” was a recognition of the enormity of what you had just done, rather than a reflection of a lack of intent to kill at the time you plunged a 20cm bladed kitchen knife with severe force into the left side of Paul Scott’s chest.
46. I have already indicated why I reject your account that you performed CPR. A surer indication of your attitude at the time was you calmly drinking from a can outside the flat as Paul Scott lay dead or dying, and your failure to own up to your actions at the scene, and your subsequent failure to address the questions put to you at the police station.
47. You are not of previous good character, although your previous offences do not involve serious violence. Nevertheless you were on post sentence supervision for a section 47 offence on the night in question. You pleaded guilty to possession of a blade article before trial and I give you credit for that, and to manslaughter before trial although you chose to contest that you were guilty of murder necessitating a trial. I accept that you did express genuine remorse at trial which is a mitigating factor, though it is tempered to the extent that you refused to acknowledge your true intent. It is to your credit that in your letter to the Court today you have taken full responsibility for your actions, and you will bear the heavy burden of guilt for what you did for the rest of your life. It is also to your credit that you have a positive report from HMP Preston in relation to your time on remand. However, the reduction for your available mitigation can only be modest, and it is outweighed by the aggravating factors.
48. Mr Donlin, having regard to the seriousness of your offending, and then balancing the aggravating and mitigating factors that I have identified, viewed in the context of such serious offending, on Count 1, murder, I pass a life sentence and set the minimum term at 26 years imprisonment less the 269 days you have spent on remand, a minimum term of 25

years and 96 days. On Count 6, possession of a bladed article, I pass a sentence of no separate penalty.

49. Joanne Maxwell, there are the same aggravating factors in your case as in the case of your son, which require an initial upward adjustment from the 25 year starting point. You are not of previous good character and have previous convictions for affray, and for possession of a bladed article (which is a further aggravating factor in your case), and you also have form for threatening others with knives and sending messages in that regard (albeit set against the backdrop of your personality disorder). Turning to the mitigating factors, I accept that you did not have an intention to kill which is an important mitigating factor. You pleaded guilty to manslaughter during the trial but you continued to deny murder, notwithstanding the strength of the evidence against you.
50. I have had regard to the fact that you have previously been diagnosed with an emotionally unstable personality disorder. In this regard I have had careful regard to the contents of the report of the psychiatrist Dr Matthew Appleyard, in advance of trial, and which was primarily directed at your fitness to stand trial. A statutory mitigating factor is where an offender suffers from any mental disorder or mental disability which (although not falling within section 2(1) of the Homicide Act 1957), lowered their degree of culpability. In this regard I have also had regard to the Guideline on Sentencing Offenders with Mental Disorders, Development Disorders or Neurological Impairments.
51. Culpability will only be reduced if there is sufficient connection between the offender's impairment or disorder and the offending behaviour. Dr Appleyard describes the characteristics of an emotionally unstable personality disorder as including a tendency to act impulsively and without consideration of the consequences, an unpredictable and capricious mood, and a liability to outbursts of emotion and reduced capacity to control behavioural explosions with a tendency to quarrelsome and threatening behaviour with conflicts with others especially when impulsive acts are thwarted or censored, as well as involvement in intense and unstable behaviour.
52. These are undoubtably traits which you demonstrated at the after party in September 2024 and in the immediate aftermath thereof, but less so on the night of 22 June 2025 when you were observed to be very calm by Mr Ali, and it was you who orchestrated the prolonged return to Lynwood Avenue when knives were collected, and it was you who drove for some 21 minutes to Peridot Close with the intention that really serious harm be inflicted on Paul Scott. This has more than a degree of calculated action and premeditation on your part over a sustained period of time, rather than impulsive behaviour on the spur of the moment as a result of your mental disorder.
53. I have considered whether on that night your mental disorder impaired your ability to exercise appropriate judgment, to make rationale choices and to understand the nature and consequences of your actions, and I have also asked whether your mental disorder caused you to behave in a disinhibited way. I have no doubt that you understood the nature and consequence of your actions, but you did not exercise appropriate judgment or exercise rational choices, and you did behave in a disinhibited way. As I have already noted, as a

mature woman and mother, you should have diffused the situation and taken your children home and gone to bed.

54. However, on no view were you acting on the spur of the moment, and your actions took place over an extended period of time, and had all the hallmarks of a planned, and calculated, revenge that was far removed from an impulsive act. You knew perfectly well what you were doing that night and what you intended to befall Paul Scott. You even remained calm, cold and unmoved, after Paul Scott was killed, as was all too apparent from the police body worn footage of you outside 21 Peridot Close.
55. Having regard to all the relevant considerations, I do not consider that your culpability was reduced, certainly not to any significant extent, by reason of your mental disorder. Nevertheless, I do consider that your mental disorder can properly be taken into account by way of mitigation, and that it provides at least some explanation for why you acted as you did, even if there was not sufficient connection between your disorder and your offending behaviour to go so far as to reduce culpability to any significant extent. You chose not to give evidence, which was your prerogative, but you have offered no explanation for your offending. I bear in mind, however, that you have written to the Court today in which you express both regret and remorse, and in which you acknowledge you must face the consequences of your actions, which is to your credit. I also bear in mind the character reference that is before me which shows a rather different side to your character than that described at trial.
56. Ms Maxwell, having regard to the seriousness of your offending, and then balancing the aggravating and mitigating factors that I have identified viewed in the context of such serious offending, on Count 1, murder, I pass a life sentence and set the minimum term at 23 years imprisonment less the 269 days you have spent on remand, a minimum term of 22 years and 96 days. On Count 5, possession of a bladed article, I pass a sentence of no separate penalty.
57. Amie Clegg, if a 25 year starting point is taken, as I consider it should be, you have the same general aggravating factors in your case as in the case of your brother. Had a 15 year starting point been taken there would have had to be a very considerable increase from such starting point having regard to the serious aggravating factors of the use of a knife, and one that had been taken to the scene (to your knowledge) as part of a joint enterprise murder with you sharing an intention that Paul Scott suffer at least really serious harm, even before further increase for the other aggravating factors that have already been identified.
58. Turning to mitigation, and in addition to the fact that you are of previous good character and did not have an intention to kill, your greatest mitigation is your young age. You were 21 at the time of the offending. Full maturity and all the attributes of adulthood are not magically conferred on young people on their 18th birthdays, and experience of life, as also reflected in the scientific research, is that young adults continue to mature in their early twenties (see *R v Clarke* [2018] EWCA Crim 185 at [5]). I also take into account, in this regard, that you were acting under the direction, and influence, of your mother and older brother, albeit that you yourself played an important role.

59. In this regard I have already identified the aspects of your role. The features of your role are not the actions of a fully mature adult, and I am satisfied that they reflect the fact that you are immature for your age. Specifically, your willingness to guide others intent on causing really serious harm to the door of someone you knew, secondly your willingness to entice Paul Scott to open the door, and perhaps most characteristically of your immaturity, that you were willing (on Liam's direction and influence) to film serious violence being inflicted upon Paul Scott, which is not the action of a fully mature adult. You did stay at the scene and did call the emergency services. In your letter today to the Court you have expressed remorse, which I accept is genuine. You will have to live with your actions for the rest of your life, and you will be in middle age, at the earliest, before you are released from prison.
60. Ms Clegg, having regard to the seriousness of your offending, and then balancing the aggravating and mitigating factors that I have identified, viewed in the context of such serious offending, on Count 1, murder, I pass a life sentence and set the minimum term at 20 years imprisonment less the 269 days you have spent on remand, a minimum term of 19 years and 96 days. Such minimum term is, I am satisfied, the appropriate end point, whatever the starting point. On Count 4, possession of a bladed article, I pass a sentence of no separate penalty.
61. It is important to emphasise, so that each of you and the public can understand the position, that the minimum term is just that - a minimum period which cannot be reduced in any way. After it is served, there is no guarantee that you would be released at that time, or at any particular time thereafter. It is then only if the Parole Board decided that you were fit to be released that you would be released, after which you would remain subject to licence for the remainder of your life. It is in these ways that a life sentence protects the public for the future.
62. The victim surcharge is imposed in the appropriate sum in relation to each defendant.
63. Take them down.