

**IN THE CROWN COURT AT LEEDS**

**THE KING**  
**-v-**  
**MARC CARTER**  
**ADAM AHMED**

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**SENTENCING REMARKS**

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**Marc Carter, Adam Ahmed** after a trial before a jury, you have been convicted of the manslaughter of Dale Brett Stogden; you have also pleaded guilty to the offence of conspiracy to supply class A drugs. It is now my task to sentence you.

**The manslaughter of Brett Stogden**

1. Brett Stogden was 50 when he died. He was the mistaken victim of a drive-by shooting on the evening of 12 August 2025. Mr Stogden had been standing a little back from the road, in a car park adjacent to the BP garage on the Doncaster Road in Wakefield; it seems likely that he was standing near to the intended victim, Reuben Scotter.
2. It is apparent that Mr Stogden had had difficulties in life, but he was a loved, and loving, father, son, brother, uncle, nephew and friend; described as a “gentle giant”, it is clear that he is much missed. Moving statements have been read to the court by Mr Stogden’s daughter, Alyssa Stogden, his sister, Tanya Candlin, and his aunt, Alison Stogden; his family members have shown great dignity when attending the trial and it is right to acknowledge the profound effect that Mr Stogden’s death has had on those who knew and loved him – nothing I can say can bring Mr Stogden back or fully address the pain that his killing has caused. In particular, I note that his daughter Alyssa suffered the trauma of arriving on the scene only moments after the shooting, to find her father on the ground, covered in blood, and struggling to breathe. It is, furthermore, a particular tragedy that only a short while before the night of the shooting, Mr Stogden had received the all clear after being treated for lung cancer; having been given that opportunity, it is all the more cruel that Mr Stodgen should then be the victim of a such a senseless act of violence.
3. Neither you, Marc Carter, nor you, Adam Ahmed, intended that any harm should come to Mr Stogden; he simply had the misfortune of being in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Acting in concert with your co-defendant, Leyton Davies, your target that evening was one or other of the Scotter brothers, Rommell and Reuben. As you were driving up the Doncaster Road in a recently acquired stolen vehicle with cloned plates (you, Adam Ahmed, were the driver; you, Marc Carter, the front seat passenger), Leyton Davies (who was sitting in the rear passenger side seat) saw the Scotters on the other side of the road. It may have been Leyton Davies who gave the instruction to turn back, but, applying the criminal standard of proof, I am sure that you were both aware who he had seen and that was why you were driving back down to the area near the BP garage.

4. Although I accept that you were not particularly aware that Mr Stogden was in the vicinity, it would have been obvious to you that there were other people around that very public location at the time. Nevertheless, as we know, when you drew level with the area where the Scotters had been seen, you slowed down and pulled over, and Leyton Davies was able to fire a shot out of the car window. That shot hit Mr Stogden front-on, at the base of his neck, penetrating his windpipe and perforating an artery. The injury to Mr Stogden caused him to suffer immediate catastrophic blood loss and, notwithstanding the efforts of the first responders, he was pronounced dead about an hour later. It was a pointless, tragic killing.
5. The jury has found Leyton Davies guilty of the murder of Mr Stogden, and he will be sentenced for that offence at a subsequent hearing. Until that time, I acknowledge that Mr Stogden's family will only achieve partial closure.
6. As for your participation, Marc Carter and Adam Ahmed, the jury found you did not intentionally assist or encourage Leyton Davies intending that he should intentionally kill anyone, or cause them really serious harm, but it did find that you assisted or encouraged him to act in a way that would inevitably carry a real risk of some physical harm, whether that was to one of the Scotters or to an unintended by-stander.
7. Although, in this case, it will ultimately not make any difference to my sentence, applying the required criminal standard of proof, I am sure that when the three of you went out on the evening of 12 August 2025, you both knew Leyton Davies was carrying some form of firearm. That, I find, is the necessary inference from the way in which you jointly acted: slowing down and pulling to the side of the road (without any of you actually preparing to exit the vehicle) so as to assist or encourage Leyton Davies in shooting out of the window. Even if I had not felt able to reach that conclusion, however, it is certain that you, Adam Ahmed, had taken a machete into the vehicle with you that evening, as you, Marc Carter, were well aware, and I am sure that you both intended to assist or encourage Leyton

Davies in threatening one or other of the Scotters with a weapon, notwithstanding the likely presence of others, and in circumstances which all reasonable people would recognise would inevitably give rise to a real risk of physical harm. While, therefore, I am sure you both did know about the firearm, in either event, I am satisfied that Mr Stogden's death was caused by an unlawful act - involving a weapon, and in a public place - carrying a high risk of death or serious bodily harm as would be inherent in the discharge of a firearm *or* the wielding of a machete, even if used with the intent to frighten rather than to kill or cause serious bodily harm.

8. Equally, and again applying the criminal standard of proof, I am sure that your first journey out on the afternoon of 12 August 2025 had involved you in driving round searching for Rommel or Reuben Scotter. You may well have engaged in some drug dealing on the journey (and I will return to your involvement in the drug trade in due course), but I am satisfied that your primary goal was to hunt out the Scotters; that, I find, is apparent from the CCTV footage, from the way in which you looped three times around the same area – which included the area where the Scotters lived – and from the fact that the fourth member of your party at that time, Jordan Duncan (then the driver), had accused the Scotters of assaulting him only the day before, and Leyton Davies was alleging that (on the night of 10 August) they had assaulted his – and your, Marc Carter – mother, and the family dog. It is simply not credible that this would not have been a point of discussion between the four of you, in particular given Leyton Davies' clearly expressed desire for revenge against the Scotters that day. Accordingly, I am sure that when you went out a second time, later that evening, all three of you were again seeking to track down the Scotters, and that this was a planned and premeditated revenge attack.
9. In large part, the context for the killing of Mr Stogden related to your involvement, with Leyton Davies, in a conspiracy to supply class A drugs. That, I am sure, formed the true background to the desire to seek out the Scotters on 12 August 2025. Although neither Rommell nor Reuben Scotter have been able to answer the allegations made against them in this trial, the evidence before me is that, at the relevant time, they were rival drug suppliers in the same area, and it strains credulity to think that this gave rise to no disputes. Indeed, the obvious inference from the evidence is that the assaults they are alleged to have inflicted on Jordan Duncan and on the mother of Leyton Davies and Marc Carter (along with an attack on the family dog) related to an on-going feud.
10. As for your responses to the killing of Mr Stogden, I find it hard to see any genuine sense of remorse. In your case, Marc Carter, your counsel have said that you have expressed

regret and remorse for becoming involved in the supply of drugs and the lifestyle that led you to be in the vehicle at the time of Mr Stogden's shooting. Your actions after the shooting showed, however, concern only for yourself (including seeking to conceal relevant evidence) and you very quickly returned to attempting to sell drugs. As for you Adam Ahmed, it was sadly revealing when, in your evidence at trial, you were asked how you had felt when told someone had been killed, you responded "*I didn't know how to feel*".

### **Conspiracy to supply class A drugs**

11. When you, Marc Carter, were arrested in respect of the killing of Mr Stogden you were found to be carrying £50 in cash, 42 wraps of heroin and 22 wraps of cocaine. On the search of a property to which the three of you had gone after the shooting, another 61 wraps of heroin were found. Messages on your respective 'phones also indicated that the three of you were involved in a conspiracy to supply heroin and cocaine.
12. Along with Leyton Davies, you, Marc Carter, and you, Adam Ahmed, subsequently pleaded guilty to a conspiracy to supply class A drugs. You entered your pleas at the earliest opportunity and you will be given full credit for that.
13. When sentencing you in respect of this offence, I will apply the statutory guideline, but I also bear in mind that, as participants in a conspiracy, you each supported the overall enterprise such that the amount with which you were personally and directly involved will be of lesser relevance, and my assessment of harm has to take into account not only the quantities with which you actually dealt but also what you intended or foresaw, particularly where, as here, the conspiracy only came to an end as a result of police action. Sentencing you for the conspiracy to supply thus requires a fact-sensitive investigation of the length and degree of your involvement, and of your respective roles, accepting that your offending will be aggravated because this was a conspiracy with others.
14. The evidence regarding the conspiracy is clear: this was a street-level operation, where you were selling heroin and cocaine directly to users. You, Marc Carter had been involved since early 2025; you, Adam Ahmed, for only a few weeks before your arrest. There is no dispute: both of you played a significant role in the operation, engaged in the packaging and selling of the drugs, and at times holding the 'phone, with a clear expectation of financial gain and with some awareness and understanding of the scale of the operation. That said, I acknowledge that there are features of your involvement that reduce your respective culpability: while neither of you were coerced, you, Marc Carter, were

encouraged to join the business by your older half-brother, Leyton Davies, and you, Adam Ahmed, were introduced by your friend, Marc Carter. More generally, both of you played a subordinate role to Leyton Davies and worked to his direction. It is a distinguishing feature between your respective cases that you, Marc Carter, were involved in the conspiracy for a far longer time than your friend, Adam Ahmed. Acknowledging that fact, I observe, however, that your roles were broadly the same, and you both anticipated continuing to work for Leyton Davies, and to thus gain from your on-going involvement (only prevented by your arrests). I also bear in mind that you, Marc Carter, were only 18 or 19 at the time you accepted your half-brother's invitation to work for him, and can be seen as more heavily dependent upon Leyton Davies, including, by August 2025, for your accommodation. Having regard to all the circumstances, I have concluded that your respective culpability should be viewed as broadly comparable.

### **Your personal circumstances and previous convictions**

15. This is not a case in which I have been asked to obtain pre-sentence reports, nor is it necessary. There is no suggestion that a dangerousness assessment is apt, and, on the other side of the balance, an immediate custodial sentence is inevitable. I have also had the benefit of representations from your respective legal teams, who have made sure that I have all relevant information about you.
16. You, Marc Carter, are now 20 years old; you were 19 at the time of the offending. Leyton Davies, with whom you share a mother, is your older (by some 8 years) half-brother. Because of her problems with drugs, both of you had to be removed from your mother's care at a young age, and were looked after by your grandfather. It is apparent that your upbringing was far from ideal and, by your teens, you were moving between family members, with little stability in your life. After leaving school, you found it difficult to hold down jobs although, to your credit, before your involvement in your brother's drugs business, apart from one incident of being drunk and disorderly on your 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, you had no criminal convictions.
17. As for you, Adam Ahmed, you were 20 at the time of these offences and are now 21. You too experienced a difficult and unstable upbringing; your mother had her own problems and you were left without a father figure in your life by your earlier teens. You effectively left school at 14, largely fending for yourself on the streets, with periods of homelessness. You have some previous convictions, dating back to your mid-teens. One of those convictions, from October 2024, is for the possession of a knife or bladed article, for which you were sentenced to 4 months in a young offenders institution. I accept,

however, that you do not have convictions for acts of violence and your previous offending is not of the same scale as the matters with which I am concerned; I do not treat your previous convictions as statutory aggravating features when sentencing you today.

### **Sentencing guideline: unlawful act manslaughter**

#### *Step 1*

18. In sentencing you for the manslaughter of Mr Stogden, I am required to follow the relevant guideline. In so doing, I must first determine the offence category, assessing both culpability and harm. Given that Mr Stogden died, the harm caused was plainly of the utmost seriousness; as for your culpability, your counsel have urged me to see your offending as falling somewhere between categories C (medium culpability) and B (high culpability); the prosecution says it more obviously falls within category B.
19. On my findings, I agree that this is a case that properly falls within category B, high culpability. It was, or ought to have been, obvious to you that encouraging or assisting Leyton Davies in using a firearm (or a machete) in a public area inherently carried a high risk of death or serious bodily harm, even if your intention was only that the use of the firearm (or machete) was to threaten or frighten rather than to kill or seriously injure.
20. On that basis, the starting point is 12 years, with a range of 8-16 years.

#### *Step 2*

21. Having determined the relevant category, I am then required to use the corresponding starting point to reach a sentence within the category range, having regard to the aggravating and mitigating factors applicable in this case.
22. As I have said, I do not treat any of your previous convictions as aggravating factors.
23. Furthermore, as I have already had regard to the use of a weapon and the risk of harm to others in determining the offence category, I do not treat these as further aggravating the offence. I should make clear, however, that, if I had not placed this offence within category B, the intended use of a weapon, and the risk of harm to others would then have needed to be treated as aggravating features, warranting a significant uplift to the starting point.
24. In any event, the seriousness of your offending is also aggravated by the premeditation and planning, as shown by the earlier attempts to hunt down the Scotters, and, on your part Marc Carter, it is a further aggravating feature that you attempted to conceal evidence.

25. As for mitigation, I am prepared to afford you both some credit for having no relevant previous convictions, a factor that is stronger in your case, Marc Carter. That said, this is not something that can be given too much weight, given that, as you have accepted, both of you were involved in a class A drug conspiracy at the time of the manslaughter.
26. The stronger points in both your cases are (i) that you were (and are) young and obviously lacking in maturity; and (ii) that you were secondary parties, who were heavily influenced by Leyton Davies, and, although the planning and premeditation involved in this offence is an aggravating feature, I am prepared to accept that that was something directed by Leyton Davies.
27. More generally I have taken into account all that has been said by your respective counsel, and I have had the benefit of seeing you both give evidence; I acknowledge that you have both had difficulties in your upbringing and I am clear that you were influenced by the lifestyle that you perceived others, such as Leyton Davies, to have, and that appropriate weight needs to be afforded to your youth both in determining your culpability and in assessing the effect that my sentence will have on you.
28. The weighing of aggravating and mitigating features is never a precise mathematical exercise; ultimately I have to arrive at a point that reflects the seriousness of your respective offending, having regard to all relevant considerations. In undertaking this exercise, it could be said that you, Marc Carter, were marginally more culpable because you attempted to conceal evidence, but I also take into account that you were the youngest of the group, and arguably more heavily influenced by Leyton Davies. Similarly, in your case, Adam Ahmed, it could be said that your offending was more serious because you were carrying the machete and driving the car, but I need to also factor in your immature desire to be part of a group you had comparatively recently joined, and the absence of any attempt on your part to hide any evidence. Having regard to all relevant considerations in both your cases, I have reached the view that the same sentence should be applied to each of you, which will be appropriately discounted to reflect your youth and immaturity and the fact that you were secondary participants in an offence that was led and directed by another.

*Steps 3, 4 and 5 - Not applicable to this case*

*Step 6: dangerousness*

29. I do not find that the dangerousness provisions are engaged in either of your cases.

*Step 7: totality*

30. This will be a relevant consideration when sentencing you for the conspiracy to supply and I have taken it into account in relation to that offence.

*Step 8: ancillary orders*

31. I make the appropriate orders for the forfeiture and destruction of the drugs and ammunition that were recovered.
32. I also direct that, in both your cases, a victim surcharge will be applied in the appropriate sum.

*Time on remand*

33. I am told that you have each spent 213 days in custody on remand and these days will count towards the term I impose. Should an error have been made in the calculation, this can be corrected administratively.

**Sentencing: conspiracy to supply class A drugs**

34. If applying the sentencing guideline for the supply of a controlled drug, this would be treated as a category 3 case for harm. As for your respective roles, for the reasons I have already provided, you would both fall to be treated as having played a significant role; under the guideline, this would provide a starting point of 4 ½ years, with a range of 3 ½ to 7 years, albeit I accept that your respective roles would place you towards the lower end of that range.
35. As I have observed, however, this was a conspiracy to supply, and cannot simply be approached by a simplistic application of the guideline. Your involvement in a conspiracy is a materially aggravating feature of your offending and would increase the appropriate term. That said, in assessing your respective roles in the conspiracy, I accept that you were both subordinate to Leyton Davies, and acted at his direction. I have also had regard to the period in which you were involved. Although this appears to have been a long-running operation, you, Marc Carter, became involved towards the beginning of the year, after being invited to do so by your older half-brother, and you, Adam Ahmed, had only been part of the operation for a few weeks. I have also taken into account your respective ages and your immaturity, and the possibility of rehabilitation. Further, you, Marc Carter, have expressed regret for getting involved.
36. As well as thus having regard to the aggravating and mitigating factors relevant to your involvement in this offence, as the totality guideline makes clear, as I am sentencing you for more than one matter, I must also have regard to the overall term. The total sentence

imposed should reflect all of the offending behaviour with reference to overall harm and culpability, together with the aggravating and mitigating factors relating to the offences and those personal to the offender, and should be just and proportionate.

37. As recent guidance has made clear, what is neither required, nor usually appropriate, is that I set out the particular reductions made, as if the assessment of aggravating and mitigating features, and the account taken of totality, was a straightforward arithmetical exercise; it is not. These are, however, all matters to which I have had regard.

38. Thus taking account of all relevant circumstances, and applying a reduction for totality – bearing in mind the terms I will impose for the manslaughter of Mr Stogden – the sentence I will pass for each of you on the conspiracy to supply will be one of three years, from which you are each entitled to a one third discount for your guilty pleas.

39. The resultant, overall sentence is, I am satisfied, the least that I can impose that will properly reflect all of your offending behaviour, having regard to overall harm and culpability, and the relevant aggravating and mitigating factors, both as those relate to the offences and as personal to each of you; it is a term that is just and proportionate in the particular circumstances of this case.

## **Sentence**

*Marc Carter; Adam Ahmed please stand*

*Marc Carter,*

40. For the manslaughter of Brett Stogden, I am satisfied that the least period of custody that I can impose in your case for this offence is ten years.

41. For the offence of conspiracy to supply class A drugs, I am satisfied that the least period of custody that I can impose (allowing for a one third reduction for your guilty plea) is two years.

42. That makes a total sentence of 12 years.

43. You will serve two-thirds of your sentence before you will be considered for parole, and even then you will remain on licence for the remainder of your sentence such that if you commit another offence or fail to comply with the terms of your licence you will be liable to be recalled to custody and may serve the entire sentence in custody.

44. The 213 days which you have spent on remand in custody will automatically count towards the custodial term of your sentence. Should an error have been made in the calculation, this can be corrected administratively.

45. The appropriate statutory surcharge will be applied.

*Adam Ahmed:*

46. For the manslaughter of Brett Stogden, I am satisfied that the least period of custody that I can impose in your case for this offence is ten years.
47. For the offence of conspiracy to supply class A drugs, I am satisfied that the least period of custody that I can impose (allowing for a one third reduction for your guilty plea) is two years.
48. That makes a total sentence of 12 years.
49. You will serve two-thirds of your sentence before you will be considered for parole, and even then you will remain on licence for the remainder of your sentence such that if you commit another offence or fail to comply with the terms of your licence you will be liable to be recalled to custody and may serve the entire sentence in custody.
50. The 213 days which you have spent on remand in custody will automatically count towards the custodial term of your sentence. Should an error have been made in the calculation, this can be corrected administratively.
51. The appropriate statutory surcharge will be applied.

### **Commendation**

This was a case that involved a great deal of hard work by the West Yorkshire police. Much of the work that is nowadays undertaken in bringing a case of this nature to trial involves searching through large quantities of data, from CCTV, 'phones, and other sources. The fair presentation of that material - in particular through the means of the timeline, the creation of plans, and the selection of CCTV footage – requires enormous attention to detail and should never be taken for granted. Those listed in the prosecution's sentencing note - for shorthand, referred to as "the team" - are to be commended for their work.

*The Hon Mrs Justice Eady DBE*

*17 March 2026*