

IN THE CROWN COURT AT LEEDS

THE KING
-v-
LEYTON DAVIES

SENTENCING REMARKS
15 May 2026

Leyton Davies after a trial before a jury you have been convicted of the murder 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 murder of Brett Stogden

1. In describing the facts of this case, I will inevitably repeat much of what I said when earlier sentencing your co-defendants, Marc Carter and Adam Ahmed, who were convicted of the manslaughter of Dale Brett Stogden; it is, however, right that my sentencing remarks in your case are placed in context and it is thus necessary to again set out these facts.
2. 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.
3. 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 previously been read to the court from Mr Stogden’s daughter, Alyssa Stogden, his sister, Tanya Candlin, and his aunt, Alison Stogden; his family members showed 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, although 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 he should then be the victim of a such a senseless act of violence.

4. Your intention that evening, Leyton Davies, was not, however, to harm Mr Stogden; he just had the misfortune of being in the wrong place at the wrong time. Acting in concert with your co-defendants, Marc Carter (who was also your younger half-brother) and Adam Ahmed, your target that evening was in fact one or other of the Scotter brothers, Rommell and Reuben. As you were being driven up the Doncaster Road in a recently acquired stolen vehicle with cloned plates (you were sitting in the rear passenger side seat; Adam Ahmed was the driver, and Marc Carter the front seat passenger), you saw the Scotters on the other side of the road and gave the instruction to Adam Ahmed to turn back, to drive past the Scotters on the same side of the road to where you had seen them. That you gave the relevant instruction to Adam Ahmed is certain: he had joined your criminal drugs enterprise only a matter of weeks earlier and his evidence was clear, that he worked to your orders and followed your instructions.
5. Although I accept that you were not specifically 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, when the vehicle drew level with the area where you had seen the Scotters, you instructed Adam Ahmed to slow down and pull over (again, I am satisfied to the criminal standard that he would not have acted save under your orders), and you were 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.
6. The jury found you, Leyton Davies, guilty of the murder of Mr Stogden; Marc Carter and Adam Ahmed guilty of his manslaughter.
7. Although, Mr Stogden was not your target, there was clear premeditation to your actions, perhaps most clearly evidenced by your message earlier in the day saying that the Scotter brothers were "*both gonna get got today*". While I cannot be sure that you sourced the stolen vehicle you were using specifically for this purpose (albeit there is a close coincidence in timing), applying the criminal standard of proof, I am sure that you had already been out searching for Rommel or Reuben Scotter, when you, and three others, had, earlier on the afternoon of 12 August 2025, taken that stolen vehicle, and had driven round in a loop in your attempt to find them. You may have engaged in some drug dealing on the journey (I 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 drove around the same area (which included the area where the Scotters lived) three times, 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, while you, Leyton Davies, were alleging that (on the night of 10 August) they had assaulted your mother, and the family dog. I cannot be certain to the requisite standard that you were carrying a gun on that first drive to find the Scotters, but you had made your desire for revenge very clear, and I am sure, having failed to track down the Scotters on your first attempt, when you went out a second time, later that evening, all three of you were again seeking to find the Scotters, and on this occasion you were carrying a firearm which you intended to use as part of a planned and premeditated revenge attack.

8. Your evidence was that you had obtained the firearm – a converted blank firing pistol – some 18 months earlier; you said it was something given to you in exchange for £500 worth of heroin, and that it had been supplied to you pre-loaded with five rounds. It was your testimony that you had not in fact fired the pistol previously, not even as a test, but that you had previously carried it with you, whilst loaded, in connection with your drug business, which was centred on the streets of Agbrigg, near Wakefield.
9. Having heard the evidence at trial, I am certain that the context for the killing of Mr Stogden related to your involvement in the drugs trade. 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 operating in the same area as you, 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 your mother (along with an attack on the family dog) related to an on-going feud.
10. As for your actions after firing the gun, it is apparent that you continued to take the lead, instructing Ahmed and Carter where to go, first to the place where your mother was staying and then, having ordered a taxi for the three of you, to your partner's house, where you and Carter remained for some days. It was your evidence that you disposed of the firearm by wrapping it up (presumably to disguise what it was) and then putting it at the bottom of a bin in the kitchen of the flat of your mother's friend. When you were at your partner's house, you had snapped the key of the stolen vehicle you had been using and thrown it into the woods at the end of the garden.

11. I cannot be sure that you immediately knew your shot had hit anyone, let alone killed them, but, as the jury found, you had fired the gun out of the window with at least the intention of causing serious bodily harm; Mr Stogden may not have been your intended victim but that does not mitigate the seriousness of your offending. Furthermore, when you did find out you had killed Mr Stogden (seemingly the next day), the evidence is consistent only with you seeking to protect yourself, carrying out internet searches for news regarding the shooting, and looking to see whether there was any reference to the car you had used, which might have enabled people to link you to the shooting. Although you have said you feel ashamed of your actions, I have seen little evidence of any genuine sense of remorse; indeed, around seven to eight hours after you had shot Mr Stogden, you were back to compiling a stock list of drugs.

Conspiracy to supply class A drugs

12. In the course of the murder enquiry 61 wraps of heroin were recovered from property with which you were associated and messages on your, and your co-defendants' 'phones, made clear that the three of you were involved in a conspiracy to supply heroin and cocaine.

13. You subsequently pleaded guilty to a conspiracy to supply class A drugs, entering your plea at the earliest opportunity; you will be given full credit for that.

14. 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, each of you supported the overall enterprise, 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 your role and of the length and degree of your involvement, accepting that your offending will be aggravated because this was a conspiracy with others.

15. The evidence regarding the conspiracy in this case is clear: this was a street-level operation, where you were selling heroin and cocaine directly to users. On your own evidence, Leyton Davies, you have been involved in the supply of drugs for some 15 years and, by the time of the events with which I am concerned, you occupied an upper end significant role, with both Carter (your half-brother, who you had invited to join your business in early 2025) and Ahmed (who Carter had introduced into your business a few weeks before the shooting) carrying out lower end significant roles, acting on, and to, your instruction.

Your personal circumstances and previous convictions

16. You were 27 at the date of the offending; you are now 28. You have relevant previous convictions in the Aberdeen Sheriff's Court dating back to 2021, for (i) assault to injury and permanent disfigurement (you struck the complainant over the head with a metal bar): sentenced deferred, 24 months' imprisonment; (ii) possession of an offensive weapon: sentence deferred, 12 months' imprisonment; (iii) carrying a knife: sentence deferred, 12 months' imprisonment.
17. At your counsels' request, a psychiatric report was obtained for the purpose of this hearing and I have paid close attention to what has been said in that document. Although Mr Kane KC has expressed disquiet at the fact that the author of the report (Dr Nachane) was not provided with your health records or details of your prior convictions, the history that you have reported is set out in some detail. This includes a background of complete dissociation from your father; removal from your mother at the age of three; being brought up, together with some 15 to 20 other children, in your grandfather's home; disengagement with education at the age of 13; traumatic life events; and a history of self-harm. In particular, Dr Nachane has recorded that you have reported that you were abducted and tortured, and saw a friend killed, by a group in Scotland in 2020, following which you reported that you had felt in low mood and attempted suicide, which led to you being sectioned under the Mental Health Act 1983, and admitted to hospital for some four months. Allowing for this history, Dr Nachane considered it possible that you suffered from PTSD after your abduction, and may have experienced pseudo hallucinations. More generally, Dr Nachane opines that your history and presentation are in keeping with a diagnosis of severe personality disorder with prominent dissocial traits.

Factors relevant to your sentence for murder

18. For the grave offence of murder there is only one sentence prescribed by law: imprisonment for life. That is the sentence I shall impose upon you in due course.
19. I am, however, required to determine the minimum period you should serve in prison before you are eligible to be considered for release on parole. It is most important that you and everyone concerned with this case should understand what the minimum term means. The minimum term is not a fixed term after which you will be automatically released but the minimum time that you will spend in custody before your case can even be considered by the parole board. Even then, at that time, it will be for the parole board to say whether or not you will be released. And, even if there comes a time, after your

minimum term, when the parole board does make such a decision, you will still be subject to licence, and this will be the case the rest of your life. If for any reason your licence were to be revoked, you would be recalled to prison to serve your life sentence in custody.

20. As for my determination of the appropriate minimum term, I must consider the seriousness of the offence, having regard to the general principles within schedule 21 of the Sentencing Act 2020 and any relevant guidelines that are not incompatible with those principles. As is common ground, given that this was a murder involving the use of a firearm, the appropriate starting point in determining the minimum term is 30 years (schedule 21, paras 3(1) and 3(2)(b)).
21. A starting point is, however, just that, and I must then go on to weigh the relevant aggravating and mitigating factors.
22. **Aggravating factors:** at schedule 21, para 9(a), a significant degree of planning or premeditation is expressly identified to constitute an aggravating factor relevant to the offence of murder. In the present case, there is no dispute that this was a planned and premeditated shooting, but, as has been submitted on your behalf, whether or not it was “*significant*” must be a question of fact and degree in each case. In this instance, although I am unable to be sure that you obtained, and cloned, a stolen vehicle “to order”, for the purpose of an attack on the Scotters, having had regard to the evidence adduced at trial - which included messages evincing your feud with the Scotter brothers in the run up to the shooting, and which also encompassed the earlier drive to try to hunt them down on 12 August - I am satisfied that this was a case where the premeditation and planning can properly be described as “*significant*”, albeit there may be other cases where the degree of planning might be even greater.
23. I also accept the point made by the prosecution that your offending was further aggravated by the fact that this was a drive-by shooting carried out in a public location where – as indeed occurred – passers-by, other than the intended target, might easily become collateral damage. It is countered, on your behalf, that this is a factor that can be seen as already encompassed in the enhanced starting point for murders involving firearms (addressing the risk they pose to others). Not all murders involving firearms are, however, carried out in a public place, and para 3(2)(b) does not suggest that this is a factor that can simply be assumed when determining the minimum term in such cases. An additional aggravating feature of this offence arises from your disposal of crucial evidence – the firearm – in the immediate aftermath of the shooting (and, I observe, your

less successful attempt to dispose of the key to the stolen vehicle you had been using at the time).

24. Finally, the prosecution have argued that a further aggravating feature of your offending arises from the fact that you were – on your own admission – regularly carrying the firearm with you, to support your drug operation, in the 18 months preceding the shooting of Mr Stogden. This, it seems to me, brings into the picture the drug-related context of this killing. As I have stated when setting out the facts, the evidence adduced at trial made clear that the shooting on 12 August 2025 arose from a feud between yourself and the Scotters which was related to your respective drug-dealing operations. When sentencing your co-defendants, Carter and Ahmed, I treated the drug conspiracy offence separately, imposing consecutive sentences (albeit reduced for totality) in this regard. Given the (significant, but lesser) roles played by Carter and Ahmed in the drug conspiracy, and the fact that they were acting on your orders, that was the appropriate approach when seeking to reflect the offending of those co-defendants. In your case, however, the shooting on 12 August 2025 was very much part of your drug business, and was informed by the (higher level) role you played in the conspiracy: you were taking the decisions and giving the orders, both in relation to the supply of drugs and also in the way you dealt with perceived threats to your business. In the circumstances, I consider that the appropriate course in your case is to treat your role in the drug conspiracy – which included your carrying of a firearm in the 18 months preceding this shooting – as an aggravating feature of the murder (which will require me to make an uplift to the minimum term in that regard), and to thus pass a concurrent sentence on the supply offence.
25. **Mitigation:** potentially mitigating factors are identified under schedule 21, para 10. By sub-para (a), it is recognised it can be a mitigating feature if the relevant intent was to cause serious bodily harm, rather than to kill. Although the shooting towards someone of a converted blank firing pistol carries an obvious risk of death, I accept that you did not disembark to deliver a shot or shots, nor did the vehicle actually come to a clear stop (which would have better enabled you to hit your intended target); it is also a case where there was a single shot fired, not multiple rounds. As such, although – as the jury found – you intended to do more than merely frighten, I cannot be sure that you had a specific intent to kill rather than to cause serious bodily harm, and I duly take this into account as a mitigating feature in your case.
26. For the reasons I have already explained, I am satisfied that this is not a case where mitigation is provided by a lack of premeditation, nor do I find that you were acting in any

way in self-defence or fear of violence. I do, however, have the benefit of a fairly full picture of your very difficult upbringing and of the challenges you have faced in your life (albeit many of those are related to choices you have made to be involved in the drug trade). In his report, Dr Nachane considered your history and presentation to be in keeping with a diagnosis of severe personality disorder with prominent dissocial traits, contributing to your risk to others (as perhaps further evidenced by the altercation in which you were involved in prison, in which you said you used a bladed spoon you had fashioned to slash another prisoner). Mr Kane KC argues that Dr Nachane's report provides potential, albeit limited, mitigation under para 10(c) schedule 21 ("*the fact that the offender was provoked (for example, by prolonged stress)*"), placing reliance on Dr Nachane's observation that your personality disorder means that you quickly resort to violence to manage difficult emotions and situations.

27. I have had careful regard to the sentencing guideline relevant to offenders with mental disorders etc and I am prepared to accept that there is some evidence that suggests your personality disorder may have informed your response to what you perceived to be a provocation arising from the actions of the Scotters. Although I have thus taken this into account, I make clear that, given the evidence of your conduct in this case – the time you had to reflect on how you responded to the provocation you perceived, and the way in which your actions were plainly and significantly premeditated – this is very limited mitigation.

Factors relevant to your sentence for conspiracy to supply class A drugs

28. If applying the sentencing guideline for the supply of a controlled drug, as a street-dealing operation, this would, ordinarily, be treated as a category 3 case for harm. The prosecution suggest that the length of your involvement in the drug business would support a higher categorisation of harm in this case, but I am not persuaded that is the correct approach, not least as this can also be a relevant consideration when determining culpability, and, in assessing you as being in the upper end of the significant role category, I have already factored in your lengthy experience in the operation. This would provide a starting point of four and a half years, with a range of three and a half to seven years.
29. 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. Moreover, you played an upper end significant role, carrying a firearm, apparently as a tool of your trade, and giving instructions to Carter and Ahmed, who were clearly

subordinate to you in the chain. More than that, your involvement was long-term, and you were significantly older than those who were working for you, and in a position of some influence over Carter, who was your younger half-brother. These various factors would warrant a sentence at a higher level than that imposed in the cases of your co-defendants, towards the top of the relevant range.

Associated matters

30. The appropriate victim surcharge will be applied.
31. A transcript of my sentencing remarks, along with a copy of the report of Dr Nachane, dated 11 May 2026, shall be attached to your file, for the benefit of the relevant prison authorities and, in due course, for the Parole Board.
32. Compensation is not appropriate.

Sentence

Leyton Davies, please stand

33. For the murder of Brett Stogden, I sentence you to life imprisonment. You will serve a minimum term of 33 years less the 272 days you have served on remand, which makes a total of 32 years and 93 days.
34. 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 four years, which will run concurrently with your sentence for murder.
35. Please now go with the custody officers.

The Hon Mrs Justice Eady DBE

15 May 2026