

IN THE CROWN COURT

Sitting in Cambridge

Thursday 4 June 2026

Rex

V

Peter Corrigan

Sentencing remarks

Mr Justice Dexter Dias :

Facts

1. Peter Corrigan was born on 4 June 1975 and so is 51 years old today. He falls to be sentenced for a single count of assisting an offender, contrary to section 4(1) of the Criminal Law Act 1967. This relates to his conduct shortly after his son had murdered Mohammed Algasim.
2. On 1 August 2025, at approximately 11.24 pm, his son Chas Corrigan stabbed Mohammed Algasim outside a block of student flats on Mill Park Road in Cambridge. Chas Corrigan was wearing a distinctive yellow high visibility (“hi-vis”) jacket at the time. Although it was a warm summer evening in early August, the defendant’s son was wearing a pair of shorts and the hi-vis jacket, an unusual and readily identifiable combination of clothing, particularly approaching midnight.
3. The immediate police investigation into the death of Mr Algasim focused on eye-witness accounts from local residents and examination of available CCTV footage. Chas Corrigan was swiftly identified as the individual responsible for the assault on Mr Algasim. Attempts were made to arrest Chas Corrigan on 2 August 2025. Police officers went to Peter Corrigan’s home address. When spoken to, Peter Corrigan told the officers that his son was not at the address and that he did not know where his son was.
4. A media appeal for information relating to Chas Corrigan’s whereabouts was made on the morning of 2 August 2025. As a result of that appeal a member of the public contacted the police to say that Chas and Peter Corrigan were present at her home. This person is Peter Corrigan’s ex-partner. She stated that the two men had let themselves into the property whilst she had been out.

5. Police officers attended the address and arrested Chas Corrigan on suspicion of murder. Peter Corrigan was arrested on suspicion of assisting an offender. Peter Corrigan resisted arrest and swore at the armed officers and tried to push past them. PC Craig Bond's statement records:

"I shouted, "MOVE BACK NOW" several times while CORRIGAN shouted, "FUCK OFF" at me. I then deployed more direct language in the hope that it would cause him to take note. I shouted, "MOVE THE FUCK BACK". CORRIGAN shouted words to the effect of, "YOU'RE NOT TAKING MY SON" and stood his ground facing me and the officers behind me. He had puffed his chest out and has his arms wide out to the side in what I took to be a fighting stance. He was displaying many of warning signs I have been trained to recognise that precede violence, including clenching his fists periodically and baring his teeth. CORRIGAN was approached from behind by another armed officer who tried to take hold of his arm to lead him away but he pulled away and so I moved forward and pushed him back with one hand and told him again to move back. He went to move towards me again as I warned him that he would get bitten by the dog if he approached again."

6. The defendant threatened PC Bond saying, "I'm coming for you", and insisted "You're not taking my son". PC Bond explains how it became necessary to use a police dog to restrain him:

"An unarmed officer then approached and I heard him tell CORRIGAN that he was under arrest for assisting an offender. CORRIGAN stepped back away from the officer shouting at him and ignoring commands to put his hands out to the sides. I moved forward to the left of the wheelie bins and I saw CORRIGAN's right hand go quickly into his bulging hoodie pocket. I was concerned that he had something in his pocket that he intended to use to cause harm to the officers trying to arrest him. I led PD ARMOUR forward towards a gap between the leftmost wheelie bin and the wall and I shouted to CORRIGAN, "PUT YOUR HANDS TO YOUR SIDES OR YOU'RE GETTING BITTEN. PUT YOUR HANDS TO THE FUCKING SIDES". With that CORRIGAN seemed to comply to a degree and put his hands in the small of his back which gave me the impression he was getting prepared to have handcuffs on. 2 officers moved forward to handcuff him and as they did so, he threw himself towards the wheelie bins knocking one of them."

7. Peter Corrigan began to struggle violently with officers. Therefore, PC Bond gave the dog the command to physically engage the defendant. The dog bit the defendant on the arm below the elbow and subdued him. This lasted no more than 20 seconds.

8. The subsequent CCTV investigation revealed that minutes after the murder, at 11.26 pm, Chas Corrigan discarded the hi-vis jacket and the knife he had used in the murder, in bushes on Vinter Street where Peter Corrigan lived at the time.
9. Further CCTV footage recorded that Peter Corrigan retrieved the sweatshirt from the bushes at 9.04 am on 2 August 2025 and discarded it in a communal bin store near his address. It was here that the jacket was later recovered by police officers. Subsequent police searches of the bushes on Vinter Street led to the discovery of the murder weapon. It is not suggested that the Peter Corrigan had anything to do with the murder weapon.
10. However, I judge that his conduct during the arrest process which obstructed the police operation to be of a piece with his concealing of evidence and is an aggravating factor.

Procedural history

11. Peter Corrigan was interviewed on 5 August 2025. He provided a prepared statement. He stated:

“The only time I became aware that someone has died is when Mr Gill [his solicitor] disclosed this to me before the interview.”

12. When asked why he thought the police were at his house looking for his son, Peter Corrigan stated that he thought it was for something serious but was unsure what that serious offence was. He refused to answer questions about the discovery of his son’s jacket on Vinter Street. He had hidden it there.
13. He was charged following a no comment interview on 13 August 2025.
14. On 8 September 2025, the defendant pleaded guilty at the PTPH. It is agreed that he is entitled to the full 25 per cent credit for his early plea. He provided a Basis of Plea:

“Basis of Plea
I Peter Corrigan born 04/06/1975 hereby admit the allegation of assisting an offender on the basis that I believed Chas was guilty of a serious relevant offence. I did not know at the alleged time that the offence being investigated was murder, I accept hiding the yellow Hi-vis which Chas was wearing.”

15. On 18 March 2026, the prosecution accepted the basis of plea. This was after Chas Corrigan had been convicted of murder.
16. Therefore, the offender is to be sentenced on the basis that he was not aware that his son was being investigated for murder. However, he was aware that his was being sought for a serious offence and he provided material assistance by retrieving and concealing evidence that he knew might link his son to a serious crime.

Documents considered

17. There is no Pre-Sentence Report (“PSR”) in this case. The defendant gave his counsel express instructions not to apply for one.

18. He has provided the court with a series of certificates that attest to the courses he has completed on remand, including two worker-of-the-month awards. These do him credit. He also states that he has secured employment on his release, although the court has not seen the letter confirming the offer.

Aggravating factors

Previous convictions

19. Peter Corrigan has 11 convictions for 24 offences. Following some juvenile offending, Peter Corrigan received a 2-year custodial sentence in 1996 for a series of dishonesty offences including burglary. He breached a combination order and offended while on bail. This was, however, 30 years ago.

20. In January 2021, the court imposed a community order for driving with excess alcohol. He failed to comply with the court's order in February 2022 and then again in January 2023. During this period, in September 2021, Peter Corrigan was fined for breaching a family court non-molestation order.

21. The sentencing guidelines provide guidance when seeking to determine the degree to which previous convictions should aggravate sentence. Section 65 of the Sentencing Code states that:

“(1) This section applies where a court is considering the seriousness of an offence (“the current offence”) committed by an offender who has one or more relevant previous convictions.

(2) The court must treat as an aggravating factor each relevant previous conviction that it considers can reasonably be so treated, having regard in particular to— (a) the nature of the offence to which the conviction relates and its relevance to the current offence, and (b) the time that has elapsed since the conviction.

(3) Where the court treats a relevant previous conviction as an aggravating factor under subsection (2) it must state in open court that the offence is so aggravated.”

22. Here there are no relevant offences of a similar type. However, that is not the end of the matter. The guidelines set out the following two relevant propositions:

“2. The primary significance of previous convictions (including convictions in other jurisdictions) is the extent to which they indicate trends in offending behaviour and possibly the offender's response to earlier sentences.

4. Previous convictions of a type different from the current offence may be of relevance where they are an indication of persistent offending or escalation and/or a failure to comply with previous court orders.”

23. I take the primary significance of the defendant's previous convictions to be his poor record of compliance with previous court orders. The non-compliance 30 years ago I take to be no more than historical background. However, applying section 65, I do regard the offender's more recent repeated failure to comply with court orders as an aggravating factor. In accordance with section 65, I state as much on the record. I emphasise, however, the degree that the instant offence is aggravated is limited.

Conduct on arrest

24. As indicated, I find the defendant's conduct on arrest an aggravating factor.

Mitigating factors

25. I can accept that the defendant has made progress in custody. He has completed drugs and alcohol courses and achieved enhanced status. That is to his credit.

26. He has caring responsibilities for his 10 year-old son, who is currently living with his grandparents. The child's mother has died and the defendant has found it difficult to cope with that.

27. It is submitted that he may lose his housing association property with continued custody. He has lived there since 2007. I note the submission, but I judge it has little impact in terms of mitigation in so serious an offence.

Balance of aggravating and mitigating factors

28. The caring responsibilities are the most powerful mitigating factor. I judge overall that the mitigating factors outweigh the aggravating factors.

Sentencing guidance

29. There is no sentencing guideline for assisting an offender. The closest Sentencing Council guideline is that for perverting the course of justice. I have considered that, recognising that it is not directly equivalent but of value in understanding relevant factors and general, rather than precise, sentencing levels for assisting offences. One of the complicating factors is that the maximum sentence for assisting is 10 years, whereas the maximum sentence for perverting the course of justice is life imprisonment. Yet the sentencing guideline has a range from community order to 7 years' custody for perverting, as Ms Shrimpton astute observed. The answer seems to me for the court to form an overall assessment and focus on the culpability and harm as outlined in the General Guideline: Overarching Principles. I have gone through the process set out in Step 1. This includes assessment of culpability and harm in the usual way. It states:

“Where there is no definitive sentencing guideline for the offence, to arrive at a provisional sentence the court should take account of all of the following (if they apply):

- the statutory maximum sentence (and if appropriate minimum sentence) for the offence;
- sentencing judgments of the Court of Appeal (Criminal Division) for the offence; and

- definitive sentencing guidelines for analogous offences.”

Assisting

30. As to assisting an offender, in *Attorney General’s Reference No. 16 of 2009 (James Yates)* [2010] 1 Cr. App. R. (S), the Court of Appeal (Criminal Division) addressed sentencing for the offence. Lord Judge CJ said:

“We do not intend to give detailed guidance on the sentences which would be appropriate for assisting an offender who has committed an offence. When assessing the sentence in such cases, the first question to be addressed is the nature and extent of the criminality of the offender for whom assistance was provided. Here, the killer had shot dead a young boy. The second is the nature and the extent of the assistance actually provided. Here it was everything that the offender could do, to the extent of assisting in the washing down of the killer in petrol to remove all traces of evidence. The third is the extent to which the efforts at assisting the killer damaged the interests of justice. That requires that those who are guilty of serious crimes should be brought to justice, convicted and sentenced. As to that, there is no doubt that the activities of the offender and the remaining members of the gang slowed down the administration of justice which, fortunately, in the end was vindicated.”

31. The answers to the three *Yates* questions are as follows:

1. Peter Corrigan provided assistance to an offender who had committed murder using a knife. However, he did not know the offence was murder. He did know it was serious.

2. The nature of the assistance he provided. Peter Corrigan attempted to dispose and ultimately destroy evidence likely to identify his son as being implicated in serious criminality.

3. The prompt action of the murder investigation team meant that the administration of justice was not, in the event, much impeded. However, at para 23 of its sentencing note, the prosecution submits that there was “some delay” caused to the investigation and Peter Corrigan’s actions “complicated” the search for evidence discarded by Chas Corrigan in the crucial early hours of the murder investigation. This I accept.

32. I have also had three cases decided by the Court of Appeal brought to my attention. In *R v Elfes* [2007] 1 Cr. App. R. (S) 118, the offender provided sustained assistance very different from in this case. Similar differences arise in *R v Robinson* [2008] 2 Cr. App. R. (S) 35. I find these cases of little assistance.

33. I find the case of *R v Amar Khatab* [2008] 2 Cr. App. R. (S) 94 (“*Khatab*”) to be more relevant, but emphasise that cases with different factual backgrounds provide only limited assistance.
34. The appellant was convicted of assisting an offender who had committed murder. The murderer was his brother. The appellant was a drug dealer who had spent some time with the deceased. The deceased and the appellant had argued, during which the deceased slapped the appellant. Once home, the appellant told his two brothers what had happened. His brothers armed themselves (one with a screwdriver, one with a stone pestle) and the three left the house. The appellant’s brothers found the deceased and attacked him. He died on the way to hospital from his injuries. In the aftermath of the attack, the appellant took the pestle from one of his brothers and disposed of it in a bin liner. Two days later the appellant surrendered himself to the police. Following the trial, he received a sentence of four years’ custody. The Court of Appeal held that since the appellant had at an early stage of proceedings admitted to disposing of a weapon used in the assault, the sentence should be reduced to one of three years’ custody.
35. The immediate similarity between this case and *Khatab* is that of assistance in concealing vital evidence. But there is a difference. In *Khatab*, the offender disposed of one of the weapons used in the attack on the victim. The Court of Appeal reduced the sentence from 4 years’ to 3 years’, but that includes a discount. As Dyson LJ (as he then was) puts it at para 14, the offender
- “was entitled to a significant discount from the sentence which would have been appropriate had he maintained a steadfast plea of not guilty all along.”
36. Thus the 36 months needs to be upwardly adjusted “significantly” because of the credit or discount the Court of Appeal granted him to reach the sentence on a plea of not guilty (the appropriate post-trial sentence). It seems to me that the points of difference between the instant case and *Khatab* must be recognised.
37. *Khatab* was convicted on basis that he knew the offence was murder or manslaughter. Given the alternatives, the sentence must have been passed on the more advantageous to the defendant, so manslaughter. Manslaughter is a serious offence. It is a homicide. The basis of plea here is that Peter Corrigan believed his son had committed a serious but unspecified offence. Of course, some section 18 offences, for example, may receive a higher sentence than manslaughter, an offence that ranges notoriously widely. But nevertheless, I judge Peter Corrigan’s offence in this respect to be less serious than *Khatab*’s.
38. Next, *Khatab* disposed of what was the murder weapon, or at least one of them. Peter Corrigan disposed of clothing. I judge this to be less serious.
39. No percentage reduction was identified by Court of Appeal in *Khatab*, save to say that it should be a “significant discount”. But I will assume that it is not as high as 25 per cent because the offender contested his trial, albeit on a limited basis. Thus, Peter Corrigan should be entitled to a further reduction from the *Khatab* level.

40. Against this, Khatab surrendered himself to the police after 2 days. On arrest, Peter Corrigan resisted arrest and was aggressive towards the officers. He tried to impede the arrest of his son. A police dog had to be used to restrain him. In this way, the instant offence is aggravated compared to Khatab.
41. Both Khatab and Peter Corrigan have previous convictions. Khatab had a previous conviction for perverting the course of justice, but the details about that are scant. As indicated, the defendant's offending is aggravated in some limited way by his history of non-compliance with court orders.

Culpability

42. The prosecution submits that the culpability is high due to the underlying offence being murder. The defence submits that there was a lack of sophistication and planning, which are Category C factors. It seems to me that the offence is very serious because the underlying offence is the most serious offence. This is plainly a Category A culpability offence. However, I recognise that the defendant did not know that it was murder he was assisting his son with. I therefore agree with Mr Shaw's reserve submission that this should be lower Category A culpability.

Harm

43. There is a dispute between the parties about harm. The prosecution submits that the potential for harm was "very great" in this case. This is because the hi-vis jacket was crucial evidence. However, since there was only limited interference with the investigation and therefore the administration of justice, it should be Level 2 harm. The defence submits that since there was only limited impact or delay, this should be Level 3 harm.
44. It seems to me that the prosecution is correct that the risk of harm was very great. However, the defendant's son was arrested quickly, by lunchtime the next day, and the jacket was found by the police. I regard this as Level 2 harm, but at lower end of that category.

Sentence calculation

45. I approach the sentence in two ways.
46. **First**, I look at the table for the perverting offence. For an offence at Category A culpability and Level 2 harm, the starting-point is 2 years' with a range of 1 to 4 years'. However, here I have found lower-level culpability and lower-level harm in each category. This would merit an adjustment down to 18 months' as a notional adjusted starting-point. There must then be an adjustment for the balance of aggravating and mitigating factors and then reduction for guilty plea of 25 per cent.
47. I am bound to observe that this does not feel as though it reflects the just and appropriate sentence when compared to the sentencing in assisting cases for murder. I suspect that this is because the perverting table has to allow for the whole range of offences, but murder is an offence of utmost gravity. It is unsurprising that the sentences appear higher. I note the General Guideline at Step 1 stating:

"When considering definitive guidelines for analogous offences the court must apply these carefully, making adjustments for any differences in the statutory maximum

sentence and in the elements of the offence. This will not be a merely arithmetical exercise.”

48. **Second**, therefore, I turn to the guidance on assisting from the Court of Appeal (Criminal Division). The downward adjustments outweigh the upward adjustment. I judge that the 36 months’ custodial term in *Khatab* should be reduced to 24 months. This takes into account both the balance of aggravating and mitigating factors, which is in the defendant’s favour, and then 25 per cent reduction for plea.

Suspended sentence order (“SSO”)

49. I add for the sake of completeness that the sentence falls within the range for an SSO under the applicable rules. Here the offender was convicted before 22 March 2026, the watershed for the new dispensation. No application for an SSO was made to the court. I have considered the table in the imposition guideline nevertheless.

50. While there is risk of harmful impact to his younger son, the child is being cared for by his grandparents. This has been the position for many months now. I have no evidence that the position is unsustainable. I am not persuaded that there is a realistic prospect of rehabilitation within the community as the defendant is a repeat offender who has breached court orders in the past. I have not a PSR assessment of the risk he presents to the public. However, while his risk may not be “high”, I judge it to be significant. This is because of his willingness of assist in an offence of serious criminality, albeit he did not know it was murder, and his continuing aggressive conduct towards the police requiring him to be bitten by a police dog to subdue him. He has some personal mitigation, but I am not persuaded it is strong. Against this, he has a history of poor compliance with court orders and is unlikely to cooperate in future. However, for my part, the decisive factor is the gravity of the offending in the instant case. The seriousness of his assisting in a murder requires an immediate custodial sentence.

Ancillary orders

Remand time

51. The defendant was remanded in custody by Cambridge Magistrates’ Court on 15 August 2025, and has remained in custody ever since. His time on remand will be credited automatically.

Victim surcharge

52. The court must impose a victim surcharge under section 42 of the Sentencing Act 2020 and the Criminal Justice Act 2003 (Surcharge) Order 2012 (SI 2012/1696), as amended. In this case, the surcharge is £187.

Effect of sentence

53. Peter Corrigan, the sentence of the court is one of 24 months’ custody. Your release point will be 40 per cent of that sentence. In any event, upon release you will remain on licence for the full term of 24 months. Should you breach the terms of your licence or reoffend, you may be recalled to prison to serve the rest of your sentence.