

IN THE CENTRAL CRIMINAL COURT

REX

v

Roman Lavrynovych

Petro Pochynok

Stanislav Carpiuc

SENTENCING REMARKS

Introduction

1. Both of you can remain seated until I indicate you should stand.
2. I will make available a copy of these sentencing remarks to the defendants and to the press after I have delivered them.
3. On Monday of this week, you Roman Lavrynovych, and you, Stanislav Carpiuc were convicted, on the unanimous verdict of the jury, of conspiracy to commit arson, being reckless as to whether life was endangered. You, Roman Lavrynovych, were also convicted of two counts of damaging property being reckless as to whether life would be endangered.
4. It now falls to me to sentence you for those offences. Where I make finding of facts against you, I do so only where I am sure of those facts. All findings I make will be consistent with the verdicts of the jury.
5. The facts of these offences were explored in enormous detail in the trial, and I do not need to repeat that detail here. It suffices to say this.

The Facts

6. In the early hours of 8 May 2025, you, Roman Lavrynovych, travelled by bus from your home in Sydenham to Countess Road in North London. There you met a man called Petro Pochynok to whom you had been introduced by you, Stanislav Carpiuc. Mr Pochynok had agreed to help you, but I find as a fact that he did not know what it was he was going to be helping you with.

7. By contrast, you, Stanislav Carpiuc, knew exactly what was planned. You had declined to get involved yourself in the first arson that was being contemplated but you were perfectly prepared to recruit someone else to help Lavrynovych. You put Lavrynovych in touch with Petro Pochynok and your support and encouragement to Mr Lavrynovych is demonstrated by the numerous calls and messages between the two of you before and after the night of 7-8 May.
8. The reason you travelled to Countess Road that evening, Roman Lavrynovych, was that you had agreed with a man you had never met, and who you did not know, to set fire to a car you were told would be parked in that street. You knew the man who gave you the job as “EL” and you had recorded his name in your phone as “EL Money”. You had agreed to carry out that piece of mindless arson for money.
9. You are not a man of great principle and you were easily bought. You did not enquire whose car it was or why your taskmaster wanted you to set it alight. But you knew you had to film the vehicle once it was alight and send the recording to EL as proof that the job had been completed if you were to get your money. As it happened, that car used to belong to Sir Kier Starmer, the Prime Minister, but you neither knew nor cared about that. You just accepted the job as you had accepted other grubby little tasks from EL before – for the cash he promised you.
10. Once the car was alight, you handed your phone to Mr Pochynok and asked him to film it. But, once he realised what you were doing, he did not wish to be involved, and you obtained only 2 seconds worth of filming before he put the phone down and ran off. You followed soon afterwards. EL was not happy about your performance that night and he sent you back to film more the next day. However, by then the car had been moved and you received no payment for your work.
11. But you remained keen to earn cash any way you could and so when EL offered you money to set fire to houses in the same part of London, you readily agreed.
12. In the early hours of Sunday 11 May, you travelled by bus to Ellington Street arriving just after 2am. You sent a message to EL to confirm you were at the correct address. You then poured an accelerant onto the steps and part of the front door and ignited it, filming the incident as you did so. The occupant of the house was woken by an alarm, saw and smelt the smoke in the building and had to escape by going onto the roof of the building and awaiting the arrival of the fire brigade.
13. The following night, you carried out a similar arson attack at a different address. This time you went back to Countess Road and, using a modified mixture of flammable

substances, you set fire to a front door of a house on that street. That house belongs to the Prime Minister and had been occupied since he moved to Downing Street by members of his family who were abed upstairs when you set the fire.

14. On hearing the sound of the fire being set, one of the occupants looked outside and saw smoke and an orange glow near the front door. She called 999. Smoke was coming through the door, the stairway was filling with smoke, and she could see that the smoke was getting thicker and moving upstairs. She described how the house was becoming full of smoke and she was struggling to breathe. Her 9-year-old daughter was woken by the smoke and was terrified. Fortunately, the London fire brigade arrived very promptly, and no one was injured.
15. I have read and will take into account the impact statements provided by the owner of the Toyota and the occupants of the houses.

Sentencing

16. I make it clear immediately that you will each pay the victim surcharge in the appropriate figure. Each of these offences was so serious that only a sentence of immediate imprisonment is appropriate in each of your cases. None of your counsel suggested that a pre-sentence report was necessary. I agree, it is not.
17. Some complexity to the sentencing exercise was created by the way these matters were charged. Count 1 alleged a conspiracy to commit arson, being reckless as to whether life was endangered. The case put forward by the prosecution was that each of the three defendants agreed with one or more other people that one or more of the fires should be set. That charge was therefore capable of covering conspiracy to set all three fires.
18. You, Mr Lavrynovych, were also convicted of 2 substantive offences, counts 3 and 5, of damaging property by fire, reckless as to whether life was thereby endangered. It follows that the fires at the houses in Ellington Street and Countess Road were each covered by two counts. I make it clear, however, that there will be no double counting in the sentence I impose.
19. In the case of a conspiracy, I am obliged to consider carefully the position of each individual offender and I have done so. I accept that those involved in this conspiracy played very different roles. You, Lavrynovych, were the central player and took the leading role. It was you who set each of the fires; you undertook the necessary reconnaissance, and you acquired the necessary materials. You also stood to receive the largest payment. You, Stanislav Carpiuc, were involved in a supporting role

throughout, you helped to recruit Mr Pochynok, and you assisted and facilitated payment.

20. I have decided that the correct approach is to sentence each of you for the conspiracy, imposing a sentence in each case that reflects your total criminality. In your case Mr Lavrynovych, the sentences for count 3 and 5 will therefore be made concurrent to that I impose on count 1.

21. I turn then to your individual circumstances and deal first with you, Mr Lavrynovych.

Lavrynovych

22. The Guidelines for this offence discriminate between cases where there were recklessness and cases where there was intent to endanger life. This count, like all those of which you were found guilty, falls into the former, identified in the guidelines as culpability B.

23. I have then to consider the harm caused or risked. In respect of the burning of the Toyota Rav car, there was significant physical harm caused to property; the car which was worth about £17,500 was completely destroyed. In addition, there was significant risk of harm to passersby or nearby residents from a vehicle set alight in the street.

24. I turn next to counts 3 and 5. You said in evidence, Mr Lavrynovych, that you had been told, and that you believed, that each of those houses was unoccupied. I have no hesitation in rejecting that suggestion. There is no evidence, other than your word, that you were told any such thing and you only had to look around the streets you were in to realise that these premises were obviously residential premises and that the overwhelming likelihood was that they would be occupied at 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning.

25. But you really did not care about that. I accept that you did not intend to put the lives of the occupants at risk but, it is my conclusion that, on both occasions, you were utterly reckless about the risk you were creating. The obvious possibility was that there were people inside, as proved to be the case, and that setting alight to their front door in the middle of the night risked exposing them to fire and/or the smoke from the fire and making it difficult for them to escape.

26. I accept that you were not the instigator of these attacks. You were acting on the instructions of EL. But you were happy to do whatever he wanted, regardless of who he was, who he worked for, or what his motivation was. You gave no thought to whatsoever to the consequences of your actions. You were to EL "*a useful idiot*", a

fool who could be manipulated to EL's advantage. You were used by EL to advance some agenda or cause of which you knew nothing. You were essentially acting as a pawn for some unknown cause and putting the lives of people asleep in their beds at risk as a result.

27. In my view, each of the arsons of property were more serious than the burning of a car. In each case you were exposing the persons likely to be abed in the properties to a risk of serious physical or psychological harm. Although, viewed in the round, this case comes close to a category 1 case, I am just persuaded that it does not quite reach that level and treat it as a category 2 case but one close to the top of category 2. The guidelines provide that the SP for a culpability category B, harm category 2 case is 4 years, and the range is 2-6 years imprisonment.

28. The aggravating features in your case Mr Lavrynoych were these:

- Your criminality encompassed three arson attacks as I have just described.
- You undertook the necessary reconnaissance and the acquisition of necessary materials.
- You set each of the fires.
- You stood to receive the largest payment.
- The offence occurred at night.
- There was a significant degree of planning and pre-meditation, although this was far from a sophisticated conspiracy and I accept that the plan evolved with EL's requests; 3 arsons were not intended at the outset.
- There was the use of an accelerant at each of the fires.

29. The mitigating features in your case are these:

- You were aged just 21 at the date of the offending and immature for your age.
- You had no previous convictions, cautions or reprimands recorded against you either here or in Ukraine. In fact, you never had any dealings with police before your arrest in May 2025.
- You were motivated, at least in part, by the need for money to send to your father who was in need of medical treatment in Ukraine.
- When these events occurred, you were very short of money to the point where you could not always feed yourself properly.

- You are a man of significantly low-level intellectual functioning as explained in the report of Dr Mazda Beigi and are somewhat vulnerable as a result.
- I accept that you are ashamed of your conduct and have shown some genuine remorse.

30. In my judgment, the appropriate sentence on count 1 for you is 7 years imprisonment and concurrent sentences of 4 years on counts 3 and 5.

31. **Roman Lavrynovych stand up.**

32. The overall result in your case, **Roman Lavrynovych**, is that you will go to prison for 7 years. You will serve up to 4 years 8 months in custody and will then be released and serve the remainder on license. You must keep to the terms of your licence and commit no further offence, or you will be liable to be recalled, and you may then serve the rest of your sentence in custody.

Stanislav Carpiuc

33. You were found guilty of a conspiracy to commit arson, being reckless as to whether life was endangered. I find on the facts that the conspiracy to which you were a part was an agreement between you, Lavrynovych and EL to set fire to the Toyota Rav whilst it was parked in Countess Road on the night of the 7-8 May and then to set fires at the two residential addresses to which I have referred. This was a case of recklessness not intention to endanger life.

34. As I indicated in respect of Roman Lavrynovych, I find that this was a culpability category B and harm category 2 case, but the harm was towards the upper end of the range.

35. The aggravating features of your case were these:

- Your criminality encompassed three arson attacks as I have just described.
- The offences occurred at night.
- There was the use of an accelerant at each of the fires.
- There was a significant degree of planning and pre-meditation, although I accept your involvement was limited as I have described.

36. The mitigating features are these:

- You are aged just 22.
- You had no previous convictions.
- You did not carry out the burning of the car, and it was not your idea to burn it.

- You were not directly involved in the setting fire to either of the two houses.
- You're involvement was limited to encouraging and supporting Roman Lavrynovych with phone calls and messages, helping to recruit Mr Pochynok as someone who might be willing to assist in the burning of the car (although as it turned out, he did not do so) and, most significantly, as the man responsible for trying to collect the money offered for these crimes.
- You gave a substantially true account, particularly as to the involvement of Mr Pochynok when interviewed by police at Luton airport and you admitted on that occasion that you had "made a mistake".
- You did not seek financial reward for your involvement and were never promised more than £100.
- Your involvement was prompted at least in part by a wish to help Lavrynovych's in his efforts to obtain money to pay for his father's medical treatment.
- You were throughout in employment, where you were well regarded by your employer.

37. In my judgment, the appropriate sentence on count 1 for you is 2 years imprisonment.

38. **Stanislav Carpiuc stand up.**

39. The overall result in your case, **Stanislav Carpiuc**, is that you will go to prison for 2 years. You will serve up to 1 years in custody and will then be released and serve the remainder on license. You must keep to the terms of your licence and commit no further offence, or you will be liable to be recalled, and you may then serve the rest of your sentence in custody.