



Courts and Tribunals Judiciary

IN THE CROWN COURT SITTING AT BRIGHTON MAGISTRATES' COURT

THE HONOURABLE MRS JUSTICE EADY DBE

THE KING

-v-

OLIVER PRIDDLE

NIRAJ AMAIDAS

SENTENCING REMARKS 10 JULY 2026

Introduction

1. Oliver Priddle; Niraj Amaidas, a jury has found you guilty of wounding with intent to do grievous bodily harm, contrary to section 18 of the Offences Against the Person Act 1861. It is now my task to sentence you.

Preliminary

2. You both stood trial in respect of an incident that took place over a short period of time in the early hours of 21 December 2019. You, Mr Priddle, were then aged 19, home from university for the Christmas holidays; you, Mr Amaidas, were 18, on a night out in Brighton with friends. You did not know each other, nor did you know Mr Cameron Devlin, who was injured in the course of the incident and who tragically died a few days later, on 26 December 2019.
3. At trial, in addition to counts of section 18, alternatively section 20, wounding, you both faced charges of murder and, in the alternative, manslaughter, which related to Mr Devlin's death. By the jury's verdicts, you have both been acquitted of any criminal liability for Mr Devlin's death; it is important I make that point at the

outset, and that this is made clear in any reports relating to this trial or about the sentences that I impose.

4. Mr Cameron Devlin was a 34 year old sound engineer who lived in Hove with his wife, Chatrin. He was a good-natured, talented man, much loved by family and friends; his studies, in this country and abroad, had been led by his talent and passion for music, and he had then settled down to establish a recording studio in Brighton, where he was a respected member of the vibrant music scene in this city. Intelligent and erudite, Mr Devlin was someone who engaged with the world; he formed loyal friendships and was described by his wife as a “*kindred spirit and an endless source of inspiration*”. The victim statements of his father, Gordon Devlin, (speaking for the family as a whole), and his younger sister, Kirsty, attest to the loss felt by so many of those who knew Cameron Devlin, and the pain his family continue to feel is palpable. Nothing I can do or say can address that pain; and, while recognising the feelings of those who have suffered such a terrible loss, I must approach my task dispassionately, making my findings relevant to sentence without allowing emotion to sway my judgement.

The facts

5. On the night of 20/21 December 2019, Mr Devlin had been out with friends. Although starting the night in good spirits, going into the early hours, Mr Devlin had become morose, brooding on the death of a friend. After walking through central Brighton by himself, and not wanting to return home at that point, Mr Devlin had sat on the ledge at the bottom of the window of itsu, on North Street, where he remained for some 30 minutes before the events which led to this trial.
6. At shortly after ten to four in the morning, you, Mr Priddle, came around the corner from West Street with two friends; you had been out socialising, but had moderated your alcohol intake as you were working the next day; you described yourself as feeling merry and in a good mood. One of your friends crossed over the road, and another walked a bit further on along North Street, but, having seen Mr Devlin, you decided to check whether he was alright. On this point, I accept your evidence, that you were genuinely concerned that this was a man who, perhaps having had too much to drink, had fallen asleep in the cold and you thought that, had it been you, you would have wanted someone to wake you up,

to check you were okay. Using the torch on your 'phone for better illumination, you accordingly bent down to tap Mr Devlin on the arm and check in on him.

7. It was at this point that you, Mr Amaidas, also came round the corner from West Street, with three friends you had been out with that evening. You had similarly been drinking, but were not obviously intoxicated, and you were also in a good mood as you and your friends headed to the railway station to get back to Crawley, where you all lived. Seeing Mr Priddle – a complete stranger to you – checking in on the man sitting, leaning against a shop window, apparently asleep, you also approached him, tapping him on the shoulder and asking if he was okay. At around the same time, however, one of your friends tapped or hit Mr Devlin's face and another started filming the incident, actions which could be seen to give a different colour to the interaction. Having carefully considered the evidence at trial, however, I accept that, in your initial dealings with Mr Devlin, neither you, Mr Amaidas, nor you, Mr Priddle, did anything to suggest you were seeking to annoy, still less provoke, Mr Devlin, nor were either of you aware of what the others were doing at that point.
8. Unhappily, however, the scene that presented itself to Mr Devlin when he then woke was one in which he had just been tapped or hit on the face, was surrounded by five young men, at least one of whom was holding a 'phone up, with a light shining at his face, apparently filming, and with another – Mr Priddle - leaning in towards him. Getting up, Mr Devlin pushed you, Mr Priddle, back, causing you to gesticulate towards Mr Devlin (questioning why he had done this when you were just checking in on him) and, when you thought he was about to punch you, to respond in kind, pushing Mr Devlin back against the window. No doubt thinking he was under attack, Mr Devlin then reached into his pocket and took out something shiny – most likely his keys – which caused you, Mr Priddle, to throw a food carton at him. Lashing out to his side, Mr Devlin caught you, Mr Amaidas, to the face. Although simply causing a scratch, I accept that, from your point of view, this was an entirely unexpected and unprovoked assault, and you now saw the man – who was older and larger than any of the youths around him – as volatile and potentially dangerous.

9. Whether as an attempt to remove himself from the scene or to punish the person he thought was the ringleader of a threatened assault, Mr Devlin went after you, Mr Priddle, with the two of you moving down North Street. At that point, you, Mr Amaidas, followed; as I accept, you at this stage saw Mr Devlin as the aggressor, and, although you did not know either of these men, you thought you should assist the other young man (Mr Priddle).
10. As the CCTV footage shows, Mr Devlin then lunged at you, Mr Priddle, grabbing hold of your coat, and bringing you to the ground. As you went down, Mr Devlin fell over you, landing heavily on the downwards sloping ground, with his right arm forward, in an apparent attempt to break his fall. As the jury's verdicts make clear, it was at that stage Mr Devlin suffered a dislocation of his right shoulder, with a fracture of the bone that would become the breeding ground for a group A streptococcal infection, ultimately leading him to suffer the sepsis that tragically ended his life. At the time of the incident, however, neither of you appreciated that Mr Devlin had injured himself in this fall, and you, Mr Priddle, quickly got up from the ground and immediately kicked out at Mr Devlin, not particularly aware of where you were aiming at the time. As for you, Mr Amaidas, you had remained standing but joined Mr Priddle in kicking at Mr Devlin, aiming your kick to his head. As you, Mr Priddle, then moved away from the scene, you put your arms out in a gesture that I accept was intended not as some kind of celebration, but to indicate that (as you saw things) this was not something you had instigated and you wanted it to stop. Still facing Mr Devlin, however, you, Mr Amaidas, saw him move on to all fours and, to stop him getting up, kicked him once more, again to the head. Then leaving the scene, you were keen to re-join your friends and get home, and started to run up to the station.
11. At this stage it is necessary for me to make some findings of fact that will further impact upon my approach to the sentences I impose. To the extent I make any findings adverse to you, I do so applying a criminal standard of proof.
12. First, although I accept that, in kicking at Mr Devlin, there was an element of self-defence on your part, Mr Priddle, consistent with the jury's verdicts, I am clear that your response was unreasonable self-defence: a shod foot is a weapon, and kicking Mr Devlin when he was on the ground was a disproportionate and

excessive response to the situation you were in. Second, although, from the forensic evidence, it is apparent that some injury must have been sustained to Mr Devlin's face, causing it to bleed, prior to either of you kicking him, I find that was not the more significant of the wounds he suffered. As the expert evidence explained, a wound caused by contact with the ground would be expected to show more of an abrasion (as, indeed, Mr Devlin suffered to his lower jaw and chin, which would also have bled); more than that, from the CCTV footage, it is apparent that your kicks, Mr Amaidas, were at a level consistent with the more significant wound to the side of Mr Devlin's face. Third, although I am, therefore, sure that your kicks, Mr Amaidas, struck Mr Devlin's face, I cannot have the same degree of certainty in relation to your kick, Mr Priddle. That said, I am sure that, at the point when you got up from the ground, you, Mr Priddle, became a party to the actions of Mr Amaidas, both of you at that stage being aware of each other and thus encouraging and assisting in what you perceived to be a defensive assault on Mr Devlin; that is a finding that is consistent with the CCTV evidence and with the jury's verdicts. Fourth, although I have been provided with some medical evidence to suggest that Mr Devlin would have suffered scarring on his face as a result of the larger wound he sustained, there is inevitably some element of speculation in this regard, and, even if I accept there would have been some residual scarring, I cannot simply assume any long-term impact.

13. Returning to the narrative, you, Mr Amaidas, were brought in for questioning for what was then considered to be an offence of grievous bodily harm. You were 18, had never been in any trouble before, had had your clothes taken away, and had been held in the cells for some eight hours before your interview; you were, I accept, petrified. The decision you then took, to lie to the police, does you no credit but it is, I find, reflective of your youth and immaturity at that time.

14. Meanwhile, Mr Devlin had been taken to A&E, where his wounds were cleaned and stitched, and his shoulder manually relocated; although X-rays were taken, these did not reveal the fracture to the shoulder bone that had occurred when he suffered the dislocation. None of the injuries suffered by Mr Devlin ought to have been life-threatening, but, discharged home, and notwithstanding the care and support of his family, Mr Devlin's condition worsened over the coming days.

15. No-one could fail to be moved by the evidence of Mr Devlin's mother about the steps the family took over those days to try to get medical assistance. Specifically, at 7.30 am on Christmas day, Mr Devlin returned to A&E with his wife and mother, presenting in pain and with a shoulder swollen to twice its normal size. As the prosecution expert, Dr Gant, explained, Mr Devlin's presentation was such that within ten minutes of contact with healthcare he ought to have been assessed for sepsis. Instead, and notwithstanding the recording of an extremely high heart-rate, Mr Devlin was discharged home again; as he was when – again supported by his wife and mother – he went into the walk-in clinic later that evening. The tragically undiagnosed sepsis caused Mr Devlin to suffer a catastrophic cardiorespiratory collapse and to die the following day.
16. After Mr Devlin's death both you, Mr Priddle, and you, Mr Amaidas, were arrested for his murder and were interviewed before being released under investigation. Over the following years, that investigation progressed slowly; not only was it impacted by the pandemic, but establishing the cause of death was complicated and required the input of a number of specialists. That delay might not have been anybody's fault but it only served to increase the pain for Mr Devlin's family, and it has meant that both of you, and your respective families, have had this matter hanging over you for six and a half years.

Sentencing guideline: wounding with intent to do grievous bodily harm

Step 1: determining the offence category

17. In determining the relevant category of this offence, the guideline makes clear that, if there are factors present for more than one category of culpability, I must weigh those factors in order to decide which most resembles the case before me.
18. The prosecution says there are high culpability factors present in this case, namely Mr Devlin's obvious vulnerability (given he was alone, asleep and intoxicated when you first encountered him), and what it says was the leading role within a group activity that you both played. I do not, however, accept that either of those descriptors correctly represent the circumstances of your offending or the verdicts returned by the jury. On the evidence, I do not find that Mr Devlin was in fact intoxicated to the point of vulnerability; although I accept that might have been the initial impression, by the time of the wounding, that was certainly no

longer so: Mr Devlin was no longer asleep, had got up, lashed out (hitting Mr Amaidas), and had brought Mr Priddle to the ground. Equally, I cannot see that either of you can fairly be described as having played a leading role in a group activity: by the time of the wounding, the three of you had moved away from the group and, although then acting together in kicking at Mr Devlin when he was on the ground, it cannot sensibly be said that either of you was taking a “*leading role*”.

19. As is common ground, a medium culpability factor arises in both your cases, a shod foot being treated as the use of a weapon. I am also prepared to accept, however, that there was some degree of excessive self-defence, a lower culpability factor, in Mr Priddle’s case. I do not make the same finding in relation to Mr Amaidas: although I have accepted that, in following Mr Devlin and Mr Priddle down North Street, you viewed Mr Devlin as the aggressor and wanted to be on hand to assist Mr Priddle, at the time when you kicked Mr Devlin twice to the head, I do not find that you were acting in what you believed to be the defence of another. Appropriately weighing the factors present in your respective cases, I find Mr Priddle’s culpability to be higher level category C under the guideline, and that of Mr Amaidas to fall within category B.

20. As for harm, I must bear in mind that all section 18 cases will involve really serious harm and, more specifically, wounding will almost always leave some permanent scarring. Even accepting that the wounding inflicted in this case was such as would have left some scarring on Mr Devlin’s face, bearing in mind the level of injury inherent in the offence, and having regard to the limited evidence before me, I judge harm to be appropriately categorised as a high level 3 in both your cases.

Step 2: starting point and category range

21. In your case, Mr Priddle, under the guideline, as a category C3 offence, that would give a starting point of three years’ custody, with a range of two to four years; in your case, Mr Amaidas, as a category B3 offence, that gives a starting point of four years’ custody, with a range of three to six years.

22. At this stage, however, the guideline recognises that an upward or downward adjustment might be necessary to reflect particular features of culpability or harm, or that the case falls close to a borderline between categories. It is also at this stage that I must take into account the aggravating and mitigating features of

the offending, either providing context to the offence or as might relate to the individual offender.

23. **Mr Priddle**, while I have found that your offending would fall towards the higher end of the C3 category range, there are no statutory aggravating factors, and although it is right that you had been drinking and that the offence was committed in an area where there were a number of others present, I do not find that these add greatly to the seriousness of your offending. On the other side of the balance, while 26 at the date of conviction, you were 19 at the date of the offence, and it is clear that your youth and immaturity at that time, possibly also informed by your then undiagnosed attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, is a mitigating feature. I also take into account your lack of previous convictions (although subsequently convicted for driving under the influence offences in August 2024, there were strong mitigating factors at play, and these are not said to be relevant to the current offence), and to all that has been said in your favour by the many witnesses who were willing to give evidence on your behalf. I accept that your conduct on 21 December 2019 was very much out of character and that, as reflected in the pre-sentence report, you have felt genuine remorse about your actions that night. It goes to your favour that, notwithstanding the stress and uncertainty arising from the on-going investigation, you completed your degree course, obtained employment, and, when you lost that job because of the trial, took up construction work to keep yourself gainfully employed. More generally, I recognise the punishment that you have already suffered as a result of the delay in bringing this matter to trial: you have had the uncertainty of a possible murder trial, with all that that implies, hanging over you for the entirety of the last six and a half years.

24. This is an offence that crosses the custody threshold. Having regard to all the relevant features of the offending, and to the aggravating and mitigating circumstances, I am satisfied that the shortest term commensurate with the seriousness of the offence that I am able to impose is one of two years and nine months. Given that is a term of less than three years, I will return to the question whether there are factors which make it appropriate to suspend the sentence in your case.

25. **Mr Amaidas:** I have found that your offending falls within the B3 category range.

There are no statutory aggravating factors, and, again, while you had been drinking and this was an offence committed in an area where there were a number of others present, I similarly do not find that these add greatly to seriousness in your case. On the other side of the balance, while 25 at the date of conviction, you were then 18, and I am again clear that your youth and immaturity at that time, is a mitigating feature. I also take into account the fact that you have no other convictions, and witnesses who gave evidence on your behalf at trial have made clear that your conduct on 21 December 2019 was very much out of character. Alongside the pre-sentence report, I have read the letters from your parents, your wife, and your employer, and it is apparent that you have reflected on your actions back in 2019 and have felt considerable remorse; it is also clear that you have matured greatly since that night, and, while you have always worked, you have grown into a young man who is an asset to his employer, and a source of support to his wife and family. As in Mr Priddle's case, I further acknowledge the uncertainty of a possible charge of murder, with all that that implies, which has hung over you for the last six and a half years, and which is, in itself, a form of punishment.

26. As I had said, this is an offence that crosses the custody threshold. Having regard to all the relevant features of your offending, and to the aggravating and mitigating circumstances, I am satisfied that the shortest term commensurate with the seriousness of the offence that I am able to impose in your case, is one of three years. That is a term that provides me with a discretion to suspend and that is a question I will return to.

Steps 3 and 4: not applicable

Step 5: dangerousness

27. This is not a case where I find the dangerousness provisions are engaged in respect of either of you.

Step 6: not applicable

Step 7: compensation

28. I have not been asked to make a compensation order in this case and I would not consider it appropriate to do so.

Step 8: reasons

29. At this stage, I have returned to the question whether it would be appropriate in either of your cases for the custodial term to be suspended. In reaching my decision, I have had regard to the imposition guideline and to the factors there identified; I have also been assisted by the pre-sentence reports that the probation service has arranged at short notice, and by the further materials and submissions provided by your respective legal teams for this hearing. I bear in mind that a suspended prison sentence is a form of punishment, with strict requirements for compliance for the entirety of the operational period, in default of which you are likely to be required to serve the custodial term imposed.
30. **Mr Priddle:** considering the factors that would weigh in favour of suspension, the evidence before me supports the conclusion that you have a realistic prospect of rehabilitation in the community, and that you do not present a high risk of re-offending or harm. Although I do not find that immediate custody would have a significant harmful impact on others, as I have already set out, I do accept that you have strong personal mitigation, in particular arising from the delay in this case. Turning to the other side of the balance, I am satisfied that you do not present a risk to any person and that you have shown yourself to have a good history of respect for the court and of compliance with court orders. This is undoubtedly a very serious offence but, on the highly unusual facts of this case, I do not consider that I can say that appropriate punishment can *only* be achieved by immediate custody. Moreover, to support you in your continued rehabilitation, ten hours rehabilitation activity requirement can be imposed for the first 12 months, to ensure you maintain contact with probation in a way that can assist you with training or employment opportunities during the operative period of the suspension, which will similarly be for two years and nine months.
31. **Mr Amaidas:** considering the factors that would weigh in favour of suspension, the evidence supports the conclusion that you have a realistic prospect of rehabilitation in the community, and that you do not present a high risk of re-offending or harm. I have accepted that you have strong personal mitigation, in particular due to the delay in this case, and I further accept that, given your wife is expecting a child later this year, immediate custody would have a significant

harmful impact on others. Turning to the other side of the balance, I am satisfied that you do not present a risk to any person and that you have shown yourself to have respect for the court and a good history of compliance with court orders. I do not disregard the very serious nature of this offence but, on the highly unusual facts of the case, I do not consider I can say that appropriate punishment can *only* be achieved by immediate custody. Moreover, to support you in your continued rehabilitation, ten hours rehabilitation activity requirement can be imposed for the first 12 months, to ensure you maintain contact with probation during the operational period of the suspension, which will be for three years.

Step 9: qualifying curfew

32. If you were facing a term of immediate imprisonment, you have both spent time on bail subject to curfew conditions that would qualify you for credit towards the custodial term of half the days spent on qualifying curfew. On the information available to me, in your case, Mr Priddle that is 145 days (289 days divided by 2, rounded up to the nearest whole number); in your case Mr Amaidas that is 135 days (270 days divided by 2). In either case, if your suspended sentence is activated then you will be afforded credit by the relevant number of days, as I have specified or, if, in either case, this period is mistaken, by an amended period as ordered by the court.

Sentence

Mr Priddle, please stand

33. For the offence of unlawful wounding with intent to do grievous bodily harm, I sentence you to two years nine months' imprisonment, suspended for two years and nine months.

34. If in the next two years and nine months you commit any offence, whether or not it is of the same type for which I am sentencing you today, you will be brought back to court and it is likely that this sentence will be brought into operation, either in full or in part.

35. Also, for the next 12 months you will be subject to a ten day rehabilitation activity requirement. That means that you must meet the officer supervising this requirement as and when required and must attend and co-operate fully with any activities that are arranged. If you do not comply with these requirements, you will

be in breach of this order, which means you will be brought back to court and you will be liable to serve the sentence, either in whole or in part.

36. In passing this sentence, I make clear that I have made no deduction for the time you have spent on qualifying curfew; that time should, however, be deducted if the sentence is activated.

37. The statutory surcharge will apply.

Mr Amaldas, please stand

38. For the offence of unlawful wounding with intent to do grievous bodily harm, I sentence you to three years' imprisonment, suspended for three years.

39. If in the next three years you commit any offence, whether or not it is of the same type for which I am sentencing you today, you will be brought back to court and it is likely that this sentence will be brought into operation, either in full or in part.

40. Also, for the next 12 months you will be subject to a ten day rehabilitation activity requirement. That means that you must meet the officer supervising this requirement as and when required and must attend and co-operate fully with any activities that are arranged. If you do not comply with these requirements, you will be in breach of this order, which means you will be brought back to court and you will be liable to serve the sentence, either in whole or in part.

41. In passing this sentence, I make clear that I have made no deductions for the time you have spent on qualifying curfew; that time should, however, be deducted if the sentence is activated.

42. The statutory surcharge will apply.