



JUDICIARY OF
ENGLAND AND WALES

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-v-

JOHN TAYLOR

WORCESTER CROWN COURT

2 APRIL 2013

SENTENCING REMARKS OF MR JUSTICE FLAUX

1. John Taylor, you have been found guilty of the murder of your wife Alethea. Since her body has never been found, only you know what became of her on the night of 18/19 January 2012 and where her body is. However, by their verdict, the jury have rejected your defence that you were not responsible for her death and do not know what has become of her. Despite your denial in evidence, Alethea was clearly perceived by you as an obstacle to your happiness with Alison Dearden. Furthermore, by 12 December 2011 Alethea had discovered that you were having an affair as you well knew and, as her notebooks bear out, you were concerned that she should not reveal the affair to other people. The incident at Yarpole church and her extreme upset at Iris Lawson's house on the evening of 18 January 2012 followed on from earlier incidents on 24 November 2011, Boxing Day 2011 and New Year's Eve 2011, when her misery and agitation at your duplicity became apparent, so it must have been a matter of considerable concern to you that she was going to reveal the affair. It is also evident from her notebooks and from what she said to Alison Dearden on 12 December and to Tina Powell on Boxing Day, that there is a dark and violent side to your personality that possibly only Alethea saw.
2. So it was that on that night of 18/19 January, when you got home, your anger and frustration with Alethea must have boiled over. You either attacked her in the bedroom where her blood was found on both sides of the bedspread and duvet cover or attacked her elsewhere and then put her, bleeding, on the bed. It may be that you smothered her with a pillow. However, by whatever means, you killed her and then drove her body away in your car under cover of darkness. As a man who has lived all his life in rural Herefordshire, you were well able to find an isolated location to conceal her body, where even the extensive searches by the police and other local people have not found her.
3. The mandatory sentence for murder is life imprisonment and that is the sentence of the Court upon you. However, under Section 269 and Schedule 21 of the Criminal Justice Act 2003, I have to determine the minimum term you should serve before you will be eligible to be considered by the Parole Board for release.
4. I am satisfied that in your case the features identified in paragraphs 4 and 5 of Schedule 21 are absent. Accordingly, the starting point is 15 years. I emphasise though that is only the starting point and I have to consider what aggravating and

mitigating factors there are in order to determine the appropriate minimum term. Paragraphs 10 and 11 of Schedule 21 set out some of the aggravating and mitigating factors which may be relevant to the offence of murder, but neither list is intended to be exclusive and what may aggravate or mitigate the offence will depend upon all the circumstances of the particular case.

5. A particularly serious aggravating feature of this case is your concealment of Alethea Taylor's body. Even now, you have failed to disclose what you have done with her, with all the agony that causes for her family and friends. You appear to have shown no remorse, perhaps because you continue to deny that it was you who murdered her.
6. In terms of mitigating factors, although you have not admitted that you killed Alethea or vouchsafed any explanation as to how she died, I sentence you on the basis that her killing was not premeditated and that you did not intend to kill her but only to cause her serious bodily harm. I also take into account that you have not been in trouble with the police before and so there is no question of any previous convictions of any kind. Finally your age and the likely impact of the sentence upon you are matters I take into account in imposing a lower minimum term than I would have done if you had been a younger man.
7. Weighing the various aggravating and mitigating features I have identified in the balance, I have concluded that the appropriate minimum term will be 17 years. From that will be deducted the 290 days you have spent in custody. What this means is that the minimum amount of time you will spend in prison from today before the Parole Board can order early release is 16 years and 75 days. If it remains necessary for the protection of the public, you will continue to be detained after that date. If the Parole Board does decide to direct release you will remain on licence for the remainder of your life and may be recalled to prison at any time.