



BARNWRIAETH
CYMRU A LLOEGR

JUDICIARY OF
ENGLAND AND WALES

R. v ANTHONY WILLIAMS

SWANSEA CROWN COURT

18 FEBRUARY 2021

SENTENCING REMARKS OF HHJ P THOMAS QC

1. There is no need for you to stand, Mr Williams. I will tell you when I want you to.
2. Over-used though the phrase is, this is a tragic case on several levels. The overwhelmingly greatest tragedy here is that a lady of 67, in reasonable health and with so much to live for, had her life ended by an act of great violence at the hands, literally, of a man that she had loved for very nearly 50 years.
3. There is also the tragedy that that act, lasting only a matter of minutes at most, and immediately repented by you will now be the defining one of the rest of your life. You will have to live with the knowledge that you killed your wife and that you have left your daughter without her beloved mother. That it will be the heaviest of burdens for you, I have no doubt. The letter that your daughter has written so movingly to the Court makes that abundantly clear.
4. Having heard the evidence of your state of mind in the year leading up to this awful event, and especially in the preceding few days, I am of the view that your mental state was severely affected at the time. That, of course, is in line with the verdict that the Jury returned in this case. I have formed the view that you were suffering from largely irrational anxiety, exacerbated by and in a vicious circle with depression and lack of sleep. You were obsessing about Covid, but you were also obsessing about matters which had no rational basis.

5. For example, you were very concerned that you would lose your home, it was a home that you owned outright. You were concerned that you would not be able to afford shoes but you had the best part of £150,000 in the bank. You worried greatly that your daughter's house insurance would be invalidated, despite the fact that she repeatedly assured you to the contrary. In short, there is no logical explanation for why a placid, non-aggressive, inoffensive man of 69, happily married for 46 years and with an absolutely impeccable character should, out of the blue, strangle his wife for such an innocuous comment as 'get over it'.
6. Again consistent with the Jury's verdict, I am left with the belief that something went severely wrong with your mental functioning due to an underlying and substantial impairment of your mental functioning. You were unable to maintain your self-control, you were unable to make rational decisions and you were unable, at that moment, to understand fully the nature of what you were doing. In short, I agree with the submissions of both Prosecution and Defence that you retained, at the time of the killing, only low responsibility for your actions.
7. I have read with care the letter that your mutual daughter has written to the Court. It is a very moving document, as I have already said. Despite her plea therein I am afraid that my wider public duty means that I have to send you to prison. In assessing the length of that I have had regard, of course, to the appropriate guideline and of the Sentencing Council Guidelines for manslaughter. It is accepted by both the Prosecution and the Defence here that the starting point is one of 7 years' imprisonment.
8. In my view, it is appropriate here to slight increase the starting point, had there been a trial on manslaughter, to deal with the aggravating factor of the prolonged nature of the attack on her. You could have desisted in the bedroom, you continued at the front door. Had you pleaded not guilty to manslaughter the notional post-sentence level would have been 7½ years. I have, however, to discount that by one third to reflect your guilty plea at the first opportunity and, accordingly, the sentence that I pass upon you, and would you now stand please, is one of 5 years' imprisonment.
9. You will serve 2½ years of that. However, that will be less the time that you have already spent on remand. At the halfway point, therefore, you will be released and you will not have to return to custody as long as you commit no offence whilst on the five years of licence and you comply with the conditions of any such licence. Finally, there will be a surcharge payable upon your release. Will you take Mr Williams down now, please?