



ROCHDALE

GROOMING GANG TRANSCRIPT

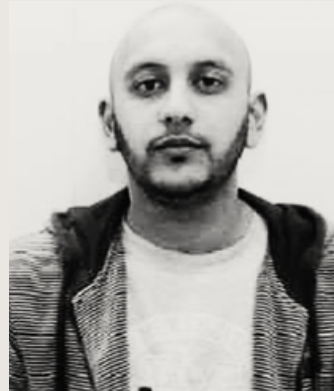
2016



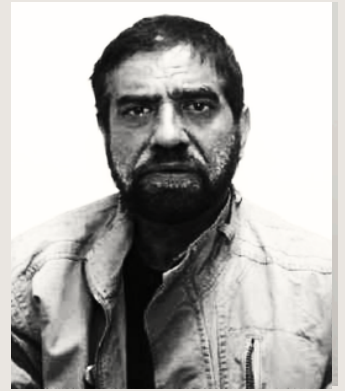
Irshad Wani



Gul Zaman



Mohammed Ishaque



Shohaib Shabbir



The sentencing remarks of Irshad Wani, Gul Zaman, Mohammed Ishaque, and Shohaib Shabbir

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About this case

These remarks concern four defendants, sentenced following investigations made as part of Operation Doublet, Greater Manchester Police's initiative addressing historic child sex offences in Rochdale. The operation began in 2012, and these defendants formed part of a larger group convicted of similar crimes.

The abuse was directed at two victims between 2004-2008, and started when was 14 and the other 16.

Mohammed Ishaque was sentenced to 11 years for multiple offences of causing child prostitution, paying for the sexual services of a child, and rape.

Shohaib Shabbir was sentenced to 7 years for multiple offences of rape, and sexual activity with a child.

Irshad Wani was sentenced to 9 years for multiple offences of sexual activity with a child.

Gul Zaman was sentenced to 10 years for multiple offences of rape.

Both of the victims were vulnerable, having troubled upbringings. Describing "every day [as] a battle" one victim stated that the ordeal has left her "not able to have a close relationship involving intimacy." The other spoke of longstanding mental health issues, and that her abuse occurred when she was "helpless and had nobody." The judge presiding over the case, HHJ Stuart Driver KC, noted that the offences involved the use of alcohol and drugs as a means to make the victims pliant.



IN THE CROWN COURT AT MANCHESTER

T20157105

The Court House,
Minshull Street,
Manchester,
M1 3FS.

Friday, 16th September, 2016

BEFORE:

HIS HONOUR JUDGE DRIVER Q.C.

R E G I N A

-V

IRSHAD WANI

GUL ZAMAN

MOHAMMED ISHAQUE

SHOHAIB SHABBIR

MR. A. J. BASSANO appeared on behalf of the prosecution.

MR. J. HARRISON appeared on behalf of the defendant Wani.

MR. Z. KHAN appeared on behalf of the defendant Zaman.

MR. HART appeared on behalf of the defendant Ishaque.

MR. GOLINSKI appeared on behalf of the defendant Shabbir.

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SENTENCING REMARKS

Friday, 16th September, 2016

JUDGE DRIVER: The defendants can be seated at first. Dealing with a couple of formalities, each of the defendants will be subject to the registration requirements of the Sexual Offences Act 2003 for life and will be considered under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act, victim surcharges to be assessed and applied.

Person 1 was a vulnerable teenager, she had been in care in [REDACTED] from the age of three and [REDACTED] she was moved from [REDACTED] and placed at a care establishment in Rochdale. In Rochdale she was groomed and corrupted by a number of older men, she has made a statement describing the impact upon her. She said that being moved to Greater Manchester was supposed to put her in a safe place, she has not used the phrase but anybody looking at that would think 'out of the frying pan into the fire.'

'The effect...' she says '...that this abuse has had on me is huge. It has made me feel low and worthless. Every day is a battle. I am not able to have a close relationship involving intimacy.' She suspects everybody, thinks that they are out to use her, she feels suicidal, she hopes that in time she

will be able to come to terms with what has happened to her and the message to the men in the dock is 'These men made my life miserable.'

Person 2 was also a teenager with problems who was exploited by two of the defendants. She says that these two men amongst others have ruined my life. She suffers anxiety and depression and finds it hard to trust men. 'At the time...' she says '...I was an immature child and they took advantage of me when I was helpless and had nobody.'

Irshad Wani, stand up. You were convicted by a jury of counts 1 to 4 of offences of sexual activity with a child. When Person 1 was still 14 years of age and you were twice her age at 29 you got her mobile phone number from somebody else and called her, asking her to go to a party. It is noteworthy that although she has been raped and prostituted by other people she feels compelled to say that Mudge, which is you, is the worst of them. 'He was the one that hooked me into the abuse that I suffered.'

You corrupted her. You took her to a gathering at the home address of Zaman, you bought her alcohol and over a period of time you took her to parties at that bungalow and another one nearby at which addresses she was given alcohol, cannabis and cocaine which you also took. You were well aware that she lived in a care home, you knew that she was 14 and you knew how vulnerable she was. When she was still 14 you began a sexual relationship, having full vaginal sexual intercourse at those two addresses, it was consensual.

In all of these cases I apply the Sentencing Council's definitive guideline. Looking at a single offence in your case, Wani, each of them has harm at Category 1 because of the penetration and culpability at Category A because of the use of alcohol and drugs. For a single offence the sentencing starting point is five years. Your situation is further aggravated by these features: Grooming, disparity of age, the vulnerability of your victim and the fact that the offence was repeated four or five times. You are not a man of previous good character, although you do not have convictions for sexual offences.

I will impose concurrent sentences on each of these offences but I have my eye on the total that you must serve. You will serve half of the sentence that I impose, you will then be released on

licence. If you do not obey its conditions you will be returned to custody. The sentence in your case on each count concurrently is nine years' imprisonment, sit down.

Stand up, Gul Zaman. You pleaded guilty to a count of rape of Person 1 and to paying for the sexual services of the child Person 2 when on at least 40 occasions. Looking at Person 1, you knew that she was living at a care home and that she was vulnerable. She was a child aged 14 or 15, to give you the benefit of the doubt 15. She had been drinking and smoking cannabis as she often did at your premises and the neighbouring premises and she was significantly intoxicated. She awoke to find you next to her, undressing her and trying to insert your penis in her vagina. She protested, she struggled but you raped her and you ejaculated inside her.

The offence against Person 2 was committed in the following

circumstances: You were in your 30s, she was 16 but you first saw her wearing her school uniform and she used to attend your home dressed in that way. You provided her with vodka and cannabis and you expected sex in return. Repeatedly as I have mentioned at least 40 times you had either sexual intercourse in her vagina or caused her to suck your penis. She did not find you in the least bit attractive, she described you as a cringe guy and although it is not suggested that this is a non-consensual offence, she felt that she had no option but to comply. On numerous occasions you gave her cash for sex. Not only have you committed the offences against these two teenagers but subsequently in 2012 you were committed of non-consensual sexual assault on two occasions against a single teenage victim and you were imprisoned.

Turning to the Sentencing Council's guideline, the rape offence begins as a Category 3B offence but there are many aggravating features; you ejaculated in her, she was a child and you knew that she was. You knew that she was in care, you used grooming behaviour towards her and you exploited the fact that she was intoxicated.

Count 9, paying for the sexual services of Person 2, it is a Category 1A case because of the penetration and because of the drink and drugs. The offence was repeated on many occasions as I have mentioned.

Your mitigation is that you pleaded guilty for which you will receive a discount of 20 percent.

I have to consider the issue of dangerousness. You have now been convicted of serious specified offences involving you having sex with three teenage victims. I agree with the findings of the probation officer in the pre-sentence report that you are a dangerous offender. I am satisfied that there is a significant risk that you will commit further specified offences and by doing so you will cause serious physical or psychological harm to one or more people. An extended sentence is necessary to protect members of the public from that significant risk of serious harm. An extended sentence is a sentence of imprisonment which has two parts; a custodial term and an extended licence period. I will explain the consequences; you will serve at least two thirds of the custodial term in custody before your case is referred to the Parole Board and for them to consider your release. You will not serve more than the whole of the custodial term. On release you will be on licence until the end of the custodial term and you will then serve the extended period of licence, you must obey the licence or will be returned to custody.

In my opinion applying the principle of totality the total sentence which you ought to face is a sentence of ten years' imprisonment. Had I been imposing a determinate sentence I would have arranged it as six years for count 8 and four years consecutive for count 9. I will express the extended sentence as follows: Count 8, ten years' custodial term. Count 9, six years' custodial term concurrent, extended licence term of five years forming an extended sentence of 15 years, sit down.

Mohammed Ishaque, you have been -- you pleaded guilty to count 10, causing the child prostitution of Person 1. Count 11, causing the child prostitution of Person 2.

Count 12, paying for her sexual services as a child and count 13, rape of her.

Count 10, Person 1, she was 16. You invited her to your home where you of course knew you were running a rudimentary brothel. You encouraged her to take part in that by telling her that the girls working there were earning handsome profit. She agreed under persuasion from you to work at your flat as a prostitute on one night when she had vaginal intercourse with four men for which she

was paid but you were also paid.

Turning to Person 2 these offences were (inaudible) committed during a period of about three or four weeks when she was staying at your home under your roof. That came about because you saw her roaming the streets in the rain in Rochdale and no doubt spotted a vulnerable target. You approached her in your car. You offered her the opportunity to sleep at your house, which she naturally took given her difficult circumstances. You told her however that if she was to stay at your house she would have to obey your house rules. Count 11, one of those rules is that she would become a prostitute

working for you. She said in her statement she felt that you were like a pimp and treated her like a piece of meat. You made her go on to the streets on your behalf, that she did on at least five nights having sex with a number of men.

Count 12, another rule of your house was that she had to have sex with you whenever you wanted. Vaginal sexual intercourse happened on at least five occasions.

Count 13, rape; you demanded sex. She refused, you pushed her on the bed, she repeatedly said no, you laughed at her, eventually she submitted and you raped her. You are not a man of previous good character but you do not have any convictions for sexual offences. In your pre-sentence report you showed no remorse or understanding of the consequences for your victims. I have given serious thought as to whether I am compelled to declare that you are a dangerous offender. I have decided that your risk can be managed by the imposition of a Sexual Harm Prevention Order and I make that order now. You are until further order, and I have in mind for the rest of your life, subject to these prohibitions which if you breach you will be liable to five years' imprisonment, that you are prohibited from having any contact directly or indirectly with any female under the age of 18 years apart from certain exceptions which it is your duty to familiarise yourself with when you receive the written order.

Looking at the Sentencing Council's guideline count 10 is at the lower end of Category 1A as your counsel submits. It is aggravated by the fact that you introduced Person 1 to prostitution. Count 11 is also a 1A offence, it is aggravated by the multiplicity of offending and the fact that you introduced Person 2 to prostitution. Count 12 is a Category 1A offence at the lower end as your counsel submits and count 13 is agreed to be a Category

2B rape with the aggravating feature that your victim was vulnerable. You will receive a 20 percent discount for your plea of guilty. I have in mind the principal of totality. The sentences are as follows and the individual components have been reduced to achieve what I think is the proper totality. Count 10, two years' imprisonment. Count 11, four years' imprisonment consecutive. Count 12, three years' imprisonment concurrent to count 11. Count 13, five years' imprisonment, making a total sentence of 11 years' imprisonment. You will serve half of that, you will be released on licence which you must obey or be returned to custody, sit down.

MR. HART: Your Honour, (inaudible) the sentence on count 13 was five years' consecutive?

JUDGE DRIVER: Five years' consecutive.

MR. HART: Yes.

JUDGE DRIVER: Shohaib Shabbir, please stand up. The jury convicted you of three offences against Person 1, count 5 rape and count 6 sexual activity with a child and count 7. Of those there will be no separate penalty for count 6 but it tells the Court that the jury in effect says that you knew that she was under 16 when you raped her.

You saw her in the street with your friend. You stopped your car that night and offered her a lift and you took them for a drive. After you dropped them off they were found by the police and they were both living in circumstances which required them to be returned to home. She spoke to you on the telephone and told you that she was running away from home and was being returned by the police. You therefore knew that she was young and she was vulnerable.

She left her home again and you came to collect her in your car and drove her to the taxi office where you worked. You raped her there. You forced her with threats not of violence but nevertheless with threats to suck your penis. I do not treat the ejaculation as an aggravating feature because it happened after her activity. The jury's verdict, as I have said, is that you knew that she was under 16.

Count 7 is that you drove her to your home address in Oldham, you altogether drank alcohol and smoked cannabis and I have no doubt that you were well aware that this girl was getting herself into a condition which you could take advantage of. In that condition she consented to sexual intercourse with you, a 20 year old who knew that she was under 16.

Looking at the guideline, the offence of rape is a Category 3B offence with the aggravating feature that she was a child. The offence of sexual activity with a child is a Category 1A case because of the penetration and the use of alcohol and drugs. It is to be noted that for each offence the Sentencing Council suggest a starting point of five years' imprisonment.

In your case I take into account your otherwise good character in the references that I have read and the fact that you are -- have been since you committed these offences some years ago a hardworking family man. I also take into account the fact that you suffered a brain injury as a teenager for which you are still feeling the effects and that imprisonment will be difficult for you.

You will serve half of the sentence, you will then be released on licence which you must obey or will be returned to custody. The sentence has been adjusted to achieve a fair totality.

On count 5 the sentence is five years' imprisonment. On count 6 there is no separate penalty. On count 7 the sentence is two years' imprisonment consecutive, making a total of seven years' imprisonment.

Are there any technical aspects of sentencing that counsel need to bring to my attention?

MR. KHAN: The only aspect is as far as Mr. Zaman is concerned he spent some time in custody on remand since his last sentence finished and that ought to be counted. I think it is automatically (inaudible).

JUDGE DRIVER: Is it automatic in the case of an extended sentence?

MR. KHAN: He finished his half way sentence in May some time I believe (inaudible).

JUDGE DRIVER: Yes, he is entitled to it but is it automatically deducted from an extended sentence, or does that have to be taken from it in the way it is with a life sentence?

MR. KHAN: I will need to check that, may I just check that?

MALE SPEAKER: Your Honour, my understanding is it does not affect the sentence that your Honour imposes, but when the Parole Board come to consider his case the date will be affected by the first day of remand on this case only.

JUDGE DRIVER: Yes, because there is not -- we do not know what the release date will be.

MALE SPEAKER: No.

JUDGE DRIVER: And so deduction of a period is a difficult concept, an impossible concept to apply.

MALE SPEAKER: Yes.

JUDGE DRIVER: Yes, if that is wrong put it in writing and I will adjust the sentence administratively.

MALE SPEAKER: Certainly, your Honour.

JUDGE DRIVER: It is my intention that he should receive any benefit that the law would normally allow for the time spent remanded in custody.

MALE SPEAKER: Thank you very much.

JUDGE DRIVER: Take them down.

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