

IN THE EASTERN CARIBBEAN SUPREME COURT
ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE
(CRIMINAL DIVISION)

CASE NO: ANUHCR2021/0043

BETWEEN:

THE KING

and

TEDSON KNOWLES

Appearances:

Mrs. Shannon Jones-Gittens, Counsel for the Crown

Mr. Wendel Alexander, Counsel for the Defendant

2024: May 15th, 16th, 21st, 23rd, 24th, 28th, 29th, 30th;
June 3rd, 4th, 5th;
July 12th, 23rd, 31st;

Sentencing Remarks

Background Facts

- [1] **SMITH, J.:** On 5th June, 2024 the prisoner, Tedson Knowles was convicted of the murder of his girlfriend, Carissa Chandler. The facts as elicited during the trial are that in the early morning hours of 23rd May, 2019 the prisoner shot Ms. Chandler then rushed her to the hospital where she was pronounced dead. The two had shared a tumultuous relationship in which he had previously pointed a gun at her and on another occasion had threatened to shoot her.

The Law and Sentencing Guidelines

- [2] The penalty for murder is governed by section 2 of the **Offences against the Person (Amendment) Act, 2013**, which provides that upon conviction for murder, a person may be sentenced to death, to life imprisonment or a term of years.

- [3] The Court is to be guided by the Sentencing Guidelines of the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court for Homicide Offences which was reissued on 26th November, 2021.

First Stage

- [4] This offence falls into paragraph 6 which covers a determinate sentence as this was a murder involving a firearm. The appropriate starting point is a sentence of 40 years, within a range of 30 – 50 years.

Second Stage

- [5] Having determined the starting point of 30 years, the Court will consider the aggravating and mitigating factors in relation to the offence.

Offence

Aggravating

- [6] The aggravated factors:-

- The offence was committed at the home of the deceased.
- The offence was unprovoked and the deceased was unarmed at the time only clothed in her towel
- The police had just left the apartment where the prisoner had been warned to keep the peace and he agreed to heed to that warning.

- [7] There are no mitigating factors in relation to the offence.

Offender

- [8] There are no aggravating or mitigating factors in this regard.

- [9] Based on the foregoing, the starting point would have to be increased to account for the aggravating factors. The Court will also take account of the victim impact report bearing in mind that the deceased was only 29 years old when she was murdered and her daughter for whom she had custody was 9 years old and is still a minor¹. I have read the Victim Impacts statements and the

¹ Her child was not fathered by the prisoner and was not present at the time of the shooting

impact the murder of his daughter has had on her father. The mother of the deceased also highlighted the added burden of having to care for her grandchild who has suffered emotionally, psychologically and financially as a result of her daughter's life being snuffed out prematurely.

- [10] The father of the victim also indicated that the death of his daughter has left him devastated and traumatised. He indicated that he still has not come to terms with her premature death.

Mitigation

- [11] Defence Counsel put forward a plea in mitigation on behalf of the prisoner. He indicated that the prisoner was the father of several children and that he played an active role in their lives. He asked the Court to take into account the time the prisoner had spent in custody on remand and also time spent during the "Covid reat9" years. The defence Counsel also asked the Court to take into account the fact that he was a first time offender and that the prisoner made an effort to take the victim to the hospital after she was shot by him. Counsel drew the Courts attention to the fact that the prisoner cooperated fully with the police and told them where to find the murder weapon. Counsel also sought to draw the Courts attention to the absence of the deceased father in Court during the trial and today at the sentencing hearing.
- [12] As already indicated, the Court will use a starting point of 30 years. The sentence will toggle upwards to take into account the aggravating factors to bring the sentence to 35 years.
- [13] The Court will also take into account the fact that the prisoner has no previous convictions.
- [14] The sentence will reflect that the remand time of 1882 days is to be deducted in addition to a further 2 years to be deducted to take into account the time on remand during the covid years. This will bring the sentence to 30 years.
- [15] I am ordering that the sentenced be reviewed **AFTER** the prisoner has served 20 years to see whether or not he has been rehabilitated.

Ancillary Orders

- [16] The Court will order that the prisoner undergo psychological treatment and counselling when these services become available at His Majesty's prison. I would also ask that the probation department reach out to the family of the deceased to facilitate family counselling as the mother did indicate her desire to receive this treatment in order for her family to heal from this traumatic ordeal.

Ann-Marie Smith
High Court Judge

By the Court

Registrar