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**IN THE HIGH COURT OF NEW ZEALAND
WHANGAREI REGISTRY**

**I TE KŌTI MATUA O AOTEAROA
WHANGĀREI-TERENGA-PARĀOA ROHE**

**CRI-2019-088-001656
[2025] NZHC 3280**

THE KING

v

MYLES ANTHONY BRUCE

Hearing: 30 October 2025

Appearances: B M O'Connor for Crown
M P Hislop and C S Taylor for Defendant

Sentence: 30 October 2025

SENTENCE OF EDWARDS J

Solicitors/Counsel:
Marsden Woods Inskip Smith (Office of the Crown Solicitor), Whangārei
M P Hislop, Auckland
C S Taylor, Ruakākā

[1] Mr Bruce, you are here for sentencing on 31 charges of sexual and violence related offending. I found you guilty on all 31 charges in a Judge-alone trial earlier this year. I acquitted you of two other charges.

[2] The convictions relate to offending against your five former partners over a period spanning approximately 15 years. Each victim has given a victim impact statement today. I will summarise what they have said shortly, but I want to acknowledge what they have said at the outset and thank them for their courage in sharing their experiences today.

Sentencing process

[3] Sentencing follows a process. The key issue I must determine today is whether to impose a finite sentence with a minimum period of imprisonment, or to impose a sentence of preventive detention. A sentence of preventive detention is a sentence of indeterminate length — the Parole Board decides whether and when it is safe to release a person from custody.

[4] In making that decision, I will first decide on an appropriate finite sentence. That involves assessing a starting point with reference to the seriousness of the offending, and then adjusting that starting point for matters personal to you. I will then consider whether a minimum period of imprisonment should be imposed. After that, I will consider whether this will be your end-sentence or whether to order preventive detention.

[5] In determining your sentence, I take into account the purposes and principles of sentencing set out in the Sentencing Act 2002.

[6] The purposes which are particularly relevant in your case include: holding you accountable; promoting a sense of responsibility in you for the harm caused; denouncing your conduct; deterring you and others from committing the same or similar offences; and protecting the community from you.

[7] The principles that are relevant include: the gravity of your offending; the general desirability of consistency in sentencing; victim information; your personal circumstances, including relevant features of your personal and family background; and the requirement to impose the least restrictive outcome in the circumstances.

Offending

[8] The charges relate to offending between 2000 and 2015. During this period, you had successive relationships with each of the five complainants. The details of your offending are set out in my written reasons for verdicts, and I provide only a brief summary here.

[9] The course of your relationships followed the same pattern. There was an initial honeymoon phase which was quickly followed by you becoming controlling and manipulative. In each case the complainant fell pregnant, often fairly early on in the relationship. An obsession with virginity was apparent in some of your offending.

[10] There were multiple incidences of sexual violence, including multiple rapes of four of the complainants. The evidence established that you demanded some form of sexual activity every day, whether the complainant agreed or not. Some of the complainants said you would simply berate and pester them for sex, until they were left with no other choice but to give in. Compliance or submission in those circumstances is not consent and nor does it form reasonable grounds for belief in consent. All rapes are violent, but some were particularly brutal and showed a high degree of callousness.

[11] Each relationship was characterised by your physical or psychological abuse of your partner. This included multiple threats to kill. In some cases, you used a prior history of abuse against a complainant. That was particularly cruel. There were also incidences of physical violence, including the infliction of injuries in places which could not be seen.

[12] Your offending against A involved you driving at speed towards a power pole with A in the car and threatening to kill her. You also intentionally held her underwater in the bathtub. On another occasion you held a knife on her inner thigh, telling her

you were going to show her what it felt like to lose her virginity. There was a separate incident where you put a knife to her hand like you were about to cut off her finger on which she was wearing an engagement ring.

[13] The offending against B included numerous occasions where B did not agree to have sex with you, but you persisted anyway. On other occasions, when B said she did not want to have sex, you would berate and abuse her until she gave in. There was a particularly serious incident giving rise to three charges. It is unnecessary for me to relay the details of this incident here, save to say it was both cruel and depraved.

[14] There were multiple occasions where you would threaten to kill B, telling her that you would kill her and hide her body and that you would get away with it. There was one occasion where you placed a pillow over B's face while threatening to kill her, and another where you placed your arm over her nose and mouth while whispering in her ear that she was going to die. One of the charges involved an incident where you punched B hard in her right eye giving her a large black eye.

[15] As for your offending against C, I found you guilty of three charges. Two of these charges were rape charges, one being a representative charge. You demanded sex from C daily and effectively wore her down through psychological abuse and sleep deprivation. On other occasions you would have sexual intercourse with her while she was asleep. There was another specific incident of rape soon after the birth of her child. There was also at least one occasion when C woke up to you masturbating over her and ejaculating on her.

[16] The offending against D also included a representative charge of rape, and sexual violation by unlawful sexual connection. You used abuse and threats to force D to have sex with you when she did not want to, and you also forced her to perform oral sex on you. There were multiple occasions throughout the relationship where you threatened to kill D by cutting her throat, and throwing her off a cliff. You also threatened to drown her in the bath.

[17] The offending against E included multiple charges of rape, and of sexual violation by unlawful sexual connection. E was forced to submit to your demands for

sex on multiple occasions despite saying no. This was so regular that rape became routine in your relationship. Two of these rapes were when E was in a particularly vulnerable state, and one caused her physical injury and immense pain. In addition, you penetrated her anus without her consent, and there were multiple occasions where you forced your penis into her mouth. You would get angry with E, push her, slap her, pull her hair and drag her around. This gave rise to a male assaults female charge.

[18] That short summary of your offending does not do justice to the full extent of what you did and the harm that you caused to each of the five complainants.

Victim impact statements

[19] We received a small glimpse of that from the victim impact statements read out in Court today. They were moving and powerful.

[20] A described deep and long-lasting emotional effects from your offending. She still experiences nightmares and insomnia and she describes the toll it has taken on her other family relationships. She refers to the emotional pain caused by your refusal to acknowledge what you have done.

[21] In her victim impact statement, B described living a life of daily torture for over five years while she was in a relationship with you. She developed a complex post-traumatic stress disorder as a result of the assaults and abuse, and her journey towards recovery has been a long one. She said it has taken her 24 years to feel like she is able to step out into the sunshine of her full and beautiful life.

[22] Complainant C, like all of your victims, spoke eloquently today. She said that while you were driven by spite and control, her motivation was not one of revenge or hate. She spoke up to protect her children and any future woman that you may prey upon.

[23] In her victim impact statement, D described how you had completely derailed her life during the course of your relationship, and that the crippling fear and tight hold you had over her continued even after the relationship had ended. However, her

resilience was also evident in what she had said and how she has coped with what you did.

[24] E's victim impact statement was simple and straight to the point. She does not forgive you, nor wish you well. She is very clear about the intentional and deliberate nature of the offending. Despite the horrific abuse she endured at your hands, she is moving forwards, describing herself as a survivor and now a thriver.

[25] Once again, I thank all five women for attending Court today and reading out their statements. It is a really important part of the sentencing process.

Personal circumstances of the offender

[26] Turning now to your personal circumstances. You are 42 years of age. You have a university education and have been employed in a range of jobs, including running your own business.

[27] Your family history is canvassed in the pre-sentence report and other reports before the Court. I do not need to go into details here except to note there are events in that background which may have a causative link to your offending. I will return to that later in this sentencing.

[28] You have nine children from seven relationships, none of whom you have contact with. It appears you have formed an online relationship while in custody.

[29] The reports before the Court document your mental health history, which includes psychotic episodes and delusional beliefs. I will return to that history, and the health assessor reports, later in this sentencing also.

[30] Significantly, you continue to deny the offending, claiming you are the victim of a sinister plot orchestrated by your ex-partners and another witness, and a corrupt justice system.

Starting point

[31] I now turn to setting a starting point for your offending. The starting point reflects the gravity of your offending. In your case, this is set by reference to the aggravating features of your offending as there is no suggestion that there are any mitigating features.

Aggravating features

[32] There is considerable agreement between counsel as to those aggravating features. I consider them to be as follows, with many of them overlapping to some degree:

- (a) *Violence.* This is inherent in sexual offending itself, but the violence associated with some of the rapes was particularly grave. The offending the subject of charges 8, 9 and 10 was extremely violent and calls for a stern response. The same may be said for charge 28. The instances where the victims were denied oxygen as a result of being held under water, smothered or suffocated were also very serious. Some of your offending involved the use of a knife.
- (b) *Vulnerability.* Some of your victims were vulnerable when you met them due to their personal backgrounds and circumstances. You used that against some of your victims in a particularly callous way. Pregnancy and childbirth also rendered your victims extremely vulnerable. Again, some of your offending involved exploiting that vulnerability. In some cases, you took steps to isolate and render your victims even more vulnerable by controlling their contact with others or moving to isolated areas where their ability to seek help was further limited.
- (c) *Harm to victims.* As was apparent from the evidence given at trial and the victim impact statements read to the Court, your offending has left physical, emotional and psychological scars. The harm has been

extensive with long-lasting effects for many of the victims. The extent of the harm is an aggravating feature of your offending.

- (d) *Breach of trust.* Your offending took place in the context of an intimate personal relationship with each of the five complainants. Trust is inherent in such a relationship. Your offending was a gross breach of that trust.
- (e) *Scale of offending.* Your offending involved multiple offences committed against each victim over the course of that relationship. It also involved offending against multiple victims over a 15-year period. You moved from one victim to the other without significant gap.

The scale of the offending includes the extent of manipulation and coercive control you exercised in each relationship. Threats to kill, verbal abuse, and in some cases, sleep deprivation, were means of controlling your victims and securing their compliance with your demands.

[33] The Crown submits that planning and pre-meditation were also present in your offending. I agree that your offending behaviours followed a similar pattern in relation to each victim. However, I am not sure that this was planned or pre-meditated in a deliberate or intentional sense. I consider this feature of your offending is addressed in the other aggravating features already mentioned above, such as the extent of manipulation and coercive control you exerted in each relationship.

Fixing the starting point

[34] Turning now to the starting point, I note that both counsel refer to the starting point adopted by Brewer J in your sentencing in 2021 following your first trial.

[35] Brewer J assessed starting points for the offending against each complainant but acknowledged that an adjustment for totality would need to be made. He then adopted a starting point of 19 years' imprisonment for the sexual offending and

uplifted it by two years for the violence-related offending. This resulted in a starting point for all the offending of 21 years' imprisonment.

[36] Your counsel has followed Brewer J's approach. While the starting points he suggests for the offending against some of the victims differs, he nevertheless suggests that a starting point of 19 years for the sexual offending, with an uplift of two years for the violence-related offending, is appropriate.

[37] The Crown submits that a starting point of 20 years be adopted for the offending against complainants B, C, D, and E, with an uplift of three years for the offending against A. This would result in an overall starting point of 23 years' imprisonment.

[38] I have had regard to the approach adopted by Brewer J in determining the appropriate starting point. I have also had regard to the guideline judgment in *R v AM* in relation to the sexual offending,¹ and other cases which include offending comparable to yours.² Those cases will be set out in footnotes to these sentencing remarks.

[39] I consider the rape offending against complainants C and D would fall into band three of *R v AM*, with the offending against complainant B and E falling within band four. When all sexual offending is considered in totality, I consider it would fall within the upper levels of band four of *R v AM* and attract a starting point of 19 years' imprisonment.

[40] In reaching that view I do not overlook the fact that the starting point of 19 years' imprisonment adopted by Brewer J was in relation to 33 offences, two more than what I am sentencing on today. I entered not guilty verdicts in relation to one charge of rape and one charge of indecent assault.

¹ *R v AM* (CA27/2009) [2010] NZCA 114, [2010] 2 NZLR 750.

² *R v Apperley* [2019] NZHC 1276; *R v Gage* [2013] NZHC 2053; and *R v Te Huia* [2016] NZHC 1045.

[41] However, I do not consider the lesser number of charges alters your culpability to any significant degree. The factors which resulted in your offending being placed towards the upper level of band four remain essentially unchanged.

[42] There is also merit in the Crown's submission that my findings are more specific about the frequency of the offending that formed the basis of the representative charges. To that extent, the nature of the offending I found to have occurred could be regarded as more serious than your first trial. This would balance any reduction in the starting point which might otherwise be available for the lesser number of convictions.

[43] It follows, however, that I do not consider my factual findings are such that a higher starting point than the 19 years' imprisonment adopted by Brewer J can be justified in this case. When the sexual offending is considered in its entirety, I am satisfied that 19 years' imprisonment reflects the gravity of that sexual offending.

[44] I also consider a two-year uplift for the violence offending is appropriate, and neither party suggested otherwise.

[45] This leads to a starting point of 21 years' imprisonment for all the offending in this case.

Personal mitigating and aggravating factors

[46] The next step in the sentencing process is to adjust the starting point for factors that are personal to you.

[47] While you do have a criminal history, including a conviction in 2001 against complainant A, the Crown does not seek an uplift. I agree that an uplift is not required, and I decline to apply one.

[48] Brewer J reduced your sentence by two years for your mental health history. Your counsel suggests a reduction of that order is appropriate in your case.

[49] The health assessor reports record your mental health history in some detail, including your substance abuse issues. Those reports also detail your family history and events in your personal background which may have contributed to your offending behaviours.

[50] I accept that your mental health conditions mean prison is likely to be more difficult for you. The law allows an adjustment for that factor.

[51] Your counsel also submits today that an adjustment should be taken into account for the time spent on EM bail. You have spent two years on EM bail and there are no records of any breach before the Court.

[52] I accept that an adjustment for all these factors is appropriate. However, any adjustment to the sentence must take account the extent of your offending. Only a modest adjustment can be justified in these circumstances. I consider a reduction of two years from the starting point is appropriate in your case.

[53] This brings the fixed sentence to one of 19 years' imprisonment.

Minimum period of imprisonment

[54] I turn next to consider whether a minimum period of imprisonment should be imposed.

[55] The Crown seeks the imposition of a minimum period of imprisonment of 10 years if a finite sentence is imposed. Your counsel submits that a minimum period is not required, and it should be left to the Parole Board to decide when you are released on parole.

[56] The Sentencing Act provides that I may only impose a minimum period of imprisonment if I am satisfied that the parole period which would otherwise apply (in your case, one-third of your sentence) is insufficient to hold you accountable; denounce your conduct; deter you and others from committing similar offences; and to protect the community from you.

[57] I consider those statutory criteria are met in your case. The scale of your offending, which covers five relationships over a 15-year timeframe, involves repeated acts of sexual violence against intimate partners, and includes horrific acts of physical harm and psychological abuse. Offending within intimate relationships is difficult to detect and it has reverberations for others in the family unit, and the community in general. Strong denunciation and deterrence is required for your type of offending.

[58] A minimum period of imprisonment is also needed to protect the community from you. Those at risk are future intimate partners. Your history of offending, and the health assessor reports before the Court, suggest that you pose a high risk of further offending. This is exacerbated by your failure to acknowledge the harm caused or to show any remorse or insight into your offending. To be eligible for your parole after serving only one-third of your sentence will not be sufficient to promote in you a sense of accountability for what you have done.

[59] Accordingly, I consider that a minimum period of imprisonment of 10 years ought to be imposed in your case. Whether you will be paroled after that date will be for the Parole Board to determine.

Preventive detention

[60] I now turn to consider whether to impose a sentence of preventive detention.

[61] The Sentencing Act provides that the purpose of preventive detention is to protect the community from those who pose a significant and ongoing risk to the safety of its members. Preventive detention may only be imposed if the Court is satisfied that an offender is likely to commit another qualifying sexual or violent offence if released at the sentence expiry date.

[62] There are statutory factors that this Court must take into account in deciding whether to impose a sentence of preventive detention. Those factors include the principle that a lengthy determinate sentence is preferable if it provides adequate protection for society.

[63] I have received two health assessor reports from Dr de Wattignar and Dr Patel. I have also considered the health assessor reports prepared by Dr van Rensburg and Dr Duggal for the sentencing in 2021, and the report by Dr Isaacson which was commissioned by your counsel at that time.

[64] All health assessor reports assess you as being at a high risk of committing further qualifying sexual and violent offences in the context of intimate partner relationships. Personality factors, including anti-social, narcissistic and psychopathic traits contribute to that assessment. Your mental health difficulties and your delusional beliefs are also said to compound your risk profile.

[65] Adding to that risk is your failure to acknowledge any responsibility for your own actions. You continue to contend that you are a victim of the justice system and of collusion between all five former partners and another person. This entrenched attitude represents a barrier to your engagement with rehabilitative programmes, which provides further reason to be concerned about your risk to the community.

[66] I consider you meet the statutory criteria for a sentence of preventive detention. There is a pattern of serious offending over a period of 15 years. You have caused serious harm to each of the victims as previously discussed, and this has implications for the wider community. All health assessor reports before the Court indicate a tendency to commit serious offences in the future, and you have not made any effort to address the cause or causes of the offending.

[67] I have thought long and hard about whether a sentence of preventive detention should be imposed in these circumstances. However, by a fine margin, I consider a lengthy finite sentence of imprisonment is adequate to protect the community in your case.

[68] In reaching that view, I take into account that I intend to impose a sentence of 19 years' imprisonment, with a minimum period of imprisonment of 10 years. This is a lengthy sentence of imprisonment, particularly for someone, like you, who has not served a sentence of imprisonment before.

[69] You are currently 42 years old. You will be 52 when you are eligible for parole. There is no guarantee that you will be released after serving the minimum period of imprisonment of 10 years. Indeed, it is unlikely you will be released if you fail to engage in rehabilitative programmes and acknowledge and take responsibility for your offending. In the event you serve your entire sentence, then you will be 61 years of age. The difficulties of predicting risk that far out are apparent, and they are canvassed in some of the health assessor reports. The risk of offending may well look very different at that age and after a considerable period in prison.

[70] Moreover, in the event that you still pose a risk to intimate partners following your release, then the Department of Corrections may apply for an extended supervision order. Such an order can be for a duration of 10 years. Such an order could be targeted to addressing your particular risks which are to intimate partners, rather than to the community at large. Of course, I cannot say whether such an application will be granted, but the availability of such an order is relevant to my decision.

[71] For these reasons, I decline to impose a sentence of preventive detention. The sentence will be a finite sentence of 19 years' imprisonment with a minimum period of imprisonment of 10 years.

Sentence

[72] Mr Bruce, please stand.

[73] For the 31 charges on which I found you guilty, I sentence you to 19 years' imprisonment with a minimum period of imprisonment of 10 years.

[74] The specific sentences for each charge are as follows:

(a) Sexual violation by rape:

(i) charges 5, 6, 10, 16, 19, 22, 26, 27, 28, 29: **19 years'**
imprisonment on each; and

- (ii) a minimum period of imprisonment of 10 years on each of these sentences.
- (b) Sexual violation by unlawful sexual connection:
 - (i) charges 24, 30, 31, 32: **10 years'** imprisonment on each.
- (c) Wounding with intent to cause grievous bodily harm:
 - (i) charges 8 and 9: **10 years'** imprisonment on each.
- (d) Indecent assault:
 - (i) charge 3: **three years'** imprisonment;
 - (ii) charge 20: **five years'** imprisonment.
- (e) Threaten to kill:
 - (i) charges 1, 7, 21 and 23: **three years'** imprisonment on each;
 - (ii) charges, 14, 15: **18 months'** imprisonment on each;
 - (iii) charge 25: **one year** imprisonment.
- (f) Injuring with intent to injure:
 - (i) charge 2: **three years'** imprisonment;
 - (ii) charge 11: **18 months'** imprisonment.
- (g) Assault with a weapon:
 - (i) charge 4: **two years'** imprisonment.

(h) Male assaults female:

(i) charges 12, 13: **18 months'** imprisonment on each;

(ii) charge 33: **one year** imprisonment.

[75] All sentences are to be served concurrently so that the total end-sentence is 19 years' imprisonment with a minimum period of imprisonment of 10 years.

[76] Mr Bruce, stand down.

Edwards J