

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

**I TE KŌTI MATUA O AOTEAROA
TE ROTORUA-NUI-A-KAHUMATAMOMOE ROHE**

**CRI-2025-063-1931
[2026] NZHC 2570**

THE KING

v

LANCE DICKINSON

Hearing: 27 August 2026

Appearances: A J Gordon and B M Cardon for Crown
A McPherson for Mr Dickinson

Date of sentence: 27 August 2026

SENTENCING NOTES OF JAGOSE J

Solicitors:
Gordon & Pilditch, Rotorua
McPherson Law, Taupō

[1] Mr Dickinson, on 1 July this year, Blanchard J entered convictions against you on your guilty pleas to murdering Cheri-Lee Bell on 20 June 2025,¹ in culmination of five breaches (one representative) over the preceding 18 months of a protection order made in relation to her.² I offer the Court's condolence to Ms Bell's survivors.

[2] I now am to sentence you for that offending. In doing so, I must accept as proven all facts essential to your guilty pleas.³ The breaches of a protection order each carry a maximum sentence of three years' imprisonment.⁴ For your murder of Ms Bell, I must sentence you to imprisonment for life, unless the wider circumstances of your offending makes that manifestly unjust.⁵

[3] If sentencing you to life imprisonment, I must then impose a minimum period of imprisonment before you may even be eligible for parole. That must be a period of at least ten years' imprisonment,⁶ or at least 17 years if I find Ms Bell's murder to have been in specified exceptional circumstances; the latter period, again, unless manifestly unjust.⁷

[4] If you are then to be released depends entirely on you satisfying the Parole Board, if released, you do not pose any undue risk to the safety of the community.⁸ If then released, you will be subject to release conditions for the rest of your life.⁹

[5] I have listened and read what counsel have had to say, both for you and for the Crown. Neither suggest life imprisonment would be manifestly unjust in your circumstances. Both suggest you be imprisoned for a minimum period of 17 years. I am not bound by their views; I have to come to my own decision. I must satisfy myself of the appropriate sentence for the gravity—for the seriousness—of your offending, including your culpability—your responsibility—for it.

¹ Crimes Act 1961, ss 167(a)–(b) and 172. Maximum penalty: life imprisonment.

² Family Violence Act 2018, ss 90(b) and 112(1)(a). Maximum penalty: three years' imprisonment.

³ Sentencing Act 2002, s 24(1)(b).

⁴ Family Violence Act, s 112(3).

⁵ Sentencing Act, s 102(1).

⁶ Section 103(2).

⁷ Section 104(1).

⁸ Parole Act 2002, s 7.

⁹ Section 29(4)(b).

Your offending

[6] I need first to cover off the background to your offending, to set out in public the conduct for which I am sentencing you.

[7] You and Ms Bell met each other as teenagers at Tūrangi's Tongariro College. The relationship between you continued for some 12 years until Ms Bell ended it in April 2025, the last years being of increasing difficulties between you. During that latter period, you and Ms Bell had two children together.

[8] Also during that latter period, family harm incidents between you and Ms Bell had given rise to a number of police safety orders requiring you temporarily to vacate the property you shared with Ms Bell.¹⁰ Incidents escalated to the point in December 2023 she obtained a temporary protection order against you.

[9] By making the protection order, that court was satisfied you had inflicted family violence against Ms Bell and the order was necessary for her and the children's protection.¹¹ The protection order meant you were not to engage in any form of family violence against Ms Bell or have contact with her except with her consent or on some other authority.¹²

[10] Without Ms Bell's consent or any other authority, you contacted her electronically and in person at her workplace, her parents' home in Motutere and her own home in Tūrangi. At Ms Bell's work and in her bedroom at her parents' home, you directly accused her of having relationships with others. She repeatedly asked you to leave, to which you responded "Just tell me the truth" and "I just want to be a family again".

[11] Your electronic communications to Ms Bell—by calls, messages and texts—numbered in the thousands, made at all times of the day and night. They often were violently abusive to her and the children. They continued despite her requests you leave her alone. You threatened to stab and to kill Ms Bell.

¹⁰ Family Violence Act, ss 36–42.

¹¹ Section 79.

¹² Section 90.

[12] On 30 May 2025, you were released from custody on bail, pending sentencing for the two admitted breaches of the protection order at Motutere on 4 May 2025. You were subject to special conditions of bail requiring you to live and be present between 7 pm and 7 am overnight at your mother's address on the west side of Lake Taupō, to not be violent, to not contact Ms Bell by any means and to not go to Motutere or Tūrangi.

[13] Late in the afternoon of 15 June 2025, you attended Ms Bell's home in Tūrangi. When she asked you to leave, you refused. On 19 June 2025, despite your nightly curfew at your mother's home, you stayed overnight at your father's home in Taumarunui. You were seen to be using your cellphone a lot. You made multiple attempts to contact Ms Bell. She responded once, just after midnight, asking if you were okay.

[14] Early the next morning, you drove past Ms Bell's address. You took videos on your cellphone of a car parked in her driveway, belonging to a friend she had invited to stay with her. Ms Bell's 16-year-old sister also was at the address, as was the four-year-old child you have with Ms Bell.

[15] You drove to a neighbouring street, walked back to Ms Bell's address and entered her home unannounced, going into the lounge. When you heard the main bedroom door opening, you hid in the small kitchen off the lounge. Ms Bell approached you there and the two of you argued.

[16] You held Ms Bell by the hair and repeatedly stabbed her with a knife, in total 13 times: non-fatally, to her chest, stomach, back, upper arm, wrist and hands; and fatally, a 10-centimetre stab to her neck which severed her right common carotid artery, trachea and oesophagus and caused her massive blood loss, internally and externally.

[17] Ms Bell screamed. Her sister came out of her bedroom to see Ms Bell holding her neck, blood spurting between her fingers, before Ms Bell collapsed to the ground. Her sister retreated to protect Ms Bell's daughter in the bedroom. Covered in Ms Bell's

blood, you ran to your car and returned to Taumarunui. Ms Bell died of her injury at her home.

[18] You told police you had gone to Ms Bell's address to get your daughter, who you believed was being neglected. You said, in the argument with Ms Bell, you grabbed a knife from the kitchen bench but you then blacked out and did not recall what happened. The knife has not been recovered, and it is an open question if you brought it with you or obtained it there.

Victim impact statements

[19] I have multiple victim impact statements from Ms Bell's parents, brothers, sister and friend. You have heard some read this morning. I have read them all. They painfully illustrate how your terrible actions removed a much-loved person from their own and her children's lives, with brutal and persisting impact on all of them and radiating out into the wider community. Some forgive you; some do not. They point to the cruelty of your actions occurring at Matariki, intended a time for familial reflection on the past, celebration of the present and planning for the future. And they emphasise your actions repeatedly breached also the court's orders made for Ms Bell's protection, recognising the threat you posed to her safety. Their statements help me understand their view of your offending. And I encourage you to reflect on them with an open mind, to inform you of their perspectives of the impact of your offending.

Personal circumstances

[20] Mr Dickinson, I turn to your personal circumstances, so far as they are discernible from the material before me. You were 26–27 years old at the time of your offending and are 28 years old now. You declined to participate in Corrections' preparation of a pre-sentence report for me. Despite being represented by counsel, you have not asked me to hear from anyone who knows of your background so far as it may relate to your offending, or on any resolution of issues between you and Ms Bell's family with whom you had a longstanding relationship.

—*criminal history*

[21] You have one previous conviction, of common assault, from 2015. The victim then was a female cousin of yours. Given the family relationship, that has some, if dated, resonance for your present offending.

—*pre-sentence report*

[22] Using institutional information available to her, the probation officer’s pre-sentence report considers you present a high risk of reoffending and a high risk of harm to others. She says you “had become fixated” on Ms Bell. Your disregard for court orders prohibiting your contact with her indicated your risk to her “was escalating”, as illustrated also by the threatening content of your electronic contacts. She adds your internet searches in the weeks prior to Ms Bell’s murder—for “how long jail for murder?”, “Lawyer Taupo” and “how to track phone”—indicate the murder was “calculated, premeditated and planned”. She says your refusal to participate in the pre-sentence report demonstrates your “lack of remorse and accountability”.

—*psychiatrist’s report*

[23] I also have an 18 August 2026 report from a consultant psychiatrist, Shailesh Kumar. Dr Kumar identifies a number of aspects of your psychological background, which he says “may collectively be relevant to assessing [your] culpability, sentencing, and rehabilitation prospects”. He commends counselling, and regular mental health support and monitoring, to aid in the last.

Approach to sentencing for murder

[24] I now explain how I will go about sentencing you. Ultimately, my sentence is to reflect this community’s repudiation of your crime, the punishment being “determined not on impulse or emotion but in terms of justice and deliberation”.¹³

¹³ *R v Puru* [1984] 1 NZLR 248 (CA) at 249.

[25] I must have regard for the statutory purposes and principles of sentencing.¹⁴ I must hold you accountable for your offending and for the harm you have caused.¹⁵ Your sentence should be sufficient to denounce your conduct,¹⁶ deter you and others from committing such offences in the future,¹⁷ and to protect the community.¹⁸ I must consider the gravity and seriousness of your offending, and take into account its effect on victims.¹⁹ The sentence must take into account the desirability of consistency in sentencing,²⁰ and anything in your circumstances as would make an otherwise appropriate sentence “disproportionately severe”.²¹

[26] Those purposes and principles of sentencings have no ranking,²² except insofar as assessment of a minimum period of imprisonment endorses only four of s 7’s eight sentencing purposes.²³ That subset is to:²⁴

... address features of an offence that aggravate its seriousness or point to a need for community protection. Mitigating factors can and do offset these features when setting a minimum period, but the fact remains that the statutory criteria for a minimum period do not include the full set of sentencing purposes and principles that apply when a determinate sentence is being fixed.

Thus any “favourable personal circumstances” have limited mitigatory weight in sentencing for murder.²⁵ A minimum period of imprisonment means you are not entitled to parole for that period.

[27] I said earlier, murder attracts a sentence of life imprisonment, unless manifestly unjust.²⁶ If so sentencing, I must impose a minimum non-parole period of at least ten

¹⁴ Sentencing Act, ss 7 and 8.

¹⁵ Sections 7(1)(a) and 103(2)(a).

¹⁶ Sections 7(1)(e) and 103(2)(b).

¹⁷ Sections 7(1)(f) and 103(2)(c).

¹⁸ Sections 7(1)(g) and 103(2)(d).

¹⁹ Section 8(1)(a)–(b) and (f).

²⁰ Section 8(1)(e).

²¹ Section 8(1)(h).

²² *Moses v R* [2020] NZCA 296, [2020] 3 NZLR 583 at [4], citing *Hessell v R* [2010] NZSC 135, [2011] 1 NZLR 607 at [37].

²³ Sentencing Act, s 103(2).

²⁴ *Malik v R* [2015] NZCA 597 at [28] (footnote omitted).

²⁵ *Brown v R* [2011] NZCA 95 at [18], citing *R v Walsh* (2005) 21 CRNZ 946 (CA) at [28].

²⁶ Sentencing Act, s 102(1).

years.²⁷ In specific cases “especially worthy of accountability and denunciation”,²⁸ the period must be of at least 17 years (unless manifestly unjust).²⁹

[28] As you have been convicted of murder, you must be sentenced to imprisonment for life unless, given your circumstances and those of your offending, a sentence of life imprisonment would be manifestly unjust.³⁰ If not, then I must decide: (a) what notional non-parole period would apply under s 103; (b) if a s 104 category applies; and if so, (c) if a non-parole period of 17 years or more would be manifestly unjust.³¹ But I need not reinvent the wheel if “application of the comparator methodology could answer both the question of whether s 104 applied and that of the appropriate MPI”.³²

[29] Addressing that non-parole period has inherent difficulties where there are statutory floors but no ceiling other than that offered by mortality.³³ Nonetheless, I am required “to benchmark the instant case against the ‘standard range of murders’, a concept elusive at best”,³⁴ and especially when “no two [murder] cases are ever identical”.³⁵

Your murder sentence

—*life imprisonment?*

[30] I start your sentencing for Ms Bell’s murder by considering if your imprisonment for life would be manifestly unjust. Neither the Crown nor your lawyer suggests it might be, but I need to make that assessment myself.

[31] A departure from life imprisonment must be justified by the circumstances of your murder of Ms Bell *and* your own circumstances.³⁶ I must make an overall

²⁷ Section 103(2).

²⁸ *Malik v R*, above n 24, at [29].

²⁹ Sentencing Act, s 104(1).

³⁰ Section 102(1).

³¹ *Davis v R* [2019] NZCA 40, [2019] 3 NZLR 43 at [25], restating the traditional two-stage approach to sentencing for murder in *R v Williams* [2005] 2 NZLR 506 (CA).

³² *Frost v R* [2023] NZCA 294 at [36].

³³ *R v Bell* CA80/03, 7 August 2003, [2003] BCL 886 at [7].

³⁴ *R v Paul* CA496/05, 1 August 2006, [2006] BCL 820 at [27].

³⁵ *Preston v R* [2016] NZCA 568, [2017] 2 NZLR 358 at [158]–[160].

³⁶ *R v Rapira* [2003] 3 NZLR 794 (CA) at [121]; and *R v Cunnard* [2014] NZCA 138 at [33].

assessment of that justification, in light of sentencing’s purposes and principles.³⁷ The necessary injustice must be clear; life imprisonment only is to be displaced in exceptional cases.³⁸

[32] There is no closed list of cases in which a sentence of life imprisonment would be manifestly unjust; power to depart from the presumption should not be “unduly proscribed”.³⁹ Still, the presumption only will be departed from in “exceptional” and “rare” cases.⁴⁰ Such include an elderly man’s ‘mercy’ killing of his demented wife,⁴¹ or a mentally-impaired defendant killing their abuser.⁴² Your circumstances are not of those cases. I cannot identify any factor, let alone one of the required exceptionality, as may displace imprisonment for life as the presumptive sentence for your murder of Ms Bell.

[33] Overall, sentencing you to life imprisonment would not be manifestly unjust. Life imprisonment is the default sentence for a murder conviction; it reflects “society’s recognition of the sanctity of human life and its condemnation of anybody who wrongfully takes another life”.⁴³ The circumstances do not mitigate your moral culpability, to displace the presumption of life imprisonment on your conviction for Ms Bell’s murder. I will sentence you to life imprisonment. For the rest of your life, you will be directly answerable to this Court.

—*your culpability*

[34] I count at least nine aggravating features in your attack on Ms Bell.⁴⁴ They are: (1) your unlawful entry into her house; (2) your use of actual violence; (3) your use of a weapon; (4) your attack to her neck; (5) carried out with particular cruelty and brutality; (6) your offending while on bail; (7) in the context of family violence

³⁷ *R v Rapira*, above n 36, at [121].

³⁸ At [121].

³⁹ *R v Cunnard*, above n 36, at [15].

⁴⁰ *R v Rapira*, above n 36, at [121]; *R v Wihongi* [2011] NZCA 592, [2012] 1 NZLR 775, at [93]; and *Hamidzadeh v R* [2012] NZCA 550, [2013] 1 NZLR 369 at [55].

⁴¹ *R v Law* (2002) 19 CRNZ 500 (HC).

⁴² *R v Wihongi*, above n 40. See also *R v Rihia* [2012] NZHC 2720.

⁴³ *R v Cunnard*, above n 36, at [16].

⁴⁴ Sentencing Act, s 9.

committed against a protected person; (8) following your likely causing persistent and prolonged fear and distress to her; and (9) with the loss of her life.

[35] I cannot identify any mitigating features of your attack on Ms Bell at all. I specifically disregard any contended mutuality in your triggering in-person argument, because you should not have been in her presence at all, let alone in her own home in the early hours of the morning without invitation or announcement.

[36] I have considered comparable fatal stabbing cases occurring against a backdrop of protection orders.⁴⁵ I particularly draw comparisons with two cases, *Rohit Singh v R* and *Preston v R*, upholding 19-year minimum non-parole periods:

- (a) your actions were not ‘in the moment’ or impulsive. You previously told Ms Bell you would stab and kill her, as you did, in the course of serious offending in terms of the Victims’ Rights Act 2002;
- (b) your killing of Ms Bell was highly brutal and callous, as illustrated by your many wounds of her, including as appears intended to cut her throat, as well as being done in close vicinity to her sister and child; and
- (c) your attack on Ms Bell in her own home and as a person to be protected from you means she was particularly vulnerable.⁴⁶

The presence of those s 104(1A)(c), (d), (e) and (h) factors means a non-parole period of at least 17 years is required to meet the statutory purposes. None of the appellate cases I have considered addresses precisely that mix of factors. Appellate guidance is to the effect that extensively planned and brutal family violence resulting in murder

⁴⁵ *Kanwarpal Singh v R* [2025] NZCA 546 (Sentencing Act, s 104(1)(b), (e), (g) and (i): 17 and a half years); *Prasad v R* [2022] NZCA 588 (s 104(1)(c) and (e): 18 and a half years); *Samson v R* [2022] NZCA 266 (s 104(1)(e): 17 years); *Duff v R* [2020] NZCA 116 (s 104(1)(g): 17 years); *Rohit Singh v R* [2019] NZCA 436 (s 104(1)(b), (c) and (e): 19 years); *Christison v R* [2017] NZCA 168 (s 104(1)(b), (c) and (e): 17 years); *Rajeshwar Singh v R* [2016] NZCA 582 (s 104(1)(b) and (c): 16 years); *Preston v R*, above n 35 (s 104(1)(b), (c) and (e): 19 years); *Malik v R*, above n 24 (s 104(1)(e) and (h): 18 and a half years); and *R v McSweeney* [2007] NZCA 147 at [11]: “beyond 17 years”.

⁴⁶ *Marong v R* [2020] NZCA 179 at [35]; *Everett v R* [2019] NZCA 68 at [19], citing *Solicitor General v Hutchinson* [2018] NZCA 162, [2018] 3 NZLR 420 at [27].

supports a starting point in the range of 18–20 years.⁴⁷ If not extensively planned here (albeit still with an indeterminate but not insignificant degree of premeditation), brutally murdering Ms Bell when subject to an order for her protection justifies no lesser range. Such is consistent with recent first instance sentencing for that same mix of factors.⁴⁸ Comparably with my decision in *R v Li*,⁴⁹ in relation to which I assess your offending only differs at immaterial margins, I take a starting non-parole period of 19 years’ imprisonment.

—*personal circumstances*

[37] Turning to your personal circumstances, your guilty plea entitles you to a discount on the non-parole period.⁵⁰ The typical one- to two-year discounts often given may be thought “too light” in some circumstances,⁵¹ if disincentivising guilty pleas and adding to delay in resolution, and trauma, stress and inconvenience for victims.⁵² I do not see that here. The majority of your guilty pleas came a year after Ms Bell’s murder, five months after obtaining a psychiatric report and confirming no defence of insanity would be advanced and relatively soon after disclosure was concluded. You knew all along what you had done. I only will allow a two-year discount for your guilty plea.

[38] Otherwise, the presence of mitigating factors under s 9(2) rarely would displace the statutory presumption under s 104.⁵³ Absent the required exceptionality, questions of manifest injustice only arise if the notional assessment is “lower than the statutory presumptive minimum”.⁵⁴

⁴⁷ *Christison v R*, above n 45, at [34]–[35], citing cases referred to in *R v Gottermeyer* [2014] NZCA 205 at [80]–[81] and, in particular, *Dawood v R* [2013] NZCA 381 and *Thurgood v R* [2012] NZCA 23.

⁴⁸ *R v Morunga* [2026] NZHC 1326 (Sentencing Act, s 104(1A)(e): 17 years); *R v Boulter* [2026] NZHC 326 (s 104(1A)(b) and (e): 17 years); and *R v Li* [2020] NZHC 3419 (s 104(1)(b), (e) and (g): 19 years).

⁴⁹ *R v Li*, above n 48.

⁵⁰ *Hessell v R*, above n 22, at [45]–[46] and [62].

⁵¹ *Frost v R*, above n 32, at [43], citing *R v Hessell* [2009] NZCA 450, [2010] 2 NZLR 298 at [70]; and *R v McSweeney*, above n 45, at [10], and [47(c)], citing *R v Hessell*, above, at [70].

⁵² *Frost v R*, above n 32, at [50], citing *R v Hessell*, above n 51, at [67].

⁵³ *Hamidzadeh v R*, above n 40, at [86], citing *R v Williams*, above n 31, and *R v Parrish* (2003) 21 CRNZ 571 (CA).

⁵⁴ *Davis v R*, above n 31, at [30].

[39] Notwithstanding Dr Kumar’s diligent review, you do not qualify for any discount available for credible personal background factors causing impaired choice and (therefore) diminished moral culpability.⁵⁵ Your counsel accepts as much.

[40] I therefore will impose a minimum period of imprisonment of 17 years. It means you may not even be considered for parole until after serving 17 years’ imprisonment. Standing back, I am satisfied that is proportionate to your murder of Ms Bell.⁵⁶

Your sentence for protection order breaches

[41] I turn to your breach of protection order convictions. They each are punishable by a term of up to three years’ imprisonment.⁵⁷ Again, little assistance can be drawn from case-by-case comparisons because the offending is “so variable and ... highly contextual”.⁵⁸ Prior convictions for such breaches are “integral to the assessment of the gravity of the index offending”.⁵⁹

[42] At the time of Ms Bell’s murder, you were remanded on bail for sentencing on two admitted breaches of the protection order. You since have pleaded guilty to three further breaches, being the representative charge reflecting the thousands of electronic contacts, your unauthorised contact with Ms Bell at her home and your attack on her there.

[43] Breaching a protection order is serious offending of itself. If it was not to double-count Ms Bell’s particular vulnerability for the purposes of s 104, I would have had little compunction about relying on her murder being committed in the course of that serious offence of breaching the protection order, also for s 104 purposes.⁶⁰

⁵⁵ *Berkland v R* [2022] NZSC 143, [2022] 1 NZLR 509 at [91]–[94] and [107]–[112]; *Zhang v R* [2019] NZCA 507, [2019] 3 NZLR 648 at [161]–[162]; *Poi v R* [2020] NZCA 312 at [32]–[51]; and *Carr v R* [2020] NZCA 357 at [55].

⁵⁶ *Frost v R*, above n 32, at [86], citing *Hessell v R*, above n 22, at [77], and *Dickey v R* [2023] NZCA 2, [2023] NZLR 405 at [175] (citing *R v Williams*, above n 31, at [67]).

⁵⁷ Family Violence Act, s 112(3).

⁵⁸ *Pahulu v Police* [2020] NZHC 153 at [29], citing *Jackson v Police* [2019] NZHC 281 at [41].

⁵⁹ *Jackson v Police*, above n 58, at [43], citing *Mitchell v R* [2013] NZCA 583, (2013) 29 FRNZ 498 at [12].

⁶⁰ *Rajeshwar Singh v R*, above n 45, at [24].

[T]he murder of a protected person by the person against whom a protection order has been made is particularly exacerbating. Where a defendant has deliberately and fatally flouted Court orders made specifically to protect the victim from him ..., there is a particular need for strong messages of denunciation and deterrence.

[44] I am required to “impose the maximum penalty prescribed for the offence if the offending is within the most serious of cases for which that penalty is prescribed”.⁶¹

[45] Murdering the protected person is within the most serious kind of protection order breach, both disregarding the order for the present, and ensuring this Court cannot reassert its protection for the future. I need not to leave headroom for any individually worse case as may be contemplated.⁶²

[46] I would impose the maximum penalty for the last breach, of three years’ imprisonment. Noting some of your third and fourth breaches occurred while you were on bail, I additionally would sentence you to two years’ imprisonment on each of them and to one year’s imprisonment on each of the first and second breaches. In other words—on those convictions, together—nine years’ imprisonment.

[47] Given your guilty pleas—which I acknowledge were made earlier of the first and second breaches, and of the latter breaches got caught up with your guilty plea to murder—I round that down to six years and nine months’ imprisonment, being the maximum 25 per cent credit available in the circumstances.⁶³ Any concerns otherwise for double-counting or totality are addressed by those sentences’ necessary concurrency with your life sentence for Ms Bell’s murder.⁶⁴

Sentence

[48] Mr Dickinson, please stand:

- (a) on your murder conviction, I sentence you to life imprisonment, with a minimum period of imprisonment of 17 years;

⁶¹ Sentencing Act, s 8(1)(c).

⁶² *R v Lata* [2018] NZCA 615 at [42].

⁶³ *Hessell v R*, above n 22, at [75].

⁶⁴ *Rajeshwar Singh v R*, above n 45, upholding *R v Singh* [2014] NZHC 1246 at [20].

- (b) on your protection order convictions, I sentence you to six years and nine months' imprisonment, to be served concurrently.

Please stand down.

Postscript

[49] Mr Dickinson, I omitted to say so at your sentencing but have summonsed you back before me to do so now, given your conviction for murder, you are now subject to the three strikes law.

[50] I am now going to give you your first warning about the consequences of another conviction for a qualifying offence. You will also be given a written notice outlining these consequences, which lists the "qualifying offences".

[51] If you are convicted of any qualifying offence other than murder committed after this warning, and the judge imposes a sentence of imprisonment of more than two years, then you will serve that sentence without parole or early release unless it would be manifestly unjust.

[52] If you are convicted of murder committed after this warning and the judge imposes a sentence of life imprisonment then, unless it would be manifestly unjust, the judge must sentence you to a minimum term of imprisonment. The minimum term of imprisonment will be at least 17 years if you plead not guilty, or at least 15 years if you plead guilty.

Please stand down.

—Jagose J