



VERA BAIRD^{QC}
POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONER

Judicial Conduct and Investigations Office,
81 - 82 Queens Building,
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Strand London,
WC2A 2LL

Dear Sir / Madam

Durham case: t20130270 / t020130276 R v Anthony Bruce

Judge George Moorhouse.

The above case was heard on 23rd September 2014, at which Bruce admitted assault occasioning bodily harm and a charge of witness intimidation and was handed a 12 months jail sentence, suspended for 12 months.

This letter is to make a formal complaint about the above case in relation to the sentence given, the facts which are set out in the attached newspaper article from the Daily Mail dated 24th September 2014.

It is clear that this would be an unduly lenient sentence if it were in the categories that are reviewable and it is of course disappointing that there is no chance for the court of appeal to express a view on the sentence and its wider potential impact on society's attempt to stop the epidemic crime of domestic violence and abuse. In Northumbria alone between April 2012 and March 2013, there were 27,275 incidents of Domestic Violence, across the North East this figure is over 53,000. Such cases must see an appropriate sentence passed as if violence against women and girls can be prevented the estimated annual costs of £15.7bn (nationally 2008) can be saved and, of course, people safeguarded.

The sentence passed, shows that the judge has no understanding of domestic abuse and its impact on women and children. Bruce carried out these violent assaults in the home from which, unlike a victim of violence on the street, there is nowhere to run. Bruce clearly repeated his torture, even after the victims reported his actions to the police. This woman has to ensure a catalogue of assaults and abuse from her husband which included biting and throttling her, before holding a knife to her throat and shooting her. In addition to this, after the victim found the courage to report this to the police, he threatened her to "drop the charges or I'll torch".

The victims should have been able to rely on her husband as should the children. Instead they faced a breach of trust of huge proportion and did not

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have the support and love of the person who should have protected them the most.

His actions repeatedly tortured the victim and should have been dealt with as such. This has not been the case.

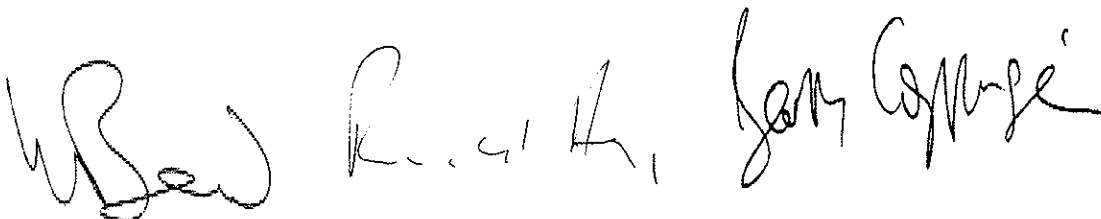
Judge Moorhouse has a duty to ensure that he imposes a sentence that reflects the seriousness of the defendant's actions. It was reported in the Daily Mail, after the trial, Bruce went on to social media to update his status as "The c*** didn't win I'm free". It was clear the sentence given would allow the defendant to brag. It is a breach of Judge Moorhouse's duty to play a role in deterring epidemic crime and working with the grain of police endeavour. This action shows his character, comments such as this are attributed to someone who "has got away with it". I have been contacted by various people who have expressed the fact that they feel Bruce has "got away with it", victims, staff of women's refuge's and newspaper readers all feel this. There has been outrage at the sentence and the defendant's subsequent comments. Decent people want to see action on this judge's failure to make this individual (and others like him) understand that this sort of conduct is not acceptable – the police, voluntary sector are all working hard to tackle domestic violence and the courts need to be part of taking domestic abuse cases seriously.

Judge Moorhouse needs to be accountable for his actions and to understand that his conduct is not acceptable, he has sent out a message to women not just across the North East but across the country that male judges will not take a role in protecting them or deterring the crime from which they suffer.

We all have a role to play in tackling Domestic Violence, the Courts and Judges are a pivotal part of doing this and Judge Moorhouse has let the judiciary and women down. The Judicial Conduct and Investigations Office now need to rebuild confidence in what has happened at Teesside Crown Court.

We look forward to hearing from you soon.

Yours sincerely,



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