

Media Statement



Tel: +27 12 845 6000

Email:
media@npa.gov.za

Victoria & Griffiths
Mxenge Building
123 Westlake Avenue
Weavind Park
Silverton
Pretoria

www.npa.gov.za

TO: ALL MEDIA

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RE: BEAUFORT WEST MAN SENTENCED TO 25 YEARS DIRECT IMPRISONMENT

A 27 year-old Beaufort West man was sentenced to 25 years direct imprisonment by the Western Cape High Court sitting in Beaufort West yesterday. Richard Jacobs was convicted on twelve counts including premeditated murder, three counts of attempted murder, three counts of assault with intent to grievous bodily harm and three counts of kidnapping, arson and malicious damage to property.

State Advocate Esmeralda Cecil strongly argued for life imprisonment on the charge of premeditated murder but Judge MJ Dolamo who was harsh on the accused during the sentencing felt that there were compelling and substantial circumstances which allowed him to deviate from the prescribed minimum sentence of life.

Jacobs was arrested and successfully prosecuted after he started a reign of terror against his former girlfriend and her friends. He used to date Bianca Botha but problems started for the petite woman towards the end of 2012 and beginning of 2013. He beat her up so badly and threw a 4,16kg brick on her head. She was so injured that specialist doctors had to do a facial reconstruction.

This terror then spread to her friends. Jacobs stabbed her friend on the breast, stabbed a man who was dating one of Botha's friends, set a house on fire while Botha was inside and blocked the entrance so that she would not be able to go out. This morning Jacobs took the stand during aggravation and mitigation arguments. He read a statement that was prepared but started crying when Advocate Cecil started cross examining him and showed him pictures of Botha's face which is now disfigured. Then arguments moved to whether the accused was remorseful or regretted what he did and where he found himself. Advocate Cecil argued that the accused has failed to show remorse and take the court into his confidence.

"A life has been taken and that life will never be returned. We may argue that this was not the most gruesome murder but we cannot put a price to a murder. His tears do not justify a lesser sentence. In light of the gravity of the crime, the injuries he caused to the defenceless victims and the degree of violence, we are asking the court to impose life imprisonment", Advocate Cecil argued.

In sentencing Judge Dolamo said, "You were known to your victims, you abused your position of trust, you used the most serious form of aggression in the commission of these offences, you also stabbed defenceless victims, you broke into someone's property but it didn't end there you set the place alight. There were other innocent people in the house like a minor. All these factors are aggravating and all these show you have little respect for human life."

The judge however found that the accused was a first offender and considered the 19 months that he spent in prison as a mitigating factor which allowed him to deviate from the minimum sentence of life imprisonment.

The NPA welcomes the sentence.

Kind Regards,

Eric Ntabazalila

DPP: Western Cape

0730621222

entabazalila@npa.gov.za