

Media Statement



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TO: ALL MEDIA

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RE: HENRI VAN BREDa SENTENCED TO THREE LIFE TERMS AND 15 YEARS FOR MURDERS OF HIS FAMILY AND ATTEMPTED MURDER OF HIS ISTER

The NPA welcomes the lengthy direct imprisonment sentence handed down to convicted murderer, Henri van Breda. As his team has indicated immediately after sentence that they will apply for leave to appeal his conviction and sentence. The state will oppose that application. The application for leave to appeal will be heard on 27 June 2018 at the Western Cape High Court.

Credit for this successful prosecution and sentence, must go to the prosecution and police team who worked tirelessly with circumstantial evidence while the accused maintained his innocence from day one, until today, despite mounting evidence against him. This success shows that when we all put our shoulders on the wheel we do get justice for the victims of crime.

Van Breda was sentenced to life imprisonment for the murder of his brother, Rudi, to life imprisonment for the murder of his father, Martin and to life imprisonment for the murder of his mother, Teresa. He was sentenced to 15 years direct imprisonment for the attempted murder of his sister, Marli, and twelve months direct imprisonment for obstruction of the administration of justice. The court declared Van Breda unfit to possess a firearm.

The gruesome murders that not only shocked South Africa but also made international news headlines, took place on the morning of 27 January 2015, in the safety of the family's three-bedroom house at 12 Groske Street in the secure gated De Zalze Estate in Stellenbosch.

During the trial, the state told the court that the family had supper on the evening of Monday, 26 January 2015, in the affluent and exclusive private housing estate that is guarded by high security systems and monitored around the clock. The Van Breda home is located approximately at the centre of the housing estate. Raised voices were heard on the same evening of 26 January 2015.

Evidence led in court showed that at approximately 04h24, Tuesday 27 January 2015, the accused made a phone call to his girlfriend that went unanswered. At approximately 04h27, he searched for emergency numbers via Google. At approximately 07h12, he made a series of telephone calls from his cell phone to emergency telephone numbers and at approximately 07h38, there was a further call to his girlfriend.

SAPS were notified of the incident at about 07h15 and arrived with the other emergency services at the Van Breda home. Rudi, 24, Martin, 54, Teresa, 56, were found hacked to death in the house. Marli, 16, was found fighting for her life. Marli was rushed to hospital with life-threatening injuries from which she recovered in due course after extensive surgery and other medical treatments. Post mortem examinations conducted on the bodies of the three deceased shows the cause of death of all the deceased as being: "Head injuries and the consequences thereof."

An axe and kitchen knife were recovered from the scene. The axe and the kitchen knife came from the Van Breda home. The knife was part of a set of kitchen knives. The accused was found in the house dressed in a pair of sleep shorts and white socks. A DNA analysis of blood found on the accused and on his clothing, matched the DNA of the three deceased. He had self-inflicted superficial knife wounds.

There were no signs of forcible entry to the Van Breda home. No items were removed from the home. The security company detected no intruder to the estate during the period in question. During the trial, conviction and sentence, the accused maintained his innocence. At first, he alleged a black man attacked his family. He alleged that there were two intruders in the house but only one attacked his family. He told the court during his testimony that the intruder was laughing while attacking his family with the axe. He was present when the attacks took place but did not come to the rescue of his family. He reacted only after the intruder attacked him.

Advocates Susan Galloway and Megan Blows prosecuted the case that included an inspection in loco early in the trial. The case ran for three years with the accused denying any involvement with the crimes. During his evidence, he told the court that two intruders entered the property but only one black man attacked his family. The intruder

was laughing while he attacked Rudi and his father. He then attacked his mother, his sister and then him. He told the court that he fought back and the intruder ran away and he (Henri) threw the axe at the intruder. He was left with stab wounds, which the court later declared as self - inflicted wounds.

During arguments in aggravation of sentence.

Advocate Galloway argued: "It is submitted that it is common cause that the crimes the accused has been convicted of are very serious in nature. Someone they trust and loved most viciously attacked the deceased and the remaining victim in their own home. The accused chose to execute the attack on his father, mother, brother and sister at a time when they were most vulnerable, that being, after they had gone to bed. The crimes were planned. This left the victims defenceless. The fact that Marli survive the attack is not due to any action or mercy of the accused but rather a miracle. As the accused did not see fit to play open cards with the court, there is no apparent motive for the killing of his family. The court is therefore been denied the opportunity of fully answering the questions "Why did he do it?" The crimes were committed without conscience. No remorse has been demonstrated by the accused. The crime committed is abhorrent and the enormity of it can hardly be over –emphasized. The seriousness of the crimes and the interest of society outweigh the personal circumstances of the accused by far and there are no substantial and compelling circumstances justifying a deviation from the prescribed minimum sentences." The court agreed.

Kind Regards,

Eric Ntabazalila
National Prosecuting Authority
Regional Communications Manager
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