

Sentencing Remarks - Chad James Rowe was sentenced to 3 years and 6 months' imprisonment for attempted robbery with a knife at a Guernsey shop, the Court emphasising the seriousness of the offence, use of a weapon, and Rowe's criminal history. Credit was given for his early guilty plea and personal mitigation, but deterrence and public protection were prioritised.

[2025]GRC077

**ROYAL COURT
FULL COURT**

26 September 2025

**Before: Catherine Maureen Fooks, Judge of the Royal Court and Jurats:
Marilyn Jasmine King, Tina Jane Le Poidevin, Felicity Jane Quevâtre,
Richard Jeremy Wallen James, Ian Michael Brown, Kay Parnwell, Sally-Ann David
and Susan Elizabeth Gallienne.**

THE LAW OFFICERS OF THE CROWN

- v -

CHAD JAMES ROWE

Crown Advocate C Dunford appeared for the Crown

Advocate S E Steel appeared for the Defendant

JUDGE OF THE ROYAL COURT:

Background

Mr Rowe you appear for sentence on a single count Indictment. The offence is attempted robbery contrary to sections 8 and 38 of the Theft (Bailiwick of Guernsey) Law 1983 in that on 7 March 2025 you attempted to rob a sales assistant working at Candie Cache Stores of money. The maximum sentence for this offence is life imprisonment.

We have taken the facts from the Prosecution Outline and the CCTV footage which we have watched. You went into Candie Cache Stores at 22:21 wearing a homemade snood to hide your head and face. You went straight to the counter where your victim was. She was working alone in the shop. You pulled a black handled bread knife from the waistband of your jeans which you held up to your victim while demanding that she place money into a green carrier bag you were holding. You made numerous requests for the money. Fortunately a man entered the shop and the victim was able to signal to him to call the police. He had to pretend to call the police as he had no Guernsey mobile phone and he shouted loudly for help. He noted that the victim looked scared. We also saw her press the alarm. You fled the scene. The police found the snood and a cigarette butt you had discarded, which were later linked to you forensically, but you were identified on the night by a JESCC officer so you were arrested a few hours later. You were under the influence of alcohol. They searched the property where they found you and they found your phone in flight mode. There was an incriminating message on it.

At interview you largely exercised your right to silence but you did say that you could not remember anything of the previous night.

The assistant has not provided a Victim Impact Statement for fear of reprisals which is indicative in itself of a level of fear. We assess her body language on the CCTV as showing fear and we also have the description from the man in the shop and the comments of the shop owner who was shocked and reported that your victim was shaken and fearful that something like this could happen again.

You are a local 40 year old man. You had been working as a fisherman. You have a child and grandchild in England.

You have a number of previous convictions which include violence, theft, public order, breaches of orders and drugs. You received a sentence of 5 years and 3 months from this Court in 2009 for importation of Class A drugs. Your most recent convictions are in 2024 for shoplifting for which you received custodial sentences of 1 month.

You have been remanded in Custody since your arrest on 8 March 2025.

Sentencing Considerations

Robbery is an offence which strikes at the very heart of this community and which must remain as rare as it is. Whilst the English Sentencing Guidelines are a helpful guide especially to aggravating and mitigating factors, this Court sentences offences of violence such as robbery on Guernsey considerations with a substantial deterrent element. That approach was endorsed by the Guernsey Court of Appeal in a number of cases including in the case of Ryder v Law Officers 2009-10 GLR 293.

We set the initial starting point before aggravating and mitigating factors at 4½ years.
There are such factors in your case:

- there was a lone shop assistant at night in her place of work where she was entitled to feel safe;
- there is the use of a weapon, a knife, which you used to threaten violence. It was a bread knife. It posed a clear threat to the shop assistant and to anyone who got in your way;
- you were under the influence of alcohol;
- whilst it is a mitigating factor that the attempt was not sophisticated, there is the aggravating factor of planning, the wearing of the home-made snood, the carrying of a knife and a bag for the money and your telephone left in flight mode to hide your whereabouts;
- there is also the impact on the other shop assistants; and
- you have previous convictions for theft and violence, the two elements of robbery, robbery being an escalation of theft.

We do take account of the fact that the offence is an attempt rather than the full offence and that you were prevented from carrying out your plan by the quick thinking actions of the assistant who pressed the alarm and the man who pretended to call the police. That said, you had completed all preparatory steps and the offence was very near completion. Importantly, the element of threat of violence had already occurred by the waving of the knife.

We set the revised starting point before consideration of plea and personal mitigation at 6½ years.

Mitigation

Plea

The court must first consider the impact of your guilty plea on sentence. We note that it was indicated before the forensic results had been received. The evidence against you was overwhelming but nonetheless we afford you full discount.

Personal Mitigation

The court has considered carefully the helpful Social Enquiry Report prepared in respect of you. We have also listened to the realistic and well structured submissions of your Advocate.

It is to your credit that you have not sought to minimise the seriousness of what you have done. We note that at the time of the offending you were homeless and without an income and, as Advocate Steel said, at rock bottom. You have limited support in Guernsey. We note that you are hoping to move to the United Kingdom to be near family.

We take full account of your traumatic childhood and difficulties within your own family, the latter because of drug use. We note that you have managed to stop using drugs which is a great achievement. Your problem at the time of offending was alcohol and you say that you are ready to engage with help to continue your abstinence since your arrest, since which time you have been in prison. This is to your credit. You are also getting therapy to help with your historical traumatic experiences and to help with emotional regulation.

We have read very carefully your letter to your victim. You express what we believe is genuine sorrow which is very much to your credit and your Advocate has emphasised your remorse and shame.

You are assessed as having a very high risk of general re-offending and a medium risk of serious harm to the public which could escalate to high risk if you continue to misuse alcohol. We must take this into account.

Sentence

You have sensibly accepted that you will be going to prison today. In Ryder it was said that offences of violence would invariably be met with heavy immediate custodial sentences unless the most exceptional mitigating circumstances were present. Those factors in your case are absent. A sentence of imprisonment is necessary to mark the seriousness of the offending and to protect the public from you. In view of the length of the sentence which the court has in mind, alternatives to immediate custody could not be considered. We have taken into account the time served on remand.

Mr Rowe, you are right in your letter to your victim, to say that she must have been “so scared” – that is putting it lightly. Your victim and all shop workers are entitled to feel safe in their workplaces and not fear that they will be either threatened or hurt with a knife. The people of Guernsey do not expect and do not want this sort of offending. Your advocate has assured us that you will use your time in custody productively and we urge you to do so.

Taking into account all that has been said and written and applying the appropriate discounts and principles, the sentence will be one of immediate custody of 3 years and 6 months with effect from 8 March 2025.

Supervision

In accordance with section 1 of the Criminal Justice (Supervision of Offenders) (Bailiwick of Guernsey) Law, 2004, upon release (or completion of any parole period if applicable), you will be subject to supervision by the Probation Service for a period equal to one quarter of the total sentence or the period you would have served had you not received remission, whichever is the shorter. If you fail to comply with the conditions of the supervision, you will be liable to further imprisonment, a fine, or both.

We commend the quick and resourceful actions of the man in the shop and the bravery and presence of mind of the assistant who pressed the alarm and involved that man. We also commend the good forensic work carried out by the police.

I repeat that the total sentence for you is one of imprisonment of 3½ years from 8 March 2025.

Catherine Maureen Fooks
Judge of the Royal Court

26 September 2025