

Unlawful importation of 16.15g cannabis into Guernsey by a non-local defendant with prior convictions; sentenced to 12 months' imprisonment suspended for 2 years and fined £1,000, with substantial mitigation considered. The Court emphasised adherence to Court of Appeal guidelines, noted personal use, clean record since 2017, and that the case is not a precedent.

[2025]GRC100

**ROYAL COURT
FULL COURT**

19 December 2025

**Before: John Russell Finch, Esq., O.B.E., Lieutenant Bailiff
and Jurats:
Claire Helen Le Pelley, Stuart Michael Crisp,
Tina Jane Le Poidevin, Simon Ernest Bodkin, Ian Michael Brown, Kay Parnwell
and Sally-Ann David.**

THE LAW OFFICERS OF THE CROWN

- v -

CHRISTOPHER PHILIP CROWLEY

Advocate J D McVeigh appeared for the Crown

Advocate S E Steel appeared for the Defendant

LIEUTENANT BAILIFF:

Background

You appear here today for sentence on an Indictment containing one Count, namely the unlawful importation of the Class B controlled drug cannabis. The maximum penalty is 21 years' imprisonment.

You are a non-local man, who was visiting the Island. You were 44 at the time of the offence and 45 now. You have a list of previous convictions and there are two entries to note: possession of a Class C controlled drug in 2010; and possession of the Class A controlled drug, crack cocaine, in 2013. You have other convictions, including criminal damage, battery, assault and making off without paying. Your last criminal conviction was in 2017.

You were arrested on 25 August 2025, the Prosecution elected trial here and you were sent for trial on 24 September 2025 when a guilty plea was entered and the case was adjourned until today for sentence. You have been on bail throughout and there is a £15,000 security.

The facts of the case are straightforward enough. You arrived with another person from Poole. There was a strong smell of cannabis in your car so unsurprisingly, there was a search. You were asked several times if there was anything to declare and said 'no'. You denied using controlled drugs. On being told there was a smell of cannabis you replied it was not a controlled drug. You did say you had a grinder, which the officer could probably smell. You denied having any cannabis in the car or upon your person. Upon searching, the drug was found – total 16.15 grams with a Guernsey street-value between £646 and £807.50. You stated in

interview that back in Bournemouth the Police don't do anything about cannabis there. You self-medicated with cannabis. You indicated that you did not believe there were Customs in Guernsey. You referred to decriminalization in England. There was 0.02 grams of cannabis on your grinder.

Sentencing Considerations

Your Advocate has done a large number of drugs cases. There are, he will have told you, binding guidelines from our Court of Appeal on drug cases such as this. We are obliged to follow those guidelines. It is not a question of this Court making-up its own. For importation of cannabis up to the amount 2 kgs, the starting-point commences at 3 years.

Mitigation

There is a good deal of mitigation to consider:

- 1) early guilty plea, although the evidence was strong;
- 2) on the facts an amount for personal use, although not miniscule; the amount is not insignificant;
- 3) a poor record, but since 2017 you have kept out of trouble. You also work for a living and are in a stable relationship. We have carefully taken note of the Probation Report and your supporting documents.

We have also taken full account of your Advocate's submissions on your behalf.

Sentence

Each case falls to be decided on its own merits. The Prosecution are right to mention your initial denials of possession and we point out that whatever action the UK authorities may take, this is still an offence there and has not been decriminalized.

We do not consider this falls into the class of serious importation, normally commercial, which we regularly deal with here.

We note your clean record since 2017. You did drop yourself in the cart with your answers when stopped. We also repeat that you are working and note that you appear to have grappled pretty successfully with a serious drink problem.

This is not a guideline case and we stress very clearly that it is not one which is a precedent for anything, apart from the fact each case is to be dealt with, as we have said, on its own facts.

You have been foolish and put yourself in serious danger of going down. Today we sentence as follows, bearing in mind that in this particular case, there is much mitigation and we deal with plenty of cases where there isn't.

The sentence is:

- 12 months' imprisonment suspended for 2 years;
- Fine of £1,000, 50 days in default, payable forthwith;
- Destruction Order for the cannabis.

You know all about suspended sentences so please don't try anything like this again and the rest of the security to be returned less the £1,000 which is payable immediately.

J R Finch, O.B.E.
Lieutenant Bailiff
19 December 2025