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IN THE COURT MARTIAL

held at

MILITARY COURT CENTRE, CATTERICK

on the

28th day of January 2026

in the case of

Mr Ian Thomas Jones

JUDGE ADVOCATE

Judge Legard

Assistant Judge Advocate General

SENTENCING REMARKS

JUDGE ADVOCATE: Ian Jones, remain seated please. You fall to be sentenced today in respect of five separate charges of indecent assault and three further charges of indecency with a child following your conviction on each of those charges after a trial.

You are now 79 years of age, you are a man of hitherto good character. Before I summarise the facts, I am going to make a few general observations about this case. Every teacher, especially those of young children, occupies a unique and critical position of trust in relation to them. Parents place their children in their care in the inviolable expectation that their loved ones will be both safe and secure

at all times, and that that bond of trust will never be broken. The responsibility of a teacher goes well beyond simply the educational development of the child. It encompasses both their welfare and their emotional wellbeing. The classroom is the one place where a young girl or boy is entitled to feel safe and secure. Your actions perpetrated over 40 years or so ago upon these three young vulnerable girls represent a profound and irreparable breach of trust and it brings shame not only upon you and upon your wider family but also upon the profession to which you once belonged. Instead of providing loco parentis care you used your position to target, to groom and then sexually abuse these then young children. And what you did to these young girls was both unconscionable and unforgivable.

The key facts that underpin these charges can be briefly summarised as follows. At the material time, the early 1980s, you were a teacher employed by the Ministry of Defence at Bishops Park School in Paderborn, Germany. Now, Bishops Park was a primary or first school for children of those then serving in the British Armed Forces. You were the class teacher to each of these three victims who were then young girls aged between seven to eight years of age. It is of note that none of these three victims were friends as such and none of them maintained any form of contact with one another over the intervening years and indeed were wholly unaware as to the identity of their fellow complainants until trial.

You singled out [name 1 redacted], you made her your stockroom monitor and you made sure she received preferential treatment, all classic hallmarks of grooming behaviour. And having done so you repeatedly abused her inside that same stockroom. The stockroom was a small, shelved space off the classroom used for the storage of stationery items and similar. It was separated from the classroom by a door and on numerous occasions you forced her to touch your penis, charge 1. You touched her on or around her vaginal area, charge 2. And on one specific occasion you penetrated her vagina with your finger causing it to bleed, charge 3. You also abused [name 2 redacted], inside that same stockroom by repeatedly making her expose herself whilst you masturbated, charge 4. By making her insert a pen into her vagina, charge 5 and, on a specific occasion within the caretaker's house in the playground area, by masturbating in front of her after she had exposed herself at your request, charge 6. And, finally, you subjected [name 3 redacted], formerly [name 3 redacted], to repeated sexual touching in the classroom while she sat beside you, charge 7, and also within the same caretaker building, charge 8.

Your story, namely that you had a perfectly normal teacher/pupil relationship with all of those under your care and that each of these three individuals were either lying or mistaken when naming you as their assailant - well that story was, in light of their compelling evidence, comprehensively and unsurprisingly rejected by the Board. Mr Peters has read out a victim impact statement from [name

3 redacted] and [name 2 redacted] and I have listened with care to [name 1 redacted], then [name 1 redacted], as she has delivered her victim personal statement in open court before me today. All women now in their 50s and I have listened to each and every one of them not only with great care but with profound sadness. Although this offending may have occurred many decades ago its impact has not diminished with time. Each of these now adult victims have carried and will no doubt continue to carry the consequences of your actions throughout their respective lives. I sincerely hope that these proceedings today may provide a degree of closure for each of these three victims or, if not, at least help them begin what, for some, may still be a long road to recovery. I wish to commend each and every one of them for the courage that they have shown by coming to court and telling their respective stories.

I do not propose to rehearse the contents of each of these somewhat haunting but eloquent personal statements within the context of these sentencing remarks. The contents of those statements speak for themselves, but I will briefly summarise one or two key points that emerge from the same. So, [name 1 redacted], who delivered her statement orally with great courage and dignity before the Court today. Amongst other things she speaks of the guilt, the shame, the worthlessness and the fear that she felt and continues to experience. Her heart, she says, aches for that little girl travelling on a school bus each day. The negative impact upon her in having to give evidence, revisit the scene and indeed the times of this abuse cannot be overstated. As is all too common in such cases her feeling of worthlessness led to weight gain and a deterioration in her mental health. She suffered loss of confidence, nightmares, hypervigilance, flashbacks. She describes the ripple effects of your abuse affecting those close to her. But to her credit, and in spite of everything, [name 1 redacted] has managed to rebuild her life and is now a safeguarding lead in a primary school. The following is a quote from one of her concluding paragraphs:

“What happened to me cannot be undone, the impact of it has been lifelong. It has shaped my health, my confidence, my relationships, my sense of safety and my beliefs about my own worth.”

For [name 1 redacted] the emotional and physical trauma was no less severe, and she dealt with in the only way she could by locking it away in the deepest recess of her memory where it remained buried for many years. But like others, or like the others, she was a young vulnerable child, confused and frightened by what you did, she was wholly unable and unequipped to process or make sense of it. She describes being robbed by you of her childhood innocence which in turn led to difficulties in forming mature relationships and it caused her, at one low point in her life, to contemplate suicide. She recalls the moment in 2001 when she suffered a flashback which she describes as devastating and

life altering. For some inexplicable reason (for which you are not to blame) the Service Police failed to act upon her initial complaint for a significant period. But [name 1 redacted] has lived with constant guilt, that her silence and her inability to come forward may have placed, she believes, other girls in harm's way. She further delayed her complaint in order to protect her dying father. She speaks of her deep sense of shame and humiliation and how she cannot help but feel in some way responsible for what happened to her even though of course she was and is entirely blameless.

And, finally, [name 3 redacted] as she was then then, was arguably the most vulnerable of all your victims. From an educational perspective she was clearly the weakest of the three girls. There is no doubt in my mind that you deliberately preyed upon her weakness. [name 3 redacted] has had on any objective view a most troubling childhood and adult life. But again, it is abundantly clear to me that the abuse she suffered at your hands as a young girl was a major contributory factor in terms of defining the pattern and the trajectory of her later life. I do not attribute each and every one of her mental health conditions, her PTSD, her depression, her agoraphobia and so forth, to you and you alone. Clearly that would be neither appropriate nor fair. But it was the abuse that she suffered as a young girl in Germany that set her on this path and which allowed others to recognise her vulnerability and victimhood and take advantage of her. In essence it was the trauma she experienced at your hands that lies at the root of many of her continuing difficulties.

Now, before I proceed to sentence I remind myself of the approach I must take when sentencing for what are now historical or non-recent offences and, in doing so, I have considered the guidance that is set out in the case of *R v Ahmed* reported in [2023] EWCA Crim 281. Any sentence I pass must be in accordance with the regime applicable at the date of sentencing not the regime which was in force at the time of the offending, but any sentence must be limited to the maximum sentence available at the time. So I should therefore have regard to applicable guideline what equivalent sentences under the 2003 Act. The seriousness of the offence assessed by reference to culpability of the offender and the harm caused or intended remain the principal considerations for the Court. Where there has been a significant passage of time between the offending and the conviction an absence of further offending over that time may be treated as a mitigating factor in combination with good character. That said, the more serious the offending the less the weight that should normally be attributed to that factor. In this case, of course, there is no suggestion that you were particularly young or immature at the time. Indeed the contrary is true. You cannot and will not of course receive any credit for a guilty plea.

This is a Court Martial, but the Judge Advocate General's guidelines are of limited assistance in such a serious case as this although I will adopt the stepped approach as set out within that guidance.

Therefore, in determining an appropriate sentence in your case, I first turn to the relevant guidelines published by the Sentencing Council. I deal first with charge 1. It is a multiple incident charge of indecent assault carrying a maximum sentence of five years' imprisonment. On the facts of this case, I agree with Mr Peters that an equivalent offence today would be causing or inciting a child under 13 to engage in sexual activity pursuant to section 8 of the 2003 Act. Now, had that been the case I am satisfied that it would have fallen squarely within category 2A. Category 2 harm on the basis that these were sustained multiple incidents perpetrated against a particularly vulnerable child and category A culpability due to the grooming behaviour and the egregious abuse of trust. Ordinarily therefore had this matter been charged today and you being convicted thereon it would have led to a start point of eight years' custody with a range of between five and ten years.

Charge 2 is a further multiple incident charge of indecent assault likely have been charged today as sexual assault of a child under the age of 13. For the same reasons a category 2A offence, category 2 harm on account of the touching of naked genitalia and the vulnerability of the child and category A culpability for the same reasons as above. Ordinarily therefore a start point of four years' custody with a range between three and seven years.

Charge 3 although a single incident involved digital vaginal penetration and therefore represents arguably the most serious of the charges against this victim and, if charged today, likely an assault of a child under 13 by penetration. I am prepared, notwithstanding the vulnerability of the victim, to place this within category 3 for harm albeit at the top end and it is clearly a category A culpability case. So, a start point of six years' custody, a range of four to nine.

Charge 4, a charge in connection with [name 2 redacted], a charge of indecency with a child at the time carries a maximum two years' imprisonment. This is also a multiple incident charge. Again, I agree with counsel for the Crown that, if charged today, it is likely to have been charged as engaging in sexual activity in the presence of a child and to fall within category 2A. Category 2 harm because it involved masturbation and culpability A for the same reasons as I have given. That would provide for a start point of two years' custody a range of one to three.

Charge 5 also charged under the then applicable law as indecency with a child but, in so far as this victim is concerned, clearly the most serious as it involved forcing or encouraging her to penetrate her vagina with a pen. If charged today that would almost certainly be charged as causing or inciting a child under 13 to engage in sexual activity and it would fall within category 2 for harm on account of the penetrative element and category A culpability leading to a start point of eight years' custody with a range of five to ten.

Charge 6 is a further charge of indecency with a child forcing a child to expose herself whilst you masturbated in front of her. Likely to be charged today as engaging in sexual activity in the presence of a child pursuant to section 11 of the 2003 Act. And for similar reasons to the above it would be a category 2A offence given this involved masturbation and abuse of trust leading to a start point of two years and a range of one to three.

Charge 7 is a charge of indecent assault against [name 3 redacted]. This is a multiple incident charge involving repeated sexual touching of [name 3 redacted] under her dress. If charged today likely to be sexual assault of a child under 13 and again would fall squarely within category 2A. Category 2 harm because it was sustained, these were multiple incidents and this individual particularly vulnerable. Category A culpability due to the abuse of trust, a feature common to all of your offending. That would have given rise to a start point of four years with a range of up to seven years' custody.

And, finally, charge 8, a further multiple incident charge of indecent assault of, in this case, sexual touching in the caretaker's house. Again, if charged today it would be charged as sexual assault of a child under 13 and for the same reasons as above a category 2A case with a start point of four years' custody and a range of between three and seven years.

There are no specific service factors justifying any further adjustment. These are, to all intents and purposes, civilian offences committed in a civilian environment and context. Taking care not to double count in respect of those matters which determine categorisation I next consider what, if any, features there are which serve to aggravate these offences. In my view the single, albeit significant, matter which serves to further increase sentence from those notional start points is the fact that on the evidence you clearly did take steps to prevent or discourage each of these three girls from reporting the abuse.

I turn now to mitigation. Now, on the last occasion I adjourned sentence in order for a pre-sentence report to be commissioned in part to assess the risk of further offending by you. I have now received and read that very full report. I am grateful to Miss Minchin for it. I note that you continue to maintain your denials and you have demonstrated, in my judgement, limited victim empathy or understanding of the harm suffered by the young girls, now women, that you abused and especially and notwithstanding your counsel's comments towards [name 1 redacted]. I am somewhat troubled but not entirely surprised by the absence of any remorse and the lack of awareness of the harm that your actions have had. You are assessed as presenting a low risk of re-conviction and a medium risk of serious harm to members of the public.

In further mitigation I have also taken into account all that has been very ably expressed on your behalf by Mr Fitch-Holland. You have much to thank him for. He has brought to my attention a number of important matters; the difficulties that you will encounter in prison, the impact upon your family most especially your wife, your various health conditions. He also emphasises your good character and especially the fact that you have been subject to police intervention and investigation in connection with these matters over the better part of 30 years. And I do give you credit for the fact that you are of hitherto good character and have lived a blameless life for some 40-odd years. Amongst other things Mr Fitch-Holland speaks of your charitable enterprises in those intervening years. However, the overall weight that I attach to that in light of the seriousness of these offences is and must be somewhat limited. It also needs to be set against the fact that whilst you have enjoyed your liberty and all that goes with it for 40-odd years your victims have continued with their suffering.

But I note that you have a number of physical and indeed mental challenges and that you will inevitably find prison a challenge. I am not blind to the issues of overcrowding nor the constraints that are place upon a prisoner's wellbeing. And I have also taken into account letters written by your wife, your children and others. They all speak very positively of you, and their words have had an important influence on my sentence. The impact of your offending, Mr Jones, will inevitably impact severely upon your wife and family but unfortunately all actions have consequences, and it is often a sad aspect of a case like this that it is those least culpable that end up suffering the most. But in any event, all those factors I have mentioned serve to direct the pendulum in the opposite direction.

Mr Jones, would you please stand? Thank you.

Having considered the matter with care I have concluded even allowing for your age and health that these offences are each so serious that only an immediate custodial sentence can be justified. On charge 1 the least possible sentence I can impose having regard to the seriousness of the offence is one of four years' imprisonment. Had you been sentenced under the current applicable regime the sentence is likely to have been one of nine years when accounting for both aggravation and mitigation. I am of course constrained by the maximum available at the time, namely five years, and taking into account all the matters I have identified I have concluded that an appropriate sentence is one of four years' imprisonment. On charge 2 a sentence of three years' imprisonment and on charge 3, the most serious of these three charges and therefore in my judgement the headline charge in so far as [name 1 redacted] is concerned, there will be a sentence of five years' imprisonment. And because I am treating charge 3 as the headline charge for [name 1 redacted] then I am justified in going to the top of the applicable range then available.

On charge 4 there will be a sentence of 18 months' imprisonment and on charge 5, again the most serious of the charges in so far as [name 2 redacted] is concerned and therefore the headline charge for that particular victim, a sentence of two years' imprisonment, again at the top of the applicable range. Had you been convicted today of a similar charge your sentence would have been one of eight years' imprisonment on that charge alone. On charge 6 there will be a sentence of 18 months imprisonment.

On both charges 7 and 8, repeated sexual touching of [name 3 redacted], there will be sentences of four years' imprisonment on each charge. Again, had you been sentenced in accordance with the present legislation those sentences would have been in the region of five and half years.

Now, my next step is to weigh the sentence and determine whether I should pass concurrent or consecutive sentences. My usual practice when sentencing for multiple offences is to pass concurrent sentences but where there is a single victim. On the facts of this particular case however where there are three separate victims and where the offending has taken place over a prolonged period of time I consider it appropriate and proportionate to pass concurrent sentences for each set of charges that relate to a particular victim but consecutive sentences in respect of each victim. It follows that the sentences on charges 1 and 2 will run concurrently with charge 3. The sentences in respect of charges 4 and 6 concurrently with the sentence on charge 5. And the sentence on charge 7 concurrently with that on charge 8. However, the sentences on charges 3, 5 and 8 will run consecutively to one another. That makes a total sentence of imprisonment of 11 years. I have then taken a step back in order to ensure that the total sentence I am about to pass is both and just and proportionate and one which reflects the totality of your offending, takes full account of all matters advanced in mitigation. Having done so I reduce the sentence to one of 10 years' imprisonment, and I achieve that by further reducing the sentence on charge 3 to four years.

So, your total sentence, Mr Jones, is one of 10 years' imprisonment. It is the shortest possible sentence commensurate with the seriousness of these offences and is significantly less than that which I originally had in mind. You have much to thank Mr Fitch-Holland for. Pursuant to section 130 of the 2022 Act you will serve up to two thirds of that ten year sentence in custody. You will then serve the remainder on licence. You must keep to the terms of your licence and commit no further offence, or you will be liable to be recalled, and you may then serve the rest of your sentence in custody. And I sincerely hope you take advantage of any rehabilitative measures available to you in prison specifically any sexual offender treatment programming. In light of that sentence I have just passed I decline to make any compensation order. And, finally, I certify that you have been convicted of sexual

offences and you will be subject to the notification requirements on an indefinite basis and you will be informed of those requirements in a certificate which you will be handed after this hearing which you must sign and you may be placed also on relevant bar lists. May I now please ask the escorts to stand?

MR PETERS: Your Honour, there is one matter.

JUDGE ADVOCATE: Yes?

MR PETERS: I did look at this --

JUDGE ADVOCATE: Take a seat, Mr Jones.

MR PETERS: And I believe that given the provisions, it is quite a lengthy route to get there but I believe the time served is half.

JUDGE ADVOCATE: Is that correct?

MR PETERS: Yes.

JUDGE ADVOCATE: Yes, in fact I think you are right because I think this error was picked up by the Court of Appeal was it not on a recent case where there was indecent assault. Absolutely you are quite right, Mr Peters.

MR PETERS: I was not aware of that case, but I looked at the provisions. I did not put it in my note but yes.

JUDGE ADVOCATE: There is a recent case, a relatively recent case. Thank you very much for bringing that to my attention and it is quite right. Mr Jones, I was wrong. You will not be serving two thirds, you will be serving up to one half of that sentence of imprisonment before you are released. But the licence provisions remain the same. Do you understand? Okay. So, the escorts please, could you please come up and your responsibility to escort Mr Jones safely and securely into custody please. Could you do so now? Mr Jones would you please go with the escorts.

(The defendant leaves the courtroom.)

JUDGE ADVOCATE: And I would just like to thank counsel for your assistance and indeed to all those present in court on both sides, if I can put it that way, and for those watching these proceedings for your patience and your decorum. Are there any other matters?

MR PETERS: No thank you.

MR FITCH-HOLLAND: No thank you.

JUDGE ADVOCATE: Then I will rise. Thank you.