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**IN THE COURT MARTIAL**

held at

**MILITARY COURT CENTRE, CATTERICK**

on the

**23<sup>rd</sup> day of April 2026**

in the case of

**REX**

V

**30363891 Craftsman Liam George ASHWORTH**

**22 Signal Regiment**

**JUDGE ADVOCATE**

Judge Mitchell

Assistant Judge Advocate General

**SENTENCING REMARKS**

JUDGE ADVOCATE: Thank you, please be seated. Service personnel retain service headdress. We have considered the sentencing guidelines relating to the offences for which you have been convicted. We have also considered Version VII of the Judge Advocate General's Sentencing Guidance, the overarching sentencing guideline relating to totality and the character references and the pre-sentence report.

Craftsman Liam George Ashworth, you have been in his Majesty's Service for 3 years and 253 days. You are 22 years old and aside from your conviction for the offences, which you are to be sentenced, you were previously convicted in 2024 of the offence of driving a motor vehicle with excess alcohol.

You have been convicted after trial before the Court Martial of four serious sexual offences, that is sexual assault, rape and two offences of sexual assault by penetration. You were 21 when you committed those offences.

On the night of 2 December 2024, whilst disinhibited by drink and whilst in a kitchen in a general area of quarters you tried to force [name redacted] to her knees because you wanted sexual contact with her there and then. [Name redacted] tried to extricate herself from that situation and separate herself from you, but you pursued her. She made it clear on route to her room that she wanted you to leave her alone, but you would not take, "No", for an answer. You sustained your pursuit to her door and entered her block before the door had chance to close.

You made your way to her room and given your persistence whether or not you let yourself in, maybe beside the point. By their verdicts the Board was sure that by the time you raped her, you forced her and pressured her to submit to not only that act but also the penetration of her vagina with your tongue and your fingers.

The level of penile penetration matters not as the law makes clear, particularly when one takes that into account with the other forms of penetration that you accepted. [Name redacted] said, "No", on each occasion. You knew she was not consenting because of what she said and the way that she behaved when you touched her and that is why you apologised afterwards.

Your assault lasted some time in that taken as a course of conduct that conduct started in one building and concluded in another. The assault in [name redacted] room had several sexual and deeply personal elements, and each offence aggravates the other. To that extent this phase of your offending can also properly be described as sustained.

She was vulnerable because she had nowhere else to run, she was in her own room. We have no doubt that your actions caused her severe psychological harm both mentally and emotionally. Taking your victim as you found her, that is someone with pre-existing mental injuries, we have no doubt that you made those injuries a good deal worse. [Name redacted] harmed herself that much is clear from the victim personal statement that she has read to us.

Taking this combination of factors together, we have no doubt that the harm you caused is properly classified within category 2 of the rape sentencing guideline. It was significantly more than that which is inherent in a case of this kind.

We equally have no doubt that your culpability that is your blameworthiness as agreed falls within category B. The starting point within category 2B of the rape guideline is 8 years imprisonment for the offence of rape alone with a range of 7 to 9 years. Your offences are also aggravated by the fact that you were well under the influence of alcohol and that led to the catastrophic error of judgement to engage in behaviour that is beyond reprehensible.

Your case is mitigated by the absence of serious previous conviction. It is also mitigated by your previous good service and your character references. It may well be said that these offences were well and truly out of character and significantly different from your usual behaviour towards women but that is no comfort at all to [name redacted].

Perhaps most significantly your case is mitigated by your youth. That point is perhaps diluted to some extent in the military court. You were, despite your age, a capable service person and entrusted with a responsible job within the defence of the realm. It is a tragedy that it comes to this, for all concerned but when you did this, you might have been young, but you were fully responsible for your actions.

We remind ourselves of the words of the Judge Advocate General:

“Service personnel have little choice where and with whom they serve. They may live in close confines with only a curtain, or if on operations, nothing separating them from others. They may share facilities including ablutions and social spaces. They work, eat and socialise together. Sexual offending undermines the bond of trust which must exist between those who serve together. It affects morale, and ultimately operational effectiveness.”

Overall, given everything we take the view that the appropriate sentence after trial is one of 7 years imprisonment. That is the lower point of the available bracket and a substantial reduction on the sentence that would have been passed if you were older.

That sentence will be served immediately, subject to an appropriate reduction for the time already spent in custody. This sentence serves all the appropriate sentencing aims including deterrence. You will serve a portion of that sentence in custody and the balance on licence. If you breach the terms of your licence, or commit any further offence within the licence period, you can be returned to prison.

The sentence will therefore be constructed as follows: on Charge 2 the sentence is 2 years' imprisonment. On Charge 4, the sentence is 7 years' imprisonment. On Charge 5 the sentence is 5 years' imprisonment. On Charge 6 the sentence is 5 years' imprisonment. Those sentences will be served immediately and concurrently.

I turn then to dismissal, you committed serious sexual offences against a fellow service member, the requirement for dismissal is obvious and conceded. In forming this opinion, we have taken into account all the information available to us about the circumstances of these offences. Including the aggravating and mitigating factors and what we understand to be the inevitable financial effects on your livelihood and any pension that you may have accrued. You will therefore be dismissed from his Majesty's service.

Notification, given that you will serve a sentence of imprisonment that exceeds 30 months you will be subject to notification requirements for life. The effect of that will be made clear to you by written notice shortly. Mr President would you please announce the sentence, thank you.

### **SENTENCE**

PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD: Craftsman Liam George Ashworth:

On Charge 2 the sentence is 2 years' imprisonment.

On Charge 4 the sentence is 7 years' imprisonment.

On Charge 5 the sentence is 5 years' imprisonment.

On Charge 6 the sentence is 5 years' imprisonment.

Those sentences will be served concurrently. Further you will be dismissed from His Majesty's Service.