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THE SUPREME COURT OF

THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

SCC 22433348

THE KING

and

JEFFREY HANSON

(Sentence)

KELLY J

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

AT DARWIN ON MONDAY 26 OCTOBER 2026

Transcribed by:
EPIQ

HER HONOUR: Yes. Now, Mr Hanson, I am going to sentence you now, but you can stay sitting down while I do that because I need to talk to you about quite a few things. All right.

Jeffrey Hanson, you have pleaded guilty to four offences. One charge of causing damage to property (a glass window) belonging to JC. The maximum penalty for that is imprisonment for 10 years.

You have also pleaded guilty to one charge of entering a dwelling house at night-time in company with three other people, armed with a chair. The maximum penalty for this is imprisonment for life.

You have also pleaded guilty to one charge, of unlawfully assaulting JC made worse by two things; 1) JC suffered harm; and 2) JC was threatened with a long metal bar. The maximum penalty for this is imprisonment for 5 years.

And finally, you have pleaded guilty to one charge of stealing a carton of beer which was the property of JC. The maximum penalty for this is imprisonment for 10 years.

I am going to talk about what you did. The facts:

You are now 43 years old. You were 42 years old when you committed these offences. There are three unknown co-offenders. The victim in this matter is JC, an 81-year-old man. He was 79 years old when you committed the offences. He lived at an address in Mannion Street, Katherine and he lived alone.

At about 11 o'clock at night on 14 October 2024, the victim was asleep in his bedroom at his home. He was woken up by a loud bang. He called his daughter and told her to call the police because people were trying to break into his flat. His daughter lives in a flat opposite the father. The daughter looked outside towards the father's flat, and she saw four men smashing the front kitchen window.

She heard one of the men say, "You're only an old man." The daughter called police and she also asked them to send an ambulance. The victim walked into his dining room area and picked up a jack bar because he could hear his kitchen window being smashed. The victim walked into the kitchen, saw you breaking the window with a chair and you put a large hole in the glass.

One of the other men was also breaking the window. He was armed with a long crowbar. The victim was holding the jack bar. He told you, "Fuck off". You climbed through the smashed kitchen window, and you cut yourself on the glass. You stood on the kitchen bench and then you climbed down, by that time, you were armed with a long metal bar.

You hit the victim with the metal bar. You hit him on the arm in two places; on his right fingers and on his hand. While you were hitting the victim, another man climbed through the broken window. He was standing on the kitchen bench. The

victim was waving the jack bar around, trying to fend off you and your co-offenders and he told you all to leave. Then you hit the victim on the head with the long metal bar causing him to fall to the ground.

You opened the front door from the inside and let the other men in. You told one of the co-offenders to grab the carton of VB that was nearby and all four of you ran away with the carton of beer. You left the metal bar behind. A number of the neighbours heard the offending and saw the offending and called police.

One of the neighbours heard one of the offenders say before he went into the unit that “The man who lives in the house is old and it would be easy to go in and take as much as they could.”

Police arrived shortly after the 000 calls were placed. A crime scene was established, and they got the DNA profile from the swabs taken from where you cut yourself and it matched your DNA profile.

Photographic lineups were conducted with neighbours and they correctly identified you. You and your co-offenders were captured on police CCTV leaving the area carrying the carton of beer.

The victim noticed a large amount of blood coming from his head while he was on the ground after you and your co-offenders had left and he gave himself first aid. St John Ambulance arrived a little bit later and the victim was taken to Katherine District Hospital. As a result of the offending, he sustained a hairline fracture to the right frontal sinus, but without displacement. He also got a deep laceration to his forehead, it was 5-centimetres long, and suffered lacerations to his right arm and hand. They sutured up his forehead laceration, and I have seen the photographs, and it is a substantial cut. His other wounds were cleaned and dressed and he got some antibiotics. He was discharged the following day.

You were arrested on 13 September 2025 when you came to police attention in Mataranka for a different matter and you were taken into custody.

I have received a victim impact statement from JC. He describes his injuries and says he feels helpless and really down in the dumps about what happened to him. He says that he was worried that someone might break into his house again and that he needs bars on the windows.

He also talked about his financial loss due to the stolen beer and property damage and having to drive to hospital. And he said he wants you to go to prison for a long time. I am told that JC is now deceased, but that has nothing to do with this offending.

I am going to talk about you now.

You have a long criminal history in New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia and the Northern Territory which includes 16

findings of guilt for burglary or attempted burglary, three for armed robbery, one for simple robbery, four for assault, 30 for stealing or attempted stealing, three for property damage, six assorted dishonesty offences, such as obtaining property by deception, receiving or possessing stolen goods and money of that nature, six weapons offences, 11 drug offences, 23 traffic offences, trespass, public nuisance, providing false particulars to police.

You also have a history of breaching court orders, four prior findings for failing to answer bail in Victoria, one breaching bail in the Northern Territory and two breaches of suspended sentence in Western Australia and Victoria.

Your criminal history mostly consists of property and dishonesty offences, but there is also some violence. You were previously sentenced to, well significant terms of imprisonment including a sentence of 7 years' imprisonment with a 5-year non-parole period for a number of armed robberies in Victoria in 2009.

There have not been any significant gaps in your offending, although I am told that between 2020 and 2024, you were attempting to stay off the drugs and out of trouble in Central Australia while you were working on a cattle station.

You are not to be punished again for those other matters, but you do not come before the court as a person of prior good character, and you are not entitled to leniency as a youth, and you are not entitled to leniency as a first offender. You are a person, it appears, of settled criminal habits. The sentencing remarks from Victoria for the armed robberies indicate that 17 years ago, a court in Victoria assessed your risk of reoffending as high and that is despite you having completed a number of courses while you were in prison in Victoria, they assessed the need for community protection and also personal deterrence as important. And they said your prospects of rehabilitation at their highest is guarded and you have committed more offences since then in that intervening 17 years.

Your lawyer, Ms Wild, gave me some information about you and your background.

You were born in Ballarat, raised in outer Melbourne where you went to school. Your parents worked as factory workers. Apparently, there was alcohol and drugs in the house as you were growing up, but your parents looked after you and took care of you, and you have maintained a relationship with your parents and also, to some extent, with your older sister. You have one older sister.

You went to primary school at Narre Warren and then subsequently at a farm school at Doveton and then to Fountain Gate High School. I am told you were sexually abused by the vice principal when you were in Grade 3, but you did not disclose that to anyone until you were an adult. You say you were a troubled kid, even before that time. You had learning difficulties and struggled to read.

At the farm school which was meant for children with learning difficulties and behaviour difficulties, you spent four days a week on the farm and one in a regular

classroom, which as I said to your lawyer, seemed to me to be a strange response to a child with learning difficulties. You have a reading age of about Grade 4, I am told. You were expelled from High School and from there went to a vocationally oriented TAFE course.

You have an unfortunate history of drug addiction which partially explains your criminal history. I am told you began using cannabis in Grade 7 and not long after that, you started using heroin. By 14, you were a heroin addict and living on the streets. You committed crimes to obtain heroin, were imprisoned, then released and started using again and committing further crimes.

THE ACCUSED: I don't use any drugs anymore.

HER HONOUR: Good. You have never done rehabilitation, but you have done courses in prison both here and in Victoria. Your lawyer tells me you were in a relationship for 12 years and you have four children. You have since separated.

In 2020, you moved to Alice Springs, you say with the intention of living free from heroin and methamphetamine and you were successful at that for some time.

Living outside of Alice Springs, you got a job for the first time mustering and mending fences on a cattle station near the Western Australian border between Timber Creek and Karratha, I am told. You committed these offences when you travelled to Katherine to drop off a co-worker. While you were in Katherine, you started drinking alcohol a lot and taking prescription painkillers.

After you committed these offences, you went back to the station to work and then to Melbourne to visit your parents after your father had surgery and that explains the delay in your arrest, I take it. There would also have been some delay in processing the DNA results. While you have been in custody, you have completed the Safe Sober Strong program and Addictive Behaviours program.

The program facilitator has written a letter saying that you have provided some, what he describes as, great contributions throughout the programs, that you have developed a good understanding of the content, that you always turned up on time and you were always polite and respectful, which is very positive. Very positive and a credit to you. You have also completed the Hygiene and Allergy course with a view to getting work in the kitchen. I am told you are presently on protection in prison, which is making your time in prison more difficult. However, you do seem to be taking the opportunities that are offered to you in the prison.

I need to talk to you a bit about the things I have to think about in sentencing you. These are serious offences. I consider the unlawful entry to be above the midrange of seriousness for this type of offence. The victim was at home and vulnerable when you and the others entered his home armed and violent. Your actions violated his sense of safety and security in his own home. He was also a relatively elderly man, and it appears from the agreed facts that you deliberately targeted him for this reason, which is a cowardly thing to do.

And I know your lawyer says that your instructions are that you did not know how old he was. You might not have known his precise age, but in the agreed facts, it is quite clear that you and the others knew he was an elderly man and you hit that old man with a long metal bar, which I am told was part of a mop, a mop handle. It must have been a painful and terrifying experience for him.

Offences of aggravated burglary, assault and theft are particularly prevalent in the Northern Territory. Acts of random violence metered out in order to steal other people's property, especially cars and alcohol, and particularly against vulnerable victims in what should be the safety of their own homes causes considerable public concern. I emphasise punishment, denunciation, general and personal deterrence and community protection.

What that means is this, I have to send a strong message that the court and the community disapprove of this kind of violent offending, and I have to impose a sentence that will discourage you and other people from doing something like this again. You did not provide any assistance to the authorities. You have never provided the names of any of the co-offenders. Now, your lawyer gave an account about - - -

THE ACCUSED: I don't know them, your Honour.

HER HONOUR: Well, even the woman that you say that you went there with, according to your lawyer. I do not actually accept the story that you told through your lawyer about going there to buy alcohol and then suddenly coming across three Aboriginal men that you do not know in the carpark and deciding to break in.

THE ACCUSED: If I did give anybody - given a name, which I've given my lawyer - if I did give you a name, I probably wouldn't be going down for these charges because I knocked on his door, he answered the door, he took the money. I'm only pleading guilty just to get this over and done with fast, just to - I didn't take one carton, I took two cartons. But that's not the point of the story. The story is I'm remorseful of my actions and I understand where you're coming from. Yeah, I'm disgusted in myself, and my family is disgusted in me for this offence, you know. I feel shameful and guilt for what I've done. That's all I can really say.

HER HONOUR: No, that is fine that you said what you had to say. Unfortunately, I do not actually believe the story. You did plead guilty and I can give you a lesser sentence because of that. But I do not believe that you are remorseful. Your lawyer submitted you were and you said you feel guilt and remorse and perhaps you do, to a certain extent. But there was a very strong Crown case against you. They had your DNA at the scene and witnesses identified you.

Also, you ran away with the beer after the offending, leaving the victim on the floor bleeding from the head. You did not try to help him. So in my view, your guilty plea is simply an acceptance of the inevitable. Nevertheless, I am giving you a reduced sentence because of the utilitarian value of the plea. That means it was

useful. People did not have to be called as witnesses, the time and money is saved by not having to go to trial and you were entitled to a benefit from that, and I am going to reduce your sentence by 20 percent.

Okay. I am going to sentence you now.

On count 2, the aggravated burglary, I would have sentenced you to imprisonment for 6 years. Reducing that by 20 percent, you will be convicted and sentenced to imprisonment for 4 years and 10 months.

On count 3, that is the assault on JC, I would have sentenced you to imprisonment for 3 years. Reducing that by 20 percent, you will be convicted and sentenced to imprisonment for 2 years and 6 months; and 6 months of that is to be cumulative on the sentence for count 2.

On count 4, stealing the carton of VB, I would have sentenced you to imprisonment for 12 months. Reducing that by 20 percent, you will be convicted and sentenced to imprisonment for 10 months; 2 months of that is to be cumulative on the sentence for count 3.

On count 1, the property damage, if it were not for your guilty plea, I would have sentenced you to imprisonment for 12 months. Reducing that by 20 percent, you will be convicted and sentenced to imprisonment for 10 months; 6 months of that is to be cumulative on the sentence for count 4.

That brings your total sentence to 6 years. You were arrested on 13 September 2025, but in the intervening time, you served a sentence of 2 months for assault on a different person, a woman, on apparently 25 July 2025.

Now, your lawyer has asked me to direct some concurrence between this sentence, the one I am imposing and the 2 months, applying the totality principal. But I decline to do so.

The correct approach for me is to consider what sentence I would have imposed if I had been sentencing you for both matters at the same time. That offending was unrelated and the sentence imposed was short. Had I been sentencing you at the same time, I would have ordered total cumulation. I do not think that the total sentence will be crushing.

So your total sentence will be a sentence of imprisonment for 6 years beginning on 13 November 2025.

Your lawyer has urged me to fix the standard non-parole period of 3 years. The learned prosecutor has urged me to fix a longer non-parole period. In her submission, we are now at a point where a longer non-parole period is appropriate for community protection. The matter was premeditated. The victim suffered serious injuries, not serious harm, but serious injuries. You were the principal offender, and your prospects of rehabilitation must be assessed as rather dim.

I was in two minds about it. It does seem to me that there is some force in what the learned prosecutor has said. However, as both lawyers have submitted, community protection is best served by rehabilitation and you cannot be assessed as beyond hope yet, if you can give up the drugs and go back to work. You cannot be written off as hopeless. And it does seem to me that a longer period of supervision in the community, if you can get parole and if you cannot breach your parole, would be more beneficial. So I am going to fix the non-parole period at the standard 50 percent, which is 3 years, starting of course on 13 November 2025.

Did you want to say something else? You had your hand up.

THE ACCUSED: I was going to say, I think I'm better off supporting the community and I kinda want to go to rehab. I want to go to an Aboriginal community. I'm not going not reoffend when I get out, your Honour, I can tell you.

HER HONOUR: Well, I hope not. I really hope not. Anyway, that is the disposition.

Is there anything further from either counsel?

MS PREECE: No, your Honour.

MS WILD: No, your Honour.

HER HONOUR: All right. Well, thank you both for your help.

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