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THE SUPREME COURT OF
THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

SCC 22414661

THE KING

and

DYLAN DEAN

(Sentence)

BURNS J

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

AT DARWIN ON MONDAY 11 MAY 2026

Transcribed by:
EPIQ

HIS HONOUR: Dylan Dean, on 10 November 2025 you entered pleas of guilty to the following charges.

Count 1, an aggravated assault on 18 December 2022 on MA who hereafter I will refer to as the victim with the circumstances of aggravation being that the victim suffered harm and that she is a female and you are a male.

Count 2, a charge that on the same day, you being in a domestic relationship with the victim, intentionally choked, strangled or suffocated her without her consent.

Charge 3, charged that between 1 April and 1 July 2023 you unlawfully assaulted the victim in circumstances of aggravation, namely that she suffered harm, that she is a female and you are a male, and that she was threatened with an offensive weapon, namely a knife.

Count 4, a charge that between the same date you unlawfully assaulted the victim with the same circumstances of aggravation. The only difference being that on this occasion the offensive weapon was a machete.

Count 5, a charge that between the same dates you unlawfully assaulted the victim with the same circumstances of aggravation. The only difference being that on this occasion the offensive weapon was a gas blowtorch.

Count 6, a charge that between the same dates you unlawfully assaulted the victim in circumstances of aggravation being that she suffered harm and that she is a female and you are a male.

Count 7, a charge that between the same dates you, being in a domestic relationship with the victim, intentionally choked, strangled or suffocated her without her consent.

Count 8, a charge that between the same date dates you unlawfully assaulted the victim in circumstances of aggravation, namely that she suffered harm and that she is a female and you are a male.

Count 9, a charge that between 1 May and 31 May 2023 you unlawfully assaulted the victim in circumstances of aggravation, namely that she suffered harm. That she is a female and you are a male and that she was indecently assaulted.

Count 10, a charge that on 24 October 2023 you unlawfully assaulted the victim in circumstances of aggravation, namely that she suffered harm and that she is a female and you are a male.

Count 11, a charge that between 20 October and 31 October 2023 you unlawfully assaulted the victim in circumstances of aggravation, namely that she suffered harm and that she is a female and you are a male.

Count 12, a charge that between 1 October and 16 November 2023 you unlawfully assaulted the victim in circumstances of aggravation, namely that she suffered harm and that she is a female and you are a male.

Count 13, a charge that on 22 November 2023 you unlawfully assaulted the victim in circumstances of aggravation, namely that she suffered harm and that she is a female and you are a male.

And, finally, count 14, a charge that on 22 November 2023, you being in a domestic relationship with the victim, intentionally choked, strangled or suffocated her without her consent.

Each of the offences to which you have pleaded guilty carries a maximum penalty of five years' imprisonment.

An agreed statement of facts was tendered at your sentence hearing. You and the victim began an intimate partner relationship in September 2021 in Junee, New South Wales. The first stages of your relationship were loving and respectful. In November 2021 the victim fell pregnant to you with twins. The victim also has a now 14-year-old child by a previous relationship who I will refer to as AB.

In early 2022 you, the victim and AB moved to Moree in New South Wales. In April 2022 the victim suffered a miscarriage. She was 20 weeks through her pregnancy when this occurred. The stress of losing the twins saw you and the victim begin to consume significant quantities of alcohol and methamphetamine. You started emotionally and physically abusing the victim.

In July 2022 you, the victim and AB drove from Moree to Victoria. You then travelled on to South Australia. The relationship between yourself and the victim continued to deteriorate. In August 2022 you and the victim drove back to New South Wales to give care and responsibility of AB to the victim's sister. AB was given to the victim's sister at a truck stop on the Olympic Highway in New South Wales.

The victim felt she needed to do this because she did not think that AB was in a safe environment due to the physical and emotional abuse from you to her, that is to the victim. You and the victim then drove to Whyalla and then Cowell in South Australia remaining at those locations for several weeks respectively. The two of you then drove to the Northern Territory.

The car in which you were travelling broke down in Tennant Creek in September 2022. You and the victim then gained employment at the Goldfields Hotel and you commenced residing at the hotel as part of your employment agreement. In November 2022 the victim again fell pregnant to you. Early in the morning of 18 December 2022 you and the victim engaged in a lengthy argument in your room at the Goldfields Hotel.

You called the victim a slut and abused her by yelling at her that the child that she was pregnant with was not yours and continued to abuse the victim for being unable to safely deliver the twins that had died stillborn. During this the victim was sitting on the edge of the bed. You were seated on a recliner chair. You then stood up and punched the victim in the ribcage. The victim was winded and panicked.

You then kicked the victim to the ribs with your right foot with significant force. The victim started crying. You pinned the victim to the chair by placing your knees on her ribs and leaning your body weight of approximately 130 kilograms on her. You placed your hand on the victim's neck and squeezed such as that she was gasping for air.

You continued to strike and verbally abuse the victim claiming that you knew she would have spoken to her family. You picked up the victim's mobile phone. You asked for the victim's mother's mobile phone number and reduced your grip on the victim's neck to allow her to respond. The victim gave you her mother's number. You dared the victim to ask her parents for help.

You dialled the number with your free hand and increased the strength of the choking action with your other hand. You held the phone up to the victim who was gasping for air. The phone call went to message bank and a voice message was left capturing portions of the above. You then hung the phone up and threw it on the floor.

The victim walked into the shower. She could not lift up her arms to take off her shirt. You lifted up her shirt so she could shower. You helped the victim get changed and gave her two Panadol tablets. The victim sustained bruising and pain to her ribs. These are the facts of counts 1 and 2, charges of aggravated assault and choking in a domestic relationship respectively.

In December 2022 the victim resigned from the Goldfields Hotel. At a similar time you secured a job as a machine operator at Remote Concrete in Tennant Creek. Remote Concrete leased a house at [REDACTED] to you and the victim. You both moved into the premises in early 2023.

On a day in late April 2023 you came home on your lunchbreak. You were agitated and paranoid as you had not used methamphetamine in some time. You went through the victim's phone and questioned her as to who she had been talking to. You then abused her for not going outside and socialising normally with other people in town as they had been asking you questions about her as you believed she had disclosed your act of domestic violence towards her to others.

You then lunged at the victim and grabbed her by the upper body. You pushed her backwards against the pantry cupboard. You then picked up a Swiss Army Knife that was lying on a nearby shelf. You held the knife blade against the victim's jawline. You demanded the victim look at you.

You then spat on her face and released her. You asked the victim why she could not just be normal and socialise. The knife blade left a superficial laceration on the victim's skin measuring approximately 5 centimetres and produced a small amount of blood and caused the victim pain. These are the facts on count 2, a charge of aggravated assault.

On a day in late April 2023, you and the victim engaged in a lengthy argument. You repeatedly accused the victim of cheating on you with another man. You said that people around town had told you that she had slept with someone else. It is accepted that these allegations were incorrect but at the time genuinely believed by you. You also accused the victim of being in contact with her family.

The victim was sitting on the bedroom mattress. She stood up. You then walked over to pick up a long machete. You told the victim not to move and pointed it in her direction. You walked out of the room and came back with some duct tape. You placed the machete on a chest of drawers and taped her wrists together and placed duct tape over her mouth.

You then pushed the victim against the bedroom cupboard and held her in place. You raised the machete above your head and said, "Don't move." At this point MB, a friend of you and the victim, entered the property in [REDACTED]. You walked out of the bedroom to go and see him. The victim followed you. You turned around and told the victim not to move.

When MB entered the premises you then pointed the machete at him and said, "Stop there." MB was shocked and asked you what was going on. You told him to "fuck off" and to get him a point. MB left the premises. You then laughed and said, "Maybe I was wrong. Clearly he doesn't give a fuck about you."

You walked towards the victim with the machete. The victim backed away in fear. You then cut the duct tape that bound the victim's hand and removed the duct tape on her face. MB returned to the premises not long after with some methamphetamine. You then consumed some of those drugs by injection. These are the facts on count 4, a charge of aggravated assault.

On a day in June 2023 you and the victim were at home in Tennant Creek. You were repeatedly accusing the victim of cheating on you. You became angry and approached the victim who was standing in the kitchen. You grabbed the victim by the upper body and banged her head against the kitchen cupboard.

You picked up a yellow blowtorch that you use to smoke methamphetamine. You ignited the blowtorch and turned the nozzle to reduce the size of the flame. You then grabbed the victim and held the blowtorch closer to the left side of her face. You told the victim to shut up and to tell you the truth. You brought the flame closer and closer.

The flame did not touch the victim's face but she could feel an intense heat and it caused her extreme fear and pain. She could smell burning hair and her skin

blistered. Part of her hair, part of her left eyebrow and all of the eyelashes on her left eye were burned off. The victim was in significant pain. You tried to hug her and she said, "Don't touch me." You then apologised and hugged the victim. These are the facts on count 5, a charge of aggravated assault.

On a day in June 2023, you and the victim were together at the [REDACTED] address. You started to accuse the victim of cheating on you with LS, a friend and former colleague. You abused the victim for a lengthy period of time. The victim said, "I wish I bled out on the table the day I lost the boys."

Upon hearing this you approached the victim and cornered her in the loungeroom. You punched her several times in the chest and stomach. She used her arms so as to protect her pregnant stomach. The victim tried to run away. You grabbed her by the neck with your hands and squeezed it with force. The victim gasped for air.

She started to see stars and then was unconscious. When she regained consciousness she was on the ground and you were standing near the kitchen bench. You said, "Why do you have to say such dumb shit for? Is that how you really feel?" These are the facts on counts 6 and 7, charges of aggravated assault and choking in a domestic relationship.

On a day in June 2023 you arrived home to the [REDACTED] address in the afternoon after a day of work. You walked into the house and accused the victim of "fucking [REDACTED]" behind your back and you called her a slut. The victim walked into the ensuite of the bathroom to avoid confrontation.

When she left the bathroom she was punched once to her left eye and once to the left side of her face without any warning by you. As a result of this assault she suffered a black eye, cuts to her lip and the inside of her mouth and bleeding to the inside of her mouth.

That night you texted SG and asked him to attend at the [REDACTED] address. When he arrived not long after that a confrontation occurred between you and him. He denied having any sexual relations with the victim. These are the facts on count 8, a charge of aggravated assault.

On a day in May 2023, you and the victim were sitting in the loungeroom of your home at the [REDACTED] address. You and the victim were discussing an incident that occurred in 2019 whereby the victim was sexually assaulted in New South Wales.

You were telling the victim that you believed that she had cheated on you and did not believe that she had been sexually assaulted and that she merely regretted having sex with a black man. You became agitated and approached the victim who was seated on a chair at the dining table.

You then said that you would show her what it was like, have your way with her and, "Round up all the local black fellas to have them run though." You then used duct tape to tape the victim's hand to the armrests of the chair that she was sitting on. You said to the victim, "You're nothing but a slut. I know you're a slut so I'm going to treat you like a slut and suck my dick you slut."

You then grabbed her head and shoved it against your crotch area. You were wearing pants at the time. A short time later you retrieved a pair of scissors and cut the tape off the victim's hands. You both sat quietly for a long time.

On 2 July 2023 the victim gave birth to your son in Alice Springs. The child was named [REDACTED]. You, the victim and your child returned to Tennant Creek in July 2023.

In September 2023 the victim, you and your son moved to Ali Curung. You found work as a machine operator. The victim was employed by the same company to help with the cooking and cleaning on the worksite. You were both living in a 20-foot shipping container at an address in Ali Curung.

These are the facts on count 9, a charge of aggravated assault.

On 24 October 2023 you and the victim were engaged in a verbal argument whilst at the Ali Curung premises. You verbally abused the victim saying that she should be grateful for you and that she was useless. You then tore up several documents belonging to the victim. You then kicked her in the stomach and the right thumb. You were wearing steel cap boots at the time of the assault. The victim suffered significant pain to her thumb from this assault. She now has reduced feeling in her thumb.

These are the facts on count 10, a charge of aggravated assault.

On a day between 20 and 31 October 2023 the victim received a call from your mother DP. DP and the victim had spoken on the phone a few times in the lead up to this day. On those occasions the victim had told DP that your abuse was getting worse. On this day you were present in the Ali Curung premises with the victim when DP called.

You grabbed the victim's phone when you noticed it was ringing. You put the phone on speaker mode. DP asked whether it was safe to talk. You were angered by this comment and approached the victim. You took hold of her and threw her across the shipping container.

You then told DP that you were going to kill the victim and your newborn son. As a result of this assault the victim suffered a large bruise to her body. These are the facts on count 11, a charge of aggravated assault.

On a day in November 2023 the victim was seated in the Ali Curung premises. You then came into the shipping container after breakfast. You were agitated and

you kicked the victim in the left shin. She suffered pain and bruising and a permanent scar as a result of a kick to the shin.

On 17 November 2023 DP flew to Alice Springs to visit you and the victim and to meet her grandson. Now, these are the facts on count 12, a charge of aggravated assault.

On 22 November 2023 you, the victim, your child and DP drove to Alice Springs. You all drove to Coles to do some grocery shopping. After doing the shopping you became angry and agitated in the carpark. DP walked away from you. The victim walked after her and convinced her to return. You all then got in the car.

You were in the driver's seat. The victim was in the front passenger's seat. DP was behind the driver's seat and your son was in the back passenger's seat. You drove erratically out of the Coles carpark. You were angry and yelling at the victim. You yelled, "It's all your fault." And, "Thanks for ruining our family holiday."

You took hold of the victim's head and banged it into the passenger's side window three times. On the third time the glass cracked. You further struck the victim to her head with your fists. You drove the group to the Discovery Park in Alice Springs where you were staying. You were still very agitated at this point.

The victim and DP took the shopping from the car inside the accommodation unit. You entered the premises and again told the victim that she had ruined everything. You then pushed her up against the fridge and choked her. DP entered the room and screamed. You let go of the victim and said, "You are both fucked." And told the victim, "Just get over it."

These are the facts on counts 13 and 14, charges of aggravated assault and choking in a domestic relationship.

On 31 January 2024 you were arrested and charged for unrelated assaults against the victim. You were sentenced to a term of imprisonment to be served in the Alice Springs Correctional Centre. In the time that you were a prisoner the victim moved to Victoria with your son.

On 29 April 2024 you were released from the Alice Springs Correctional Centre. You were then immediately arrested by members of the Northern Territory Police Force. You were charged and you were denied bail by members of the police force and by a Local Court judge. You declined to participate in an electronic record of interview after receiving legal advice.

You did, however, make various comments regarding your account both at the time of arrest and on covertly taped telephone calls. On various occasions during the above sequence of offending you prohibited the victim from seeking medical attention.

When you were arrested you made the following comments to Sergeant Nigel Bennett. When asked,

“What are your thoughts on doing an interview?---100 per cent. I’m not being charged with sexual assault. As I said before it was 2.5 years of a fucking drug induced bender. Most of those aggravated I’d probably give them to you but it fucking sure as hell wasn’t sexual assault.”

You asked, “So what’s the charge?” When you were told several aggravated assaults you interrupted the officer and said, “I know aggravated assaults. I’ve done time for that. There’s a big chance it’s all fucking true. But what’s this indecent, like, sexual, like, what’s that?”

On a telephone call to DP on 14 February 2024 you made the following comments, “I don’t even know what she said down there. I know the majority of it happened up here. As I said in the last phone call I will plead guilty to all of it bar that one thing because it never fucking happened. I don’t know what planet that cunt was on.” You also said, “Mum, it was pretty full on but my mitigating circumstances were we were both fried cunts for nearly two years.”

I received a victim impact statement dated 26 March 2026 in which the victim states that after the numerous assaults by you she was often left with a wide range of injuries including cuts and bruises, leaving her in constant pain and suffering. She continues to have scars on her body that are a constant reminder of how she was treated and the pain she was forced to endure.

She continues to be prescribed strong painkillers for nerve damage and back pain. The victim speaks of your cruelty towards her as a person who loved you. She states that you assaulted her when she was pregnant, making her feel that her unborn child was not important to you. She was constantly in fear of losing her child.

She carries guilt and shame over what her time with you has done to her children and family. They continue to live in a state of panic with gates padlocked, security cameras and doors deadbolted. Your actions left the victim feeling worthless and useless. She sent her teenage daughter to live with her parents because she was scared for her safety.

She became isolated from her family. The victim’s daughter has been diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder and has had multiple incidents of self-harm due to the impact you have had on her life. The victim carries guilt over not protecting her daughter better. The victim is on prescription medication for anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder.

She has engaged with counselling, psychologists and psychiatrists in the last two years. She has been diagnosed with complex post-traumatic stress disorder, panic disorder and agoraphobia. She struggles to maintain healthy relationships. It is clear that your crimes have had a devastating effect upon the victim and her

extended family. There is no indication that this position is likely to change in the near future.

Individually each of the offences committed by you are of varying degrees of seriousness. None are trivial but each has circumstances which justify varying assessments of the objective gravity of each offence. All of the offending occurred in a domestic relationship. Although I note that this is an element of some of the offences and as such cannot act as an aggravating circumstance with regard to those offences.

The offences occurred over a period of 11 months and formed a pattern of behaviour in which you asserted physical, psychological and emotional power over the victim. In the absence of any other explanation the inevitable inference is that you received some personal gratification from exercising power and control over the victim. While many of the offences were of brief duration the fear and intimidation inflicted was long lasting.

Many of the offences were brazen and committed in front of others. You used a variety of weapons including a machete, a blowtorch and steel capped boots. These are capable of inflicting great harm and causing significant injury. On various occasions you prohibited the victim from seeking and receiving medical attention. You did not voluntarily desist from your course of offending and the offending only ceased because you were arrested on other charges for assaulting the same victim.

You have a criminal history which not only disentitles you to leniency in sentencing for the present offences but also establishes the need for personal deterrence to be given prominence as a sentencing consideration. You are heavily recorded for offences of violence, particularly against domestic partners, and the sentences which I must impose must be such as to deter you from committing offences of violence. Having said that, you are not to be punished twice for the offences which appear on your criminal record.

I take into account your personal history as outlined in the submissions filed on your behalf. They have not been challenged by the Crown so I will accept those submissions as being substantially factually accurate. At the particular request of your lawyer I will refrain from giving the details of your childhood. I will summarise the material as follows.

You are a 33-year-old man originally from New South Wales. Your parents' relationship was marred by domestic violence. Your parents separated in your early childhood. From the ages of 6 to 10 you lived with your father and your stepmother in New South Wales. A number of child protection notifications were made during this period most of which were confirmed.

These related to physical abuse, emotional abuse, the risk of emotional harm and you requesting respite from your family home. You were placed back in your mother's care in July 2002. Between this time and August 2006 you were cared for by your mother and stepfather and your maternal grandparents.

There was a brief period in 2003 where child protective services took out a temporary care order due to your family being unwilling to care for you due to your aggressive and oppositional behaviours. In August 2006 you disclosed that you were physically assaulted by your stepfather and threatened with sexual assault.

You were having difficulty at school being bullied and physically assaulted by other students. A proposed reunification with your father in 2006 did not occur due to your father telling you that you were not welcome. You were voluntarily placed with a family friend before returning home. You made threats of self-harm and you were placed into the care of the relevant child protection agency.

It appears that your mother was ill equipped to deal with your behavioural issues. Sadly you were sexually assaulted and physically abused whilst in care. It is said that as a result of your childhood experiences you are unable to form stable relationships and friendships. It is said that you are liable to become manic and lose control of your emotions, act violently and destructively.

You have a tendency not to trust anyone. It is said that your relationships with women are underpinned by shame and insecurity and not feeling like a man. I accept your history of significant childhood deprivation and exposure to violence and sexual violence warrants a significant reduction of your moral culpability for your offending.

That history also warrants a substantial lessening in the role of general deterrence in sentencing you for these offences. I accept that the relationship with the victim was initially loving and respectful and that the problems in your relationship began with the victim's miscarriage in April 2022.

It is accepted that your history of methamphetamine use predates the victim's miscarriage but it is admitted that your use of this substance escalated after this event. You have reported that you use drugs to help you forget your problems. It is not at all surprising that someone with your history of childhood deprivation and exposure to violence would commence using illicit drugs as a means of self-medication.

I am satisfied that it is probable that your use of illicit drugs is causally connected to the commission of the present offences. I accept the submission that you always intended to plead guilty to the present charges. The prosecution initially brought a further more serious charge alleging sexual assault which you vehemently denied.

When this charge was discontinued by the prosecution you entered pleas of guilty. Your pleas of guilty had utilitarian value by saving the community the cost of a defended trial. In addition, I am satisfied that your pleas of guilty evidence a degree of remorse. Your pleas have also relieved the victim of the need to relive these offences by giving evidence.

In assessing the extent to which your pleas of guilty evidence remorse I do note that there was a strong prosecution case against you. I will reduce the otherwise appropriate sentences by approximately 20 per cent because of your pleas of guilty.

I cannot assess your prospects for rehabilitation as any better than guarded at this time. You have a substantial criminal history which not only disentitles you to leniency in sentencing for the present offences but also speaks of the importance of specific deterrence and protection of the public as sentencing considerations.

You have engaged in a family violence program within custody whilst awaiting sentence but your prospects of re-offending, particularly in domestic relationship settings, will remain high until such time as you address issues arising from your childhood deprivation and abuse and, in particular, your substance abuse.

Whilst in custody you do not have access to illicit drugs as you would in the community. You have demonstrated the capacity to remain drug free for short periods in the past while in the community but your prospects for re-offending are intimately connected with your ability to maintain a commitment to abstinence from drug use and to engage in appropriate counselling and treatment once you are released from prison.

At the present time the prospect of you maintaining such commitment is unknown. I already indicated that your history of significant deprivation as a child entitles you to a reduction, a significant reduction, in your moral culpability and also a reduction in the importance of general deterrence. Balanced against that is the need to protect the public and also to deter you from committing further offences.

I will proceed by way of an aggregate sentence of imprisonment pursuant to s 52 of the *Sentencing Act 1995* (NT). In compliance with that section I will also indicate what sentences would have been imposed for each individual offences. In assessing the appropriate head sentence and non-parole period I take into account that you already served three months of a five month sentence of imprisonment for assaulting the victim immediately before you were arrested and remanded in custody on the present charges.

I record convictions on all of the charges and you are sentenced to an aggregate term of imprisonment of 7 years and 6 months commencing on 29 April 2024 and expiring on 28 October 2031. I set a non-parole period of 4 years and 6 months commencing on 29 April 2024 and expiring on 28 October 2028.

I would have imposed the following sentences on each of the individual charges:

- Count 1; 14 months' imprisonment.
- Count 2; 18 months' imprisonment.
- Count 3; 10 months' imprisonment.

- Count 4; 18 months' imprisonment.
- Count 5; 18 months' imprisonment.
- Count 6; 10 months' imprisonment.
- Count 7; 18 months' imprisonment.
- Count 8; 20 months' imprisonment.
- Count 9; 16 months' imprisonment.
- Count 10; 14 months' imprisonment.
- Count 11; 10 months' imprisonment.
- Count 12; 9 months' imprisonment.
- Count 13; 15 months' imprisonment.
- Count 14; 12 months' imprisonment.

Finally, I make an order pursuant to s 8(3) of the *Domestic and Family Violence Act* in the mandatory terms as well as a full non-contact condition with the victim as the protected person for a period of 15 years commencing today.

Is there anything arising from that?

MR JAMES: No, your Honour.

MS CHEN: No, your Honour.

HIS HONOUR: Then I will adjourn.
