

Nathan Edwards, you plead guilty to two counts of assault. Both crimes were committed on 13 May 2024 against your wife Jenna Goss. You had been in a relationship for four years and married for one of them. You were then 36 and she was 33. You lived together in George Town. She had five children from a previous relationship aged between 12 and 5 and they lived with you. In addition, you had two children together: a son aged about two and a half who is autistic, and a daughter who was only five days old at the time.

Just after 11.00 pm Ms Goss was in bed in the bedroom you shared. She was holding the baby. Your son was asleep in the same room. After you came into the bedroom you argued about a comment you made to her complaining about not having had intimate relations since the baby was born. She asked you to leave the house but you refused. She could not leave the house herself because she had nowhere else to go and of course she had the children to look after. You put your son in another bedroom and returned to the hallway where, by then, Ms Goss was standing carrying the baby. You punched her to the nose with your right hand. The force of the blow knocked her to the ground. She kept hold of the baby as she fell and was not sure if the baby made contact with the ground or not. She returned to her feet. She had her phone with her, but you took it from her thinking she may use it to call the police. You walked into the bedroom where you had left your son. When she followed you asking for her phone back you punched her again, this time to her eye. On this occasion she did not lose her footing.

After packing some clothes, you gave her the phone back and left the house. She called "000". She was on the phone to the police when you walked back in. You threw her phone to the ground but left again without any further violence.

When the police arrived a short time later they saw that Ms Goss had a bruised and swollen eye and haemorrhages under the surface of both eyes. Photographs taken by the police show that the bruising and swelling to her eye is very pronounced. Quite a lot of force would have been required to cause an injury of that nature. She was bleeding from her nose and at the site of a piercing on her lower lip. She had some abrasions to her shoulders and she complained of being stiff and sore over her whole body. Ms Goss was urged to go to the hospital but she refused saying that there was no-one to look after the children. She and the baby were reviewed by a general practitioner the following day. Fortunately Ms Goss suffered no long term injury and there was no sign of harm to the baby.

You were arrested not long after you left the house after the police found you at a hotel nearby. When you were interviewed you admitted that you had been arguing with Ms Goss but you denied striking her and said only that you pushed her away when she was shouting at you.

You have a poor record for family violence. You have been violent and abusive not only towards your current partner but also your two previous partners. In 2016 you had recently separated from Tiffany Harris with whom you had three children. On 27 October 2016 a police family violence order was made to protect her. Within a few days you breached the order by abusing her on the phone and sending her highly threatening text messages. Then on 5 December 2016 you breached a family violence order by then in place by sending her abusive and more highly threatening text messages. When the police came looking for you they discovered that you had left Tasmania.

On 1 June 2017 you were fined by a magistrate in Queensland for having, in April that year, contravened a domestic violence order to protect Ms Harris made in that State.

By 2018 you were back in Tasmania and in a relationship with Jasmine Thompson. On 20 June 2018 you assaulted her, while her 10 month son was present, by grabbing her around the throat and hitting her head twice, before throwing a baby gate at her, all the while abusing and threatening her. On 7 September 2018 you were sentenced for the 2016 breaches and the 2018 assaults to imprisonment for three months, one month of which was suspended.

More offences were committed in 2019 against Tiffany Harris. You had moved back in with her and during January and February 2019 you subjected her to abusive, aggressive and controlling behaviour, including in front of the children. You pleaded guilty to emotional abuse and intimidation and breaching the family violence order by living with her and verbally abusing her. Another partly suspended sentence was imposed.

By 6 January 2022 you had been in a relationship with Jenna Goss for about 18 months and the oldest child of the relationship had been born. On that day you were travelling in a car with the child as well as Ms Goss's five other children. You became angry about her speaking with her ex-partner. You pushed her out of the car. I was not told that she was injured so I assume that the car had either come to a stop or was travelling slowly, but having pushed her out you kept driving. You were sentenced for that offence on 11 May 2022 along with a series of other offences of dishonesty and evading the police. You spent about two months in custody. Most recently you were sentenced again on both 26 June 2024 and on 1 July 2024 for serious driving offences but also a common assault of Ms Goss which was committed in breach of a family violence order. A magistrate found that on 30 October 2022, after an argument with Ms Goss, she asked you to leave the house but you assaulted her by throwing a cup of coffee over her. The combined result of the sentences was imprisonment for 20 weeks plus 48 days from 13 May 2024. You would have completed that sentence by 16 November 2024 so any term of imprisonment I impose should commence then. It is an aggravating factor that the crimes committed against Ms Goss on 13 May 2024 for which you are now to be sentenced were committed while a warrant for your arrest was active as a result of your failure to answer bail on 5 December 2023 during the hearing of the earlier assault charge.

You are now aged 35. There is nothing from your background and family circumstances which may explain your behaviour. You have supportive siblings and a history of employment. On your release you will be able to live and work some distance from Ms Goss. Your plea of guilty is in your favour. It was not entered until the case was listed for a possible trial, but it facilitates justice and means that Ms Goss will not be subjected to the ordeal and additional trauma of having to give evidence when she was likely reluctant or unwilling to do so. Conversely, it means that you do not run the risk of being found guilty of a more serious offence because the State agreed to not proceed with one count on the indictment.

On your behalf your counsel explained that these crimes were committed during a stressful period. That, of course, is never an excuse for violence. In any event, this was another example of the type of behaviour you have been engaging in for years. At the time you told the police that you had run out of patience with Ms Goss because she had been emotionally abusing you for three years, which is further indication of your lack of insight and remorse and unwillingness to take responsibility for your own actions.

You are not to be punished for your record but it strongly indicates of your lack of remorse, your disregard for the law, for the force of court orders, and a propensity to be violent, abusive and controlling within relationships. It also indicates a reduced likelihood of rehabilitation and that you pose a continuing risk. I was asked to declare you to be a serial family violence perpetrator under the *Family Violence Act*, s 29A. You have been convicted of family violence offences on more than three occasions in the last ten years and after taking account of the matters listed in s 29A(5), such a declaration is clearly warranted. There is already a family violence order in place which will continue to protect Ms Goss until 2027 so no further order is necessary.

You are to be sentenced for serious assaults. They took place in what should have been the safety of the victim's own home, away from anyone who could offer her protection and only five days after she had given birth to your child. To punch Ms Goss while she was holding the baby was a particularly cowardly, dangerous and abusive act. Shortly afterwards you punched her again. The force of the blows was such as to cause the injuries I have described but could easily have caused much greater harm to her and the child. It is also aggravating that the assaults were committed in the presence of your children. You knew your son was present. Hopefully the baby was too young to have realised what happened. Ms Goss's other children were in the house as well. It is not suggested that those children directly witnessed these events but they must have learned of the aftermath. The psychological damage which can be done to children by direct and indirect exposure to family violence is well recognised. Who knows how your son may have been affected, particularly in light of his autism.

As has been frequently pointed out, the prevalence and devastating impacts of violence and emotional abuse perpetrated against women in domestic circumstances are well recognised across Australia by the criminal courts and the community. It is an insidious, prevalent and serious societal problem. Perpetrators abuse the trust which is inherent within relationships. Victims are vulnerable and commonly reluctant to complain. It seems that Ms Goss has been, and continues to be, a reluctant witness in proceedings against you and wishes to resume the relationship. That might be so for a range of possible factors. She may wish to preserve her relationship with you, despite her fear and the abuse and violence, for the sake of loyalty, affection, companionship, economic and domestic support. This only serves to emphasise the need, as far as a court is able to achieve, to protect her and others in a similar situation. You are a serial offender and past sentences have not deterred you. I will allow eligibility for parole but not until you have served a sufficient term to meet the sentencing aims I have identified. But for your plea of guilty I would have sentenced you to imprisonment for two years and three months with eligibility for parole after 15 months.

Nathan Edwards, you are convicted on counts 2 and 3 on the indictment. In accordance with the *Family Violence Act*, s 13A, I direct that both offences be recorded on your criminal record as a family violence offence. I declare you to be a serial family violence perpetrator and I determine that the declaration is to remain in force for four years from today. I impose one sentence. You are sentenced to imprisonment for 21 months from 16 November 2024. I order that you not be eligible for parole until you have served 12 months of that term. It will be a matter for the Parole Board to assess if and when it is appropriate to release you on parole, and upon what conditions.