

STATE OF TASMANIA v MADELINE CARLY BLACKWELL
COMMENTS ON PASSING SENTENCE

ESTCOURT J
24 OCTOBER 2025

The defendant, Madeline Carly Blackwell, now 28 years old, has pleaded guilty to the crime of attempted carjacking. The complainant, Joanna Rose Breen, aged 35, was not known to the defendant prior to the offending.

On 28 March 2024, the defendant attended the Royal Hobart Hospital for medical treatment. As part of her treatment, nurses inserted an intravenous plastic cannula into her inner left arm. She left part way through her treatment taking the cannula with her. At about 3:10 pm on that day, the complainant was driving her Mazda motor vehicle on Harrington Street in Hobart. She pulled over onto the side of the road in order to listen to a voicemail message.

As the complainant was sitting in the drivers seat of her vehicle, the defendant approached her and opened the driver's side door. The defendant told the complainant, *"Get out of the car. I have a needle. It has AIDS on it"*. The complainant did not move and the defendant moved the cannula towards her in a stabbing motion whilst saying, *"I will stab you with it. I am not messing around. I will stab you"*. The complainant started to collect her belongings and then screamed for help.

The defendant leant into the vehicle and tried to grab the complainant. The complainant leaned backwards and faced her feet towards the defendant and tried to kick her. However, the defendant continued to move toward the complainant stating, *"I am going to do it. I am going to do it. Just give me the keys"*. The complainant continued to scream for help. The defendant grabbed the complainant by her hair and dragged her out of the vehicle. The complainant believed the defendant was about to stab her.

The defendant got into the driver's seat of the vehicle and demanded the car keys, gesturing the cannula towards the complainant. The complainant tried to move back but was holding the driver's side door to try and prevent the defendant from driving away.

Two male witnesses approached the vehicle. One of the witnesses asked the complainant what was happening. She told him the defendant was trying to steal the car and was in possession of a needle with blood on it. This witness moved his vehicle in front of the complainant's car to prevent the defendant leaving. The other witness indicated that police were on their way. Police arrived a short time later and spoke with the defendant, who was seated in the driver's seat of the vehicle. The defendant was still in possession of the cannula. Police arrested the defendant and took her to the Hobart Police Station. She participated in a record of interview during which she told police that she had been at the Royal Hobart Hospital earlier that day following a panic attack. She was in the Emergency Department when she decided that she had to leave to see her family and so she decided to steal a vehicle to drive to them.

During the incident, the complainant was very frightened and genuinely believed that the defendant was going to stab her. As a result of the incident, the complainant had a small amount of blood on her right forearm from the cannula but she did not suffer any injuries as a result of the incident.

The defendant has been convicted of a number of stealing and burglary offences, including one count of stealing with force and one count of motor vehicle stealing. She has also been convicted of one count of common assault and in addition to receiving two suspended

sentences, she is currently the subject of a Community Corrections order and her compliance with that order has been poor.

I am told that the defendant left her home on the day in question in an ambulance because she had problems with mental health and when she was at the hospital, it occurred to her that someone in the mafia was holding up her four-year-old daughter. She had earlier had an abusive phone call from her daughter's father who lives in Queensland, ending with the words "you're going to die" said over and over.

I am told that she texted her mother on the day to get her daughter out of the house because she believed the mafia was coming. She ran out of the hospital thinking that her daughter was threatened. She ran around in circles to try and find out how to get to her daughter and she saw the complainant and acted as she did.

I have had the very considerable benefit of a pre-sentence report on the defendant which informs me in part as follows:

"Ms Blackwell advised she initially developed an addiction to opioids following her endometriosis surgery at age 20, she stated this episode lasted 2 years prior to commencing the Opioid Replacement Therapy (ORT). She advised following several IVF miscarriages she started using methamphetamine in conjunction with benzodiazepines since 2018 to suppress her grief, advising she stopped the ORT program as a result. She advised she completed the detox program through the inpatient withdrawal unit at Alcohol and Drug Services (ADS) more than once, during this time in an attempt to cease methamphetamine however experienced several relapses. She advised her last relapse was in August 2025, when she used methamphetamine for approximately one week after being sober for approximately five months. Ms Blackwell noted also experimenting with heroin and cannabis on a few occasions. She advised she re-commenced the ORT program whilst incarcerated and reported ongoing engagement in the program. Ms Blackwell reported she is due to commence the Bridge Program through Salvation Army later this month...

Ms Blackwell attributed her offending to her mental ill-health and illicit substance use. She advised prior to the incident she had 'escaped' from the hospital whilst being treated for a psychotic episode resulting from illicit substance use and trauma from an abusive relationship. She expressed remorse and shame, stating even though she was not of sound mind she can remember the incident.

Ms Blackwell advised she has attempted to minimize her illicit substance use, seek support to address her domestic violence trauma and is medicated for psychosis in response to her offending. She stated she is content to engage with Community Corrections if sentenced to a community-based order."

The author of the pre-sentence report recommends a period of community based supervision of no less than 12 months, during which the defendant's case management would focus on addressing her "criminogenic links to offending including illicit substance use, mental health and consequential decision making".

In all of the rather sad circumstances of this case, I see no reason not to accept the recommendation made by Community Corrections. I note that the defendant is not suitable for community service because of her health conditions and her substance abuse.

The defendant is convicted and I make a community correction order with an operational period of 18 months. The order will contain all of the statutory core conditions set out in s 42AO of the *Sentencing Act 1997*, and the following special conditions set out in s 42AP of the Act. They are as follows:

- (1)(b) the offender must, during the operational period of the order, attend educational and other programs as directed by the court or a probation officer, including, I order, if directed by a probation officer, the offender must attend, participate in, and complete the EQUIPS Addiction Program as directed;
- (1)(c) the offender must, during the operational period of the order, submit to the supervision of a probation officer as required by the probation officer;
- (1)(e) the offender must, during the operational period of the order, undergo assessment and treatment for drug dependency as directed by a probation officer; and
- (1)(j) the offender must, during the operational period of the order, submit to medical, psychological or psychiatric assessment or treatment as directed by a probation officer.

Ms Blackwell you must report to the office of Community Corrections on Monday of next week for enrolment onto this order.