

CANADA / JUDGMENT

R. v. Reed

2025 BCSC 2411

COURT

Supreme Court of British Columbia

DECIDED

6 November 2025

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2025 BCSC 2411 R. v. Reed

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Citation:

R. v. Reed,

2025 BCSC 2411

Date: 20251106

Docket: 34436-1; 37052-2

Registry: Vancouver

Rex

v.

Richard Charles Reed

Before: The Honourable Justice Maisonville

Oral Reasons for Sentence

Counsel for the Crown:

K. Andani, K.C.

Counsel for the Accused:

S.N. Dickson

Place and Date of Hearing:

Vancouver, B.C.

November 6, 2025

Place and Date of Judgment:

Vancouver, B.C.

November 6, 2025

[1] THE COURT: Following a plea inquiry, Richard Charles Reed pleaded guilty to the offence of attempted murder of Spence Griffith.

[2] There was an agreed statement of facts before the Court and it set out the following:

Pursuant to Section 655, of the Criminal Code of Canada, the accused, Richard Charles Reed, admits the following facts alleged against him for the purpose of dispensing with the proof:

1. Richard Charles Reed and Spence Griffith were close friends.
2. On December 29, 2020, Mr. Reed conspired with a mutual friend, Nicholas To, to lure Mr. Griffith to General Currie Elementary schoolyard in Richmond (the "School").
3. Mr. Reed was in telephone contact with Mr. To, who incidentally, was trying to back out of the plan. Mr. Reed assured him that he (To) was not needed to do anything but to keep him updated.
4. At approximately 10 pm, Mr. Griffith attended the School where he met up with Mr. To and several others on the pretext that they were there to have a few drinks.
5. Shortly after Mr. Griffith arrived at the School, Mr. Reed, armed with a firearm, approached the group, and walked directly towards Mr. Griffith. When Mr. Reed was about 6-9 feet from Mr. Griffith, he shot at him several times, hitting Mr. Griffith once in the palm of his hand.
6. Mr. Griffith was able to escape with only a single injury to his hand. He ran and managed to call 911. He sustained non-life-threatening injuries.
7. Mr. Reed filmed himself before and after committing the offence. The first recording was made two days before attempting to murder Mr. Griffith (the "December 27th recording"); in the subsequent recording, he "rapped" about the shooting (the "Confession recording").
8. In the December 27th recording, Mr. Reed spoke directly into the camera and said the following:
 - That in two days time, he would be committing an offence against Mr. Griffith;
 - he was very upset with Mr. Griffith. He described Mr. Griffith as his little brother Mr. Reed stated that Mr. Griffith was aware that he still loved Yasmine, and that she had broken his heart. Mr. Griffith knew that Yasmine was the love of Mr. Reed's life. He had warned Mr. Griffith to stay away from his ex-girlfriend, as he was still in love with her;

- Mr. Griffith betrayed Mr. Reed when he became involved with Yasmine. Mr. Reed had warned Mr. Griffith; the two men had fought over this conduct and Mr. Reed had attempted to blow up Mr. Griffith's car. Yet Mr. Griffith remained undeterred;
 - Mr. Reed warned Mr. Griffith that if he continued this conduct, Mr. Reed would kill him.
9. He posted the December 27th recording to a chat group with Mr. To and Mr. Lam. Shortly after the failed attempt to kill Mr. Griffith, the video was deleted, and the chat group was abandoned.
 10. In the Confession recording, Mr. Reed described how he "as a real man" went to shoot Mr. Griffith but his gun jammed, and he shot "Spence" once in the hand and Spence ran away.
 11. Following the offence, Mr. Reed continued to express his anger at Mr. Griffith's conduct. While Mr. Reed was detained on an unrelated offence, he attempted to recruit two other people, to finish the job.
 12. At the time of the shooting, Mr. Reed was under a probation order and firearms prohibition. Upon a search of his residence, eight firearms were seized, one of them was the gun he used to shoot Mr. Griffith.
 13. On January 14, 2025, Mr. Reed was found guilty of first-degree murder and is currently serving a life sentence. The murder was committed on September 18, 2020, some three months before he attempted to murder Mr. Griffith.

The Circumstances of Mr. Reed

- [3] He is presently 27 and-a-half-years old.
- [4] He was only 20 years of age at the time he committed this offence. I reviewed and carefully considered an earlier presentence report in connection with Mr. Reed that was before the court. It is clear to the author of that report that Mr. Reed had a very difficult childhood. His life was marked with physical abuse, parental neglect and absence.
- [5] Mr. Reed, as a child, went through the foster system and had to fend for himself. As a consequence of his parental neglect, he had difficulty with his foster parents and ran away from home. He was expelled from school at Grade 9. Following that, he accumulated a lengthy criminal record. Since he was a youth, he has had about 50 convictions. His record discloses a history of violence, together with the use of weapons. He was convicted of murder in September 2024 and was sentenced to a period of life sentence imprisonment for that.
- [6] Mr. Reed is also serving a sentence for possessing and firing a firearm in connection with that murder. The motivation for that murder was financial, and he used a firearm to commit that murder.

- [7] The Crown notes that Mr. Reed, before the Court, is a person who had become institutionalized. He had 32 adult convictions before he committed this offence. He has always been given jail. It is not surprising that he is entrenched in the criminal lifestyle, drug use, which ultimately escalated to murder for hire.
- [8] It is also clear that he suffered a challenging background. The presentence report indicates that he had no formal education or really any education at all. He has challenges with literacy, and I understand he now wishes to better himself.
- [9] There is no victim impact statement, as Mr. Griffith has refused to participate and provide a victim impact statement.
- [10] Mr. Reed's counsel additionally explained more in respect of Mr. Reed's background.
- [11] He was born in New Orleans, USA, and moved to Canada with his mother at the age of one. His mother had left the relationship she was in due to Mr. Reed's father being physically abusive and violent to her. She came to Canada and from then on, Mr. Reed saw little of his father and has only met with him ten times in the course of his lifetime. Regrettably, Mr. Reed also suffered physical violence from his mother who punched and choked him. He was removed from home at the age of nine and placed in foster care, and was in and out of five different foster households.
- [12] Deprived of a male father figure or any positive male figure, and due to this disattachment with his parents, he found it difficult to attach to his foster parents. He has effectively been on his own from an early age. This has impacted his ability to reach his full potential.
- [13] As a child, he was additionally diagnosed with attention deficit disorder, oppositional defiance disorder, attachment disorder, and suffers from being bipolar.
- [14] He stopped attending school at the age of 13 when he was expelled. He has been a challenging child to parent, and those difficulties were driven in large part from his lack of nurturing and being loved. He, as a consequence of his upbringing, failed to acquire an early foundation for stability so necessary to a person's development.
- [15] His trauma and adverse experience have paved a path ultimately to criminal behaviour. He has had substance abuse issues and has spent most of his adult life in jail. This is not justifiable conduct for what occurred; it is simply an explanation of his background.
- [16] Despite his dealing with adversity, he wishes to pave a better path forward. There are a few reasons for optimism in respect of Mr. Reed. He would like to achieve his high school equivalency. He is taking up reading, trying to overcome his literacy issues, and reading novels. He has been placed into high school while in custody which he awaits to start due to it being on first-come first-served basis. He has yet to commence but he is enrolled.
- [17] He will be 51 years of age when he is finally released on his various sentences.

- [18] He also has supports in the community. He maintains a close relationship with his sister in British Columbia, as well as his mother who is across the border in Washington State. Despite being subjected to violence by her, he does not blame her. He has found a compassion within himself to forgive his mother and he loves her and is investing carefully in an ongoing relationship with her.

The Law

- [19] I turn to the number of cases that were put before the Court. The Crown and defence have proposed a joint submission for sentence of ten years' imprisonment for the attempted murder.
- [20] Pursuant to the decision of *R. v. Anthony-Cook*, 2016 SCC 43 I note as follows: that joint submissions on sentence, being when Crown and defence counsel agree to recommend a particular sentence to the trial judge in exchange for the accused pleading guilty, are vitally important to the well-being of the criminal justice system as well as the justice system at large. While normally such agreements are unexceptional, they are readily approved by trial judges without difficulty. Occasionally, a joint submission may appear to be unduly lenient or unduly harsh and trial judges are not obliged to go along with them, citing *Anthony-Cook* at para. 25.
- [21] In *R. v. Cheema*, 2019 BCCA 268, the Court reiterated, following the Supreme Court of Canada's decision in *Anthony-Cook*, that joint submissions are to be treated differently unless the joint submission is markedly out of the range and would not enhance the justice system.
- [22] A number of cases respecting similar sentences for attempted murder were also before the court. The minimum of five years to a life sentence is set out by the legislation with the range in the caselaw being from seven to 15 years. The range is very wide, as Crown counsel noted. All of the cases say that when murder is attempted with a firearm, denunciation and deterrence are the paramount factors for a court to consider.
- [23] Before the Court was the sentencing decision of *R. v. Ferguson*, 2018 BCSC 1523, which followed a guilty plea. The context of that decision was it was a contract killing. An 18-year-old Black man who had no criminal record had travelled from Ontario to British Columbia and was involved in the planning of the offence. Disguised in a burka as a woman, he went to a food court at the Vancouver International Airport and the target was able to run away after the gun jammed.
- [24] Mr. Ferguson was young. He had no criminal record and seven years was considered appropriate when he was convicted, when he pled guilty. Conspiracy was also before the court and the court ordered four years consecutive, for a total of 11 years.

- [25] The decision of *R. v. Botticelli*, 2019 BCSC 1330 was also before the Court. It was a decision of the B.C. Supreme Court which upheld the fit sentence in circumstances that, following an argument, the 60-year-old offender shot his brother and sister-in-law in the garage of his mother's home. He had hidden the shotgun in the ceiling of the garage and shot the victims at close range. Both victims sustained life-changing injuries.
- [26] The B.C. Court of Appeal in *R. v. Botticelli*, 2022 BCCA 344 upheld the sentence of 15 years but, with totality, reduced to 12 years for the two offences to be served concurrently, and three years for the firearm to be served consecutive.
- [27] The decision of *R. v. May*, 2017 BCSC 1971 was also before the Court in which the offender shot his romantic rival. He found his girlfriend with someone else and returned with a loaded shotgun and shot his rival in the face and left. The offender was 63 years old and had a criminal record. It was stated he had a challenging upbringing. He also suffered from drug and alcohol abuse. The victim had suffered life-threatening injuries.
- [28] After the offence and before the sentence, the offender was diagnosed with leukemia and was undergoing chemotherapy. Nonetheless, he was sentenced to nine-and-a-half years for attempted murder, four years for the firearm, and one year for being in a motor vehicle with a firearm present. The B.C. Court of Appeal upheld that as a fit sentence: *R. v. May*, 2018 BCCA 391.
- [29] The decision of *R. v. Kipp*, 2010 BCSC 584 was also before the Court. It was a drug-related dispute. The sentencing judge of the B.C. Supreme Court was dealing with an offender who was a 20-year-old Indigenous man with a harsh upbringing. He had a significant criminal record. He committed the offence to protect his drug business and reputation.
- [30] The offender took a loaded rifle into his taxi. It was a daytime offence. He exited his taxi, called out to the victim, his rival drug dealer, and when the victim turned around, he fired 13 rounds to the victim. The victim was shot four times. An unintended person was struck once. The offender was on bail at the time of the offence, subject to not possessing a firearm.
- [31] The court gave a ten-year sentence for the attempted murder, six years for the aggravated assault of the unintended victim, plus two years consecutive for the firearm. The principal for totality in sentencing reduced the sentence to 11 years.

Aggravating and Mitigating Factors

- [32] Here, in the case at bar, there are many similar mitigating and aggravating circumstances before the Court to those noted in the case authorities.
- [33] The aggravating circumstances are that this offence was committed with a firearm. It was a premeditated shooting in which the victim had been lured. The shooting had occurred in a public place. It was motivated by jealousy, and displayed reckless and dangerous behaviour.

- [34] There are, however, mitigating factors to consider. The mitigating factors before the Court are that Mr. Reed has pleaded guilty and taken responsibility for this offence. He is remorseful and he regrets hurting his victim, Mr. Griffith. He told the Court that he is very sorry for what he has done. While he cannot change what he has done, he wishes to change his life going forward.
- [35] Mr. Reed was only 20 years of age when he committed this offence. That was a factor in the cases of Kipp and Ferguson. As well, this case is six years old. Mr. Reed is now 27 years of age. He is from a racialized background, given his African American heritage, and has suffered much in his short lifetime.
- [36] However, I accept that he expresses deep remorse. He spoke to the Court emotionally to express his regret and I accept that. He is taking responsibility for his conduct and is taking the first step towards becoming a better person.

Sentence

- [37] Mr. Reed, please stand up.
- [38] In all of the circumstances, I am acceding to the joint submission. It is an appropriate sentence. The public interest test is met. The sentence would not bring the administration of justice into disrepute or, otherwise, be contrary to the public interest. Savings to the justice system and those resources can now be channelled elsewhere. Furthermore, the sentence, nonetheless, reflects the society's condemnation of these acts and sends a clear message.
- [39] In all of the circumstances, it is appropriate that it be ten years. You have a long and hard path ahead of you, but I accept your remorse and your desire to become a better human being. In all of the circumstances, I find the joint submission for ten years is appropriate.
- [40] In addition, the following ancillary orders will attach to this sentence:
- An order pursuant to s. 109(2)(b) of the Criminal Code prohibiting you from possessing any prohibited firearm, restricted firearm, prohibited weapon, prohibited device, and prohibited ammunition for life; and for any firearm other than a prohibited firearm or restricted firearm and any cross-bow, restricted weapon, ammunition, and explosive substance for life pursuant to s. 109(3).
 - An order that you provide a sample of your DNA pursuant to s. 487.051 of the Criminal Code as attempted murder is a primary designated offence and therefore the order is mandatory.
 - An order for forfeiture of firearms devices, ammunition seized in this case, pursuant to s. 491 of the Criminal Code.
 - And an order that a copy of these reasons for sentence and the agreed statement of facts be forwarded to the Correctional Service of Canada pursuant to s. 743.2 of the Criminal Code.
- [41] You can be seated now, thank you.

[42] CNSL K. ANDANI: Justice, the Crown enters a stay of proceedings with respect to Counts 2 to 8 on Indictment Number 34436, and I enter a stay of proceedings with respect to Indictment 37052.

[43] THE COURT: In its entirety?

[44] CNSL K. ANDANI: Yes.

[45] THE COURT: Thank you.

"Maisonville J."

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