

Press release: Man who killed family members who took him in has sentence increased

A homeless man who murdered 2 members of a family who helped him and tried to murder a third member of the same family has had his sentence increased after the Solicitor General appealed it as unduly lenient.

Aaron Barley, who was 23 years old at the time, attacked 3 members of the Wilkinson family in a premeditated and savage act of unprovoked violence.

Barley stabbed and killed Pierce Wilkinson, aged 13, and his mother Tracey, in their home having waited for Peter Wilkinson, Tracy's husband and Pierce's father, to take the dog out for a walk. When Mr Wilkinson returned to the house Barley stabbed him a number of times in an attempt to kill him which he was fortunate to survive.

The attack was entirely unprovoked, with the Wilkinson family having done much over the course of the preceding year to help Barley with the difficulties he had in his life. Their help included supporting him to find a home and a job and inviting him to spend Christmas day with them. The 4th member of the Wilkinson family, Lydia, who was aged 18 at the time was away at the time of the attack.

Barley has shown no remorse for the killings of Pierce and Tracey Wilkinson and has expressed regret that he failed to kill Peter Wilkinson. He was originally sentenced to life imprisonment with a minimum term of 30 years at Birmingham Crown Court. Today, the Court of Appeal agreed the sentence was too low and increased the minimum term to 35 years.

Speaking after the hearing, the Solicitor General said:

Aaron Barley's attack on the Wilkinson family was a truly despicable crime. The Wilkinson family had gone out of their way to help him and he repaid their kindness with a brutal attack which devastated their family. My thoughts are with Peter and Lydia Wilkinson particularly and I hope they can find some comfort in the increased sentence today.