

## **‘P’: Life, murder**

P reported that since being in prison his thinking has been dominated increasingly by the past. Not that this was not a problem before: P described that thoughts of the past combined with a lack of direction about the future in preceding his suicidal gestures. These thoughts often centred upon his parents’ separation and the unsettled form of his life following this. In addition he claimed to have been the victim of an attempted sexual assault when nearly sixteen years of age. This emerged after detailed probing concerning his social difficulties and is divulged at his request. The perpetrator was apparently a stranger, the setting a park. It may be of relevance that a previous report mentioned problems with his stepfather being partly due to a “lack of masculinity”. P indicated that the incident has stayed on his mind a great deal, especially in the years immediately after then during his periods of boredom in prison. He asserted that he could not bring himself to tell anyone of this in the past and feels it has contributed to his shyness and guardedness.

P claimed that the victim of his offence made propositions of a sexual nature on five separate occasions. He also suggested that his refusals were not too assertive as he did not want to lose the flat. These advances (he denied any physical contact took place) may well have had an additionally unsettling influence in view of the incident referred to above. P’s relationship with his landlord appears to have been an increasingly tense one. P was expected to do all the housework and cooking, including the landlord’s. He claimed that his rent varied according to the latter’s moods (which in turn depended largely on intake of alcohol and degree of success on the horses). Arguments between them had caused a resurgence of what P terms his “bad nerves”, affecting his performance and motivation at work. He described that for a period of four months he rose at three o’clock in the morning, after four hours’ sleep, to work for a catering agency. When he stopped going in to work, not surprisingly he lost his job. During the same period his relationship with his girlfriend of three years ended. She was twelve years older than P, had introduced him to the landlord and shared with him a not dissimilar lifestyle. At this point his landlord gave him one week’s notice to leave.

P stated that he “knew” five days before the offence that he would kill (or at least be involved in killing) the victim. He felt, in his own words, that “everything was building up”, “the thinking wouldn’t stop” (about how he felt he was being treated) and that he had “nothing to lose”. On the day before he was due to move out of his accommodation he had been drinking homemade beer and wine with a friend, his co-accused, who had come to help him move some possessions. P approached his landlord concerning the refund of his deposit (£60) but, he claimed, the landlord would not comply. P threatened to tell DHSS about the landlord’s allegedly fraudulent practices, at which point, he asserted, the not too sober landlord tried to hit him. P described then saying to his friend that he would kill the landlord but could not go through with it. He stated that his friend asked for a knife, which he supplied, upon which his friend hit then stabbed the landlord. P claimed that he thought of stopping his friend but was worried about the knife and his friend’s state of mind.

It will be apparent that P’s account minimises his role in the physical violence that took place and it may be noted that an earlier report referred to his co-accused stating that they both attacked the victim. By P’s own admission he tries not to think of the offence.

