

**Breaking News .ie 26 April 2010**

## Man to be sentenced for killing of young mother:

A 44-year-old man is due to be sentenced at the Central Criminal Court later today for killing a young mother, whom he stabbed in the back six times.

Clive Butcher, who is originally from the UK but has an address on Ranelagh Road in Dublin, was cleared of Rebecca Hoban's murder by a jury last February, but was found guilty of her manslaughter.

He had admitted to her manslaughter before the trial got underway, but his plea was rejected by the DPP.

Ms Hoban was knifed six times in the back with a kitchen knife at Mr Butcher's temporary accommodation in Ranelagh on December 17, 2008.

The two, who were homeless and addicted to drugs at the time, had met while sleeping rough in Phoenix Park and had been in and out of a relationship for a year before the killing.

Ms Hoban's relatives, who were not present during the murder trial, attended the court for this morning's sentence hearing.

Taking the witness stand to read out her victim impact statement, the victim's sister, Jodie Hoban described Rebecca as a lovely person with a heart of gold.

“She had a hard life and she made mistakes, but no one deserves to die the way she did...we have had many sleepless nights thinking of the way she died.”

Ms Hoban said she had to attend counselling and school. She said the family's photos and keepsakes of Rebecca are “some comfort, but we would rather have our sister alive.”

Ms Hoban also said she attended the trial for one day, but found it very upsetting. And she mentioned Rebecca's 10-year-old son Brandon, whom she said had been deprived of his mother in tragic circumstances.

On the day in question, Mr Butcher and Rebecca Hoban had spent the day together drinking and smoking heroin. Rebecca texted the accused that afternoon saying “I love you Mr C. Butcher.”

Just before 7pm that evening, Mr Butcher dialled 999 and asked for an ambulance to be sent to his bedsit, saying Rebecca was “dying rapidly on the floor”.

He told the operator he was an “evil f\*\*\*er” who had just stabbed a woman three or four times.

In his subsequent interviews with gardaí, Mr Butcher described a “violent struggle” after a row broke out over money for drugs.

He said Rebecca snatched up a bread knife and came towards him, threatening him.

Mr Butcher said he grabbed her hand, twisted her arm behind her back and pressed her up against the wall, and that's when the knife must have “went in”.

“I'm sorry it happened, I loved the girl” he told gardaí.

Ms Hoban was stabbed six times in total. Her injuries, one of which was 19cm deep, caused her lungs to collapse.

The DPP has directed that the offence is on the upper end of the scale.

The court heard the accused has 16 previous convictions in the UK including common assault, having sex with a 16-year-old girl, and making indecent photographs of children.

His defence lawyer, Mr Brendan Grehan SC, asked the court to take into account the fact that the accused did not have a record of violence, that the incident had occurred in a context of heavy abuse of substances, and that Mr Butcher was now clear of drugs.

He said Ms Hoban was very much part of Mr Butcher's life, and that he too had lost in all of this. Mr Grehan also read out an apology to Ms Hoban's family on the accused's behalf.

In it, Mr Butcher said he was sincerely sorry for what had happened and that he wanted them to know that all he could think about afterwards was helping Rebecca. He said the events of December 17 were never absent from his mind, but he knew no words of his could ease the pain and emptiness in their hearts.

Mr Justice George Birmingham is due to pass sentence this afternoon.