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Convicted Killer Attacks Prison Staff at Holme House Over Food Dispute

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A life-sentenced murderer assaulted two prison officers at Holme House Prison in Stockton during a dispute about cooking arrangements, leaving one officer with a lasting facial scar.

Kion McKenna, now 22, is serving a life sentence for the 2020 fatal stabbing of Louis Johnson at East Croydon Station in London. He was handed a minimum term of 16 years following his conviction for murder at the Old Bailey. Despite already being incarcerated, McKenna found himself back in court this week after a violent outburst against prison staff.

The incident occurred on April 17, 2024, at approximately 5:30 pm. Prosecutor Victoria Ball told Teesside Crown Court that prison officers were allowing inmates out of their cells to collect their meals in block four when McKenna refused to return to his cell. As tensions rose, several officers intervened.

Ms Ball described the convicted killer as visibly angry and aggressive, stating he was “agitated” with body language that raised alarm. When approached by staff, McKenna warned them, saying, “I’m not going in my f***** door. If anyone touches me, I’m a lifer, let’s see what happens.”

Despite de-escalation efforts, officers were forced to initiate a “guide and hold” tactic to escort him back into his cell. That’s when McKenna lashed out violently. He punched a male officer, knocking him to the ground, before turning on a female officer, striking her in the face and assaulting her again as she attempted to get back on her feet.

Both officers sustained facial injuries that required hospital treatment at James Cook University Hospital in Middlesbrough. Each had facial wounds that required gluing, and the male officer has been left with a permanent scar.

In his victim impact statement, the male officer expressed the psychological toll of the attack. “In 2024, I was physically assaulted by Kion McKenna simply for telling Kion no. As a result, I have suffered a permanent scar to my face.. The assault left me feeling deeply angry.”

Defence barrister Kate Danby told the court that McKenna suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), and that he believed his request to cook his own food was reasonable. However, he did not respond appropriately when challenged.

McKenna, currently being held at HMP Lowdham Grange in Nottinghamshire, was sentenced to 18 months for the assaults. This new sentence will be served simultaneously as his existing life term.

This is not McKenna’s first violent incident behind bars. He has previously faced court hearings for assaulting prison staff while in custody.

The court was also reminded of McKenna’s original conviction. He was just 16 years old when he fatally stabbed Louis Johnson during a confrontation between rival gangs.

Following the attack, McKenna fled London and attempted to change his appearance by shaving his head. CCTV later captured him smiling and dancing in a Chichester takeaway before handing himself in at a police station in Islington on January 29, 2020.

At the time of sentencing, Judge Mark Dennis KC (King's Counsel) lifted anonymity restrictions and highlighted McKenna's behaviour after the killing. He had written a rap boasting about the stabbing, referencing the victim's street name and the injuries inflicted. The judge said McKenna showed "little concern hitherto about publicising his actions" and pointed to the lyrics as evidence of a disturbing lack of remorse.

The original case saw the court hear how the stabbing stemmed from ongoing tensions between gangs in Tooting and Clapham, with McKenna and Johnson representing opposing sides.

Despite the heavy sentence for murder, McKenna's continued violent behaviour in prison has raised renewed concerns about inmate management and staff safety in high-security facilities.