

## Man Jailed for Brutal Van Stabbing

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A man has been jailed for over seven years following a brutal late-night stabbing in Grimsby that left the victim needing life-saving surgery. The attacker, Andrew Prior, 29, inflicted a near-fatal chest wound while the victim was asleep inside his van. The incident has been described in court as part of an escalating pattern of violent behaviour.

The attack occurred on 19 December last year, shortly before midnight, after the victim agreed to drop off a female friend at a house in Grimsby. He remained in his Transit-style

van to wait for her return. While sitting in the driver's seat and still wearing his seatbelt, the man fell asleep.

Hull Crown Court heard that the victim awoke to find Prior suddenly opening the driver's side door before stabbing him in the abdomen with a kitchen knife. The blade, approximately three inches long, caused a 2cm wound near the bottom right of his chest.

Despite his injuries, the victim managed to drive himself to Diana, Princess of Wales Hospital in Grimsby. Medical staff stabilised him before transferring him to Castle Hill Hospital near Hull for emergency surgery. The court was told that a significant quantity of blood had to be drained from his lungs and that the procedure was vital to his survival.

Prosecutor Marc Luxford said the surgery ultimately saved the victim's life. "If it hadn't been for that surgery, it would have been a lot worse," he said. The man remained in the hospital for ten days.

In a statement to the court, the victim explained how the attack had affected his mental state. "Since this incident, I am very jumpy and aggressive, but usually I am mellow. I break down and get emotional," he said. He described experiencing flashbacks and struggling with fear, especially at night.

Police arrested Prior at the Grimsby property where the female acquaintance had been dropped off. He was discovered in the bath, reportedly using drugs at the time. Forensic analysis revealed that his DNA was on the handle of the knife, and the victim's blood was found on the blade.

During police questioning, Prior declined to answer any questions. However, he later denied the charge, claiming the victim had been the aggressor and had brandished a machete. He suggested the injuries may have been self-inflicted. These claims were not accepted by the court.

Prior has a history of violent offences. He had 11 previous convictions, including assault and attempted robbery in 2016, affray in 2020, and intentional strangulation in 2022.

He pleaded guilty to wounding with intent on the day his trial was due to begin.

Defence barrister Michael Forrest told the court that Prior acknowledged he had problems managing his anger and emotions but was willing to seek help. "It has been a revolving door

over the last couple of years,” Mr Forrest said. “He has been back and forth from custody. He knows that is the result of his actions. He is the first to acknowledge that he needs some assistance.”

The court also heard that Prior has a young son in the Grimsby area and wider family ties in Liverpool.

Recorder Brian Whitehead, in passing sentence, said: “This is an escalating pattern of violent behaviour which got close to ending someone’s life. This was a near-fatal incident.” He described Prior as a dangerous offender and imposed a sentence of seven years and two months in prison, with an additional extended licence period of two years upon release.

“I hope you are a different man by then,” Recorder Whitehead told him. “I hope we don’t see you again.”

Prior will serve at least two-thirds of his custodial sentence before being considered for parole. He is also expected to undergo a psychological assessment during his imprisonment to address his behavioural issues.

The case highlights ongoing concerns about knife crime and violent repeat offenders in parts of Lincolnshire and Humberside, with local authorities continuing to urge community cooperation in tackling violence.