

## ***The Queen v Kerridge* [2021] NTSC (sentencing) (1 November 2021) – Northern Territory Supreme Court**

‘Coercive control’ – ‘Domestic violence order’ – ‘Economic abuse’ – ‘Emotional and psychological abuse’ – ‘Exposing children to domestic and family violence’ – ‘Financial abuse’ – ‘People living in regional, rural, and remote communities’ – ‘Physical violence and harm’ – ‘Sentencing’ – ‘Sexual and reproductive abuse’

Charges: Sexual intercourse without consent x12; aggravated assault x3.

Proceedings: Sentencing.

Facts: The male offender was found guilty of 12 counts of sexual intercourse without consent and 3 counts of aggravated assault committed against his female partner between 2017 and 2018. The relationship between the offender and the victim began in 2005 but after the birth of their first child in 2010 the relationship deteriorated.

The offender was controlling, demanding and repeatedly used threats to coerce compliance with his demands for unwanted sex acts, including threats to use a firearm pointed at the victim and also a cattle prod (which was actually used to shock her on the stomach). The offender blamed the victim for the couple’s financial troubles and the victim was forced to not only work full time but also financially manage the offender’s business and earn additional money repairing and selling second-hand items as well as attend to all of the domestic duties.

The Victim Impact Statement described the offender’s physical, emotional, and financial control over her and her ongoing fear of the offender; she lives in a motor home so she can leave in a hurry if the offender is released from prison as she is scared the offender will seek revenge.

Decision and Reasoning: the offender was sentenced to 15 years imprisonment, with a fixed non-parole period of 12 years. The Domestic Violence Order was altered to forbid the offender from having any direct or indirect contact with the victim for 20 years.

Justice Mildren found there were no mitigating circumstances. His Honour considered the offender’s prior convictions for assaults against the victim and aggravated assault against his son. His Honour classified the offences as really serious, and a significant sentence of imprisonment was needed for both personal and general deterrence. He found the offender’s behaviour to be ‘callous, controlling and sadistic.’