**IN THE SENIOR COURTS OF BELIZE**

**CENTRAL SESSION-BELIZE DISTRICT**

**IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE**

**INDICTMENT NO: C 004/2023**

**BETWEEN:**

**THE KING**

**and**

**RICHARD BENNETTT**

Defendant

**Before:**

The Honourable Mde. Justice Candace Nanton

**Appearances:**

Mrs. Portia Staine Ferguson, Senior Crown Counsel for the King

Mr. Leeroy Banner for the Defendant

---

2024: April 8; 9; 11; 12

---

**RULING ON NO CASE SUBMISSION**

**Background**

**[1] NANTON, J:** The Crown has indicted the Accused for two counts of murder contrary to **Section 117 read along with Section 106(1) of the Criminal Code** (hereinafter the

Code) arising out of the shooting deaths of Cynthia Conorquie and Allen Garcia which is alleged to have occurred on 17th day of March, 2021.

**[2]** On 8th April, 2024 this trial began by Judge sitting alone pursuant to **Section 65A (a) of the Indictable Procedure Act,** which outlines that the offence of murder shall be tried by a Judge sitting without a jury.

**[3]** At the commencement of this trial the Court conducted a *Voir Dire* to determine the admissibility of an oral utterance alleged to have been given by the Accused to Inspector Isaias Sanchez in the presence of Police Corporal Edward Ciau while in police custody.

**[4]** On 9th April, 2024 the Court delivered an oral ruling excluding the statement on the basis that it was obtained in breach of **The Commissioner's Guidelines for the Treatment of Persons in Detention 2015,** and that the breaches were so substantial and of such a degree that to admit the utterance would have an adverse effect on the fairness of the proceedings.

**[5]** The trial proceeded with the remaining evidence. On 11th April the Crown closed its case.

**[6]** On 12th April, 2024 Counsel for the Accused made a submission of no case to answer. The Court, after careful consideration of the submissions made by both sides upheld the submission of no case to answer. The Court now presents its written reasons for so doing.

**The Submissions**

**[7]** Mr. Banner for the Accused has submitted that there is no case to answer. He grounds his submission on both limbs of the **Galbraith**[1] test: firstly that there is no evidence that the crimes of murder alleged have been committed by the Accused and alternatively that even if there was some evidence, the state of the evidence, even taking the Crown's

[1] [1981] 1 WLR 1081

case at its highest, is such that the Court, in its fact-finding function, could not reasonably convict on it if properly directed.

**[8]** The Crown has submitted that there is a case to answer and that there is no basis for the case to be stopped at this stage. The Crown submitted that the evidence of identification from witnesses Andrew Conorquie and Corporal Shaheed Mai establish that the Accused is the person seen on video footage entering and exiting the yard next to where the victims were shot at the time that they were shot. The Crown contends that this circumstantial evidence is sufficient to establish a *prima facie* case of murder against the Accused.

**The Test on a Submission of no Case**

**[9]** The test in this jurisdiction for when a case should be stopped is examined by our Apex Court, the Caribbean Court of Justice ("the CCJ") in the Belizean case of **Bennettt v R**[2] , per Wit JCCJ:

> *"[9] The power to stop the trial at the close of the prosecution case is founded in the common law. The appropriate tests are to be found in the well-known case* ***R v Galbraith****. In accordance with that decision, there is no difficulty 'if there is no evidence that the crime alleged has been committed by the defendant …The judge will of course stop the case.' The difficulty arises, Lord Lane CJ said, 'where there is some evidence, but it is of a tenuous character, for example because of inherent weakness or vagueness or because it is inconsistent with other evidence.' He then identified two scenarios: '(a) Where the judge comes to the conclusion that the [prosecution] evidence, taken at its highest, is such that a jury properly directed could not properly convict upon it, it is his duty, upon a submission being made, to stop the case. (b) Where however the [prosecution] evidence is such that the strength or weakness depends on the view to be*

[2] 94 WIR 126

*taken of the witness's reliability, or other matters which are generally speaking to be taken within the province of the jury and where on one possible view of the facts there is evidence upon which a jury could properly come to the conclusion that the defendant is guilty, then the judge should allow the matter to be tried by the jury.'"*

**[10]** The Court interprets **Bennettt** as saying, then in this context that this Court can only stop this case without calling upon the Defendant to answer the charge:

(i) if there is no evidence to make out any element of the charge;

(ii) if the evidence, taken at its highest, is so weak, vague or inconsistent that a reasonable fact finder could not convict.

**[11]** The test for a no-case submission is the same for both a Judge-alone trial as in a jury trial this is borne out by a decision of the Northern Ireland Court of Appeal in **Chief Constable v Lo**[3] , per Kerr LCJ:

*"[14] The proper approach of a judge or magistrate sitting without a jury does not, therefore, involve the application of a different test from that of the second limb in Galbraith. The exercise that the judge must engage in is the same, suitably adjusted to reflect the fact that he is the tribunal of fact. It is important to note that the judge should not ask himself the question, at the close of the prosecution case, 'do I have a reasonable doubt?' The question that he should ask is whether he is convinced that there are no circumstances in which he could properly convict. Where evidence of the offence charged has been given, the judge could only reach that conclusion where the evidence was so weak or so discredited that it could not conceivably support a guilty verdict."*

[3][2006] NICA 3

**[12]** The Court in this regard also relies upon the Belizean High Court decision of **R v Nicoli Rhys**[4] , per Benjamin CJ:

> *"[5]…It is important for the Court in the present case to remind itself that at this stage of the case, the judge must not embark on a fact-finding exercise that involves the assessment of the strength of the evidence and the drawing of definitive inferences. Rather, the (judge) (sic) must identify the inferences capable of being drawn that are most favourable to the prosecution and determine whether a reasonable mind could arrive at a verdict of guilt to the criminal standard. The judge is required to look at the evidence critically and as a whole, and answer whether there can be a conviction without irrationality."*

**[13]** The high nature of the threshold that the Defendant must clear in relation to the second limb of **Galbraith** is demonstrated to this Court by two decisions. The first is that of the Belizean Privy Council decision of **Taibo v R**[5] where the Board held that even if a case is "very thin" if a tribunal of fact could without irrationality, be satisfied of guilt the Court is required to let the matter proceed. The second is a recent Barbadian CCJ decision of **James Fields v The State**[6]. In this case the CCJ upheld that a fact finder, in that case a jury, is entitled, in their freedom to determine for themselves what facts that they accept or not, to rely on the evidence of a witness even if they accept at certain points that that witness has lied, thus highlighting the danger at the no-case stage of trying to resolve questions concerning who is telling the truth and what evidence is or is not to be believed, per Saunders PCCJ and Anderson JCCJ:

> *"[32] It is elementary law that the judge is the trier of law, and the jury is the trier of fact. The categories of evidence which are admissible are matters of law for the judge; the weight to be placed on admissible evidence is a matter of fact for the jury. The criminal law provides multitudes of examples where*

[4] Indictment No C29/2012
[5] (1996) 48 WIR 74 at p 84.
[6] [2023] CCJ 13 (AJ) BB.

*the judge may properly exclude certain categories of evidence from consideration by the jury. A judge is also entitled to stop the trial altogether at the end of the prosecution's case if there is no evidence that the crime has been committed by the defendant or where the evidence given is of a tenuous character, for example, because of inherent weakness or vagueness or because it is inconsistent with other evidence. But even in such cases where the evidence is tenuous, if its strength or weakness depends on the view to be taken of a witness' reliability, or other matters which are generally speaking within the province of the jury, and on one possible view of the facts there is evidence upon which a jury could properly come to the conclusion that the defendant is guilty, then the judge should allow the case to be tried by the jury…*

*[33] The role of the jury is to evaluate the testimony of the witnesses and to determine what weight and reliability to assign to their statements. This role is crucial in the fact-finding process. In determining credibility, the jurors may have regard to the demeanour, consistency, bias or motive, prior inconsistent statements, corroborating evidence, and all the various factors a person will use in their daily life in order to assess and distinguish between truth and falsity. The fact that a witness has provided false information on one point under oath can impact the credibility of that witness and the weight given to their testimony. But once the case has been given over to the jury, it is the jury and the jury alone that has the responsibility to carefully consider the implications of the untruthfulness and evaluate how it affects the overall credibility of the witness' testimony on the essential question(s) in issue."*

**Analysis**

**[14]** The Court first examines the elements of the crime of murder for which the Defendant stands indicted. The definition of murder is found at **Section 117 of the Code**:

*"117. Every person who intentionally causes the death of another person by any unlawful harm is guilty of murder, unless his crime is reduced to manslaughter by reason of such extreme provocation, or other matter of partial excuse as in the next following sections mentioned."*

**[15]** The Court is assisted in establishing the elements of the offence of murder by a decision of our Court of Appeal in **Peter Augustine v R**[7], per Carey JA:

*"11. Murder is defined in the Criminal Code as intentionally causing the death of another without justification or provocation…It was essential to emphasize… that the specific intent which the prosecution must establish on the charge against him was an intent to kill."*

**[16]** The elements of murder in the context of this case, in the Court's view, require proof of the following:

1) That Cynthia Conorquie and Allen Garcia are deceased.
2) That their deaths were caused by the act of the Accused.
3) That the Accused specifically intended to kill the deceased persons.
4) That there was no legal justification for the killing of the deceased persons.
5) That the Accused was not legally provoked into killing the deceased persons.

**[17]** The case for the Crown to prove the charges of murder rests solely on video footage evidence extracted by CIB IT Technician Corporal Edward Ciau from a DVR situated at a house located at #1003 Magazine Street, and video footage extracted from HD recorders located at Raccoon Street Police Station. Corporal Ciau burnt these extracts onto a DVD-R. That DVD-R was admitted into evidence without objection as **EC1.**

[7] Criminal Appeal No. 8 of 2001.

**[18]** Inspector Isaias Sanchez, in the presence of Corporal Edward Ciau, showed the extracted video footage to witnesses Andrew Conorquie and Corporal Mai, who both identified the Accused as one of the individuals seen on the extracted video footage.

**[19]** The first relevant video extract shows three individuals walking out of a yard on Magazine Street. Andrew Conorquie identified one of these individuals as the Accused.

**[20]** The second relevant video extract shows two male persons "creep" walking through a walkway between two houses heading towards the fence separating that house from the house where the shooting occurred. Andrew Conorquie and Corporal Mai both identify the Accused as the male individual with a flashlight in his hand.

**[21]** The third relevant video extract shows male individuals walking out from underneath a house at Magazine Road. Andrew Conorquie identifies one of those individuals as the Accused.

**[22]** The footage obtained from Racoon Street Police Station shows Magazine Street, and an intersection between Magazine Road and Logwood. The relevant portion of this video upon which the Crown relies is when an unidentified bare backed male individual with a dreadlocks hairstyle is shown running towards a house identified as the Accused's home by Andrew Conorquie. That house is located opposite to where the shootings occurred.

**Whether the Crown has Led Evidence on Each Element of the Offence of Murder**

**[23]** It is not disputed that the Crown has led evidence of the first element i.e. that Cynthia Conorquie and Allen Garcia are dead, and that their deaths were caused by gunshot wounds. The main issue for determination is whether the Crown has led evidence that of the other elements and more pointedly that it was an act of the Accused that caused their deaths.

**[24]** The quality of the identification evidence led by the Crown will be examined below- however, proceeding on the assumption that the identification evidence is of a sufficient quality to be left before the tribunal of fact- the question remains whether the evidence advanced is *prima facie* evidence capable of establishing the guilt of the Accused.

**[25]** Even accepting the correctness of the identification flowing from the video evidence, this Court finds that the Crown has failed to demonstrate either directly or indirectly through circumstantial evidence, a causal connection between an act of the Accused and the shooting death of the Deceased persons. The video evidence at best shows the Accused at a house next to where the shooting occurred in the company of other persons around the time when the shootings occur. The evidence that came out of the Crown's case is that the Accused lived in the house opposite to where the shootings occurred and that he frequented the home of the deceased. Therefore the whole of the evidence i.e. that he is seen in the area of the shooting, "creep walking" in the company of other individuals at the time of the shooting, and that someone who looked like him proceeded to his house after the shooting, without more, cannot reasonably lead to any inference of guilt.

**[26]** The Court also takes notice that the Crown's case was not one of joint enterprise but indicted him as the sole offender. The Court is unable to decipher the evidence capable of supporting that case.

**[27]** In **August**[8]**,** the case for the Prosecution was based solely on circumstantial evidence. the Caribbean Court of Justice (CJ) noted, at [32]:

> *It is well established that it is "no derogation of evidence to say that it is circumstantial". The nature and value of circumstantial evidence have been described as follows: "Circumstantial evidence is particularly powerful when it proves a variety of different facts all of which point to the same conclusion… [it] 'works by cumulatively, in geometrical progression, eliminating other possibilities' and has been likened to a rope comprised of*

[8] [2018] CCJ 7 (AJ)

*several cords: 'One strand of the cord might be insufficient to sustain the weight, but three stranded together may be quite of sufficient strength. Thus it may be in circumstantial evidence – there may be a combination of circumstances, no one of which would raise a reasonable conviction or more than a mere suspicion; but the three taken together may create a strong conclusion of guilt with as much certainty as human affairs can require or admit of.'"…*

*[38]: A case built on circumstantial evidence often amounts to an accumulation of what might otherwise be dismissed as happenstance. The nature of circumstantial evidence is such that while no single strand of evidence would be sufficient to prove the defendant's guilt beyond reasonable doubt, when the strands are woven together, they all lead to the inexorable view that the defendant's guilt is proved beyond reasonable doubt. There was therefore a serious misdirection wholly in August's favour when the trial judge directed the jury that each strand of the circumstantial evidence required its own proof of August's guilt beyond reasonable doubt. It is not the individual strand that required proof beyond reasonable doubt, but the whole. The cogency of the inference of guilt therefore was built not on any particular strand of evidence but on the cumulative strength of the strands of circumstantial evidence. Accordingly, the circumstantial evidence, as a whole, adduced by the prosecution pointed sufficiently to August's guilt to entitle the jury to convict him.*

**[28]** At the conclusion of the Prosecution's case, the question for the Judge is whether, looked at critically and in the round, the jury could safely convict: **P (JM)**[9] **.** In this case, the Court is hard-pressed to find the strands which collectively can support a finding a guilt beyond reasonable doubt. There is quite plainly no evidence upon which a fact finder can safely convict. The case of **Masih**[10] per Pitchford LJ. poses the question as:

[9] [2007] EWCA Crim 3216, [2008] 2 Cr App R 6.
[10] [2015] EWCA Crim 477

*Could a reasonable jury, properly directed, exclude all realistic possibilities consistent with the defendant's innocence?*'- the answer to that question in this case is a definitive no.

**[29]** The Court recognises that the Court's resolution of the question above is sufficient to put an end to this matter; however, for the sake of completeness the Court will also analyse the quality of the identification evidence, which illustrates that the case could not have advanced on the basis of either limb of the **Galbraith** test.

**Identification Evidence**

**[30]** This Court accepts that there is no effective distinction as concerns admissibility between a direct view of the action of an individual by a bystander and a view of those activities by someone on a video display unit of a camera, or a view of those activities on a recording of what the camera recorded. He who saw may describe what he saw, because it is relevant evidence provided that that which is seen on the camera or recording is connected by sufficient evidence to the alleged actions of the Accused at the time and place in question. As with the witness who saw directly, so with him who viewed a display or recording, the weight and reliability of his evidence will depend upon assessment of all relevant considerations, including the clarity of the recording, its length, and, where identification is in issue, the witness's prior knowledge of the person said to be identified, in accordance with well-established principles.

**[31]** Where there is a recording, as in this case, a witness has the opportunity to study again and again what may be a fleeting glimpse of a short incident, and that study may affect greatly both his ability to describe what he saw and his confidence in an identification. When the film or recording is shown to the Court, his evidence and the validity of his increased confidence, if he has any, can be assessed in the light of what the Court itself can see. When the film or recording is not available, or is not produced, the Court will, and in my view must, hesitate and consider very carefully indeed before finding themselves made sure of guilt upon such evidence. But if they are made sure of guilt by

such evidence, having correctly directed themselves with reference to it, there is no reason in law why they should not convict. It is direct evidence of what was seen to be happening in a particular place at a particular time and, like all direct evidence, may vary greatly in its weight, credibility and reliability.

**[32]** On a submission of no case to answer the Court is duty bound to assess the quality of the identification evidence to determine whether this case falls within the second limb of the **Galbraith** test. The Court appreciates that matters of identification/recognition are generally speaking matters of fact for the tribunal of fact unless it is unsupported and so poor that no conviction is possible.

**[33]** The Privy Council in **R v Daley**[11] restated the law with respect to evidence of visual identification. On the issue of withdrawal of a case from a jury, Lord Mustill, in delivering the advice of the Board, at page 334 stated:

> *"…in the kind of identification case dealt with by R v Turnbull the case is withdrawn from the jury not because the judge considers the witness is lying but because the evidence even if taken to be honest has a base so slender that it is unreliable and therefore not sufficient to found a conviction: and indeed as R v Turnbull itself emphasized, the fact that an honest witness may be mistaken on identification is a particular source of risk. When assessing the 'quality' of the evidence under the Turnbull doctrine, the jury is protected from acting upon the type of evidence which, even if believed, experience has shown to be a possible source of injustice."*

**[34]** The Court must ensure that the quality of the identification, whether made by a bystander seeing events real time or by someone viewing a video recording, is of a sufficient quality that it can safely be left to the fact finder for its assessment. Thankfully, in this case the actual video evidence was tendered and when shown during the course of the proceedings it was slowed down and zoomed in, in the same manner in which the videos were shown to the witnesses. The Court therefore had ample opportunity to view

[11] (1993) 43 WIR 325

what the witnesses viewed and the witnesses were able to state at which points they made their identifications and on the basis of what characteristics.

**Andrew Conorquie**

**[35]** Andrew Conorquie identified the Accused from three extracts of video footage: the first was where three individuals are walking in a yard:

> *That is Richard Benet the person in the back of the other person. I can say that is Richard Benet- at that moment in time he had long dreads; he had a mask over the dreads, but you can still see the hair swinging by the way he walk; he walks with a hip upright; I know him to a tee; I know his reactions his movements his walk. He walks with a hop (witness demonstrates). I know him from he born; all his life I know him; he enter into my house like family, my ma my pa welcome him in like they own kids*
>
> *Any other way you can say that is Richard Bennett?*
>
> *He has dark complexion that's it*

**[36]** The second video where two individuals are seen creep walking:

> *The second video is when he and his friend was coming in through Ms. Dorothy's house; he has a flashlight in his hand – Richard Bennett…The second video shows he and his friend coming from the middle of the yard between the two house Ms. Dorothy's house and Ms. Dorothy son house— the walkway in between the two house heading to the back towards my fence Richard have a flashlight in his hand…*
>
> *…In the second video you can see his reactions and movements better than the first video, so you can know who from who; he was wearing the same black Nike slippers and ¾ pants with the t-shirt then you can see his dreads out and his head covered with one of the masks – the mask covered his*

*hair. By reaction and movements I mean by the way – Richard Benet – I grew up with him I know his movements; how he react when we play and run and jump or do anything, I know his reactions on certain things. He was the first one leading the way with the flashlight ducking and moving like sideway after that you cannot no more cause he went too close to the fence and you can't see no more. By his movements his natural personality when he do certain things like he ah go pon hop he was the first one dipping (witness demonstrates) the other one at the back was his friend.*

**[37]** The other footage from #1003 Magazine Street showed the person he identified as the Accused heading out from underneath a house. He knew that it was the Accused because the person he saw in the other videos wore the same clothing, and he said that this video was just from a different angle.

**[38]** The witness was also shown the video from Raccoon Street Police Station where he said that the individual seen running towards the Accused's home looked like the Accused, because the person had the dreadlock hairstyle, but without the stockings over his head and the person was not wearing a shirt. He also stated that that video was from a further distance.

**[39]** In cross examination the witness accepted that a lot of people in that area are of Creole descent and some wear dreadlocked hairstyles, and a lot of young men wear Nike slippers and dress in the same way as the person he identified as the Accused. He stated that he watched the video over and over.

**Shaheed Mai**

**[40]** Shaheed Mai identified the Accused from the video footage which shows two individuals "creep walking" in a yard towards a fence. The following is extracted from his evidence and details his identification of the Accused:

*Whilst observing the video at about 8 seconds into the video footage, I clearly saw two male persons came into frame; the one at the front I could have clearly seen that that male person was wearing a black hair covering that extended to about the center of his back; I could have also clearly seen that male person was wearing a black in colour slipper with a white check mark on both slippers. I then observed that specific male person went down into a creeping position and walked towards what I believe was a fence or a house side. I then at that point immediately informed Inspector Sanchez that I recognized that male person to be Richard Bennett, whom I also know to be as 'Plunky', and that the other male person I observed to wear a bucket style hat, I could not have identified…*

*Whilst watching the video, Officer Ciau had zoomed into the video where I could have clearly identified Richard Bennett, as well as, because I have known Richard Bennett for several years having conducted searches on him as well as interacting with him whilst on duty. I was able to identify him by the way that he walked, his facial feature, which I know is specific to him as well as at the time knowing that he had dreadlock style hair. I know him to have a strut like hopping style walk, which I have known him to have all the years that I have known him…I knew Richard Bennett before becoming a police officer as we would interact or play together as young man at the basketball court located on the Rogers Stadium compound as well as playing football and would at times walk with him and his sister, who were attending the Queens Street Primary School. So, I have known Richard Bennett personally from about before 2008 to this time, and the last time that I had interacted personally with Richard Bennett was sometime in January of 2021 whereby, I spoke with him for about 15 minutes where he had expressed to me information.*

**[41]** Under cross examination there were robust challenges to much of Corporal Mai's evidence, which is not worth repeating at this stage except, to say that the video was

zoomed in at various stages mentioned by the witness, and the witness accepted that he could not see specific facial features such as the nose, eyes, or lips of the individuals in the footage. The witness; however, maintained that he was able to see the right jaw line of the individual whom he identified as the Accused. The witness also accepted that he would not have interacted with the Accused from 2015- when he became a police officer- to 2020 as the Accused was in custody during that time. His knowledge of the Accused was according to him in January of 2021 when he conducted searches and before he became a police officer when they would play basketball together.

**[42]** The Court takes the case of the Crown at its highest for the determination of this issue of the quality of the identification evidence. The Court, without assessing the truthfulness of the witness' accounts finds that the quality of all of the video evidence tendered was too poor for a proper identification to have been made for the following reasons:

i. The videos are not clear- they are in infrared without colour and the lighting is poor as it is captured at night.
ii. The movement in the videos are very quick and even when slowed down the images therein are blurred.
iii. There is a significant distance between the individuals and the cameras which recorded them.
iv. The cameras were located at a height so that the view is downwards and not frontal. There was thus a very limited view of the individual.
v. The faces of the individuals cannot be seen at all- a side profile is shown in one captured still frame, but that image is indistinguishable.
vi. The hair which was a feature identified by both witnesses is covered by a stocking.
vii. The individual identified as the Accused at best is shown for no more than 8 seconds in one video (the creeping video) and for no more than a couple seconds in the other two videos in which he was identified.

viii. The walk described by both witnesses is barely captured and if, at all it was a fleeting glance, since from the time both individuals entered the frame they walked in a similar creeping manner.

**[43]** The Court acknowledges that the Crown's case is one of recognition and that the witnesses, unlike this Court, have known the Accused for many years prior. Mr Conorquie stated quite emphatically the close relationship he had with the Accused, that he grew up with him and that he knew him to a "tee", his mannerisms, his movements etc. The witness was extremely confident in the strength of his identification. Witness Mai similarly described the extent of his prior knowledge of the Accused.

**[44]** The Court acknowledges the fact that a recognition case is likely to be stronger than identification of strangers. However, it is possible that several witnesses can be mistaken even regards someone known to them. Identification evidence is a category of evidence that requires special caution. The reliability of their evidence depends on the quality of the video evidence. The Court finds that for the reasons advanced above there was insufficient opportunity for the witnesses to observe the peculiar features of the Accused that they claimed to have observed on the video and by which they have identified him.

**[45]** The only supporting evidence of the identification that is relied upon i.e. that the Accused was arrested with a Nike slippers similar to that alleged to have been worn on the video footage is not sufficient to ground an otherwise, unreliable identification.

**[46]** The Court finds that the evidence is so tenuous that no reasonable tribunal of fact could properly convict. In those circumstances the application to withdraw the case before its fact-finding function is upheld by the Court. The Court will not call upon the Defendant to answer the charge.

**Disposition**

**[47]** The no case submission is upheld and the Accused is discharged.

**Post Script**

**[48]** The Court wishes to state that this is a case where it is evident that there is an urgent need for pre-charge consultation between the police and the Prosecution in line with the recommendations made by the Academy for Law of the Caribbean Court of Justice [CCJ] at its Criminal Justice Reform, which resulted in the adoption of the **Needham's Point Declaration on Criminal Justice Reform: Achieving A Modern Criminal Justice System (in the Caribbean)**. This declaration was adopted by all participating countries including Belize. Such consultation may not only result in more successful prosecutions, but may also result in a reduction of cases where the paucity of evidence is only realised years into the case. This can save precious resource which can be redirected elsewhere in the Criminal Justice System.

**Candace Nanton**
High Court Judge
Senior Courts Belize
Dated 18th April, 2024