

Public Prosecutor v Dhanabalan s/o A Gopalkrishnan  
[2003] SGHC 178

**Case Number** : CC 33/2003  
**Decision Date** : 21 August 2003  
**Tribunal/Court** : High Court  
**Coram** : Choo Han Teck J  
**Counsel Name(s)** : G. Kannan and Derek Kang (Attorney-General's Chambers) for the Public Prosecutor; Subhas Anandan and Anand Nalachandran (Harry Elias Partnership) for the Accused  
**Parties** : Public Prosecutor — Dhanabalan s/o A Gopalkrishnan

*Criminal Procedure and Sentencing – Sentencing – Trafficking in controlled drugs.*

1 The accused Dhanabalan s/o A Gopalkrishnan aged 33 pleaded guilty to two charges of trafficking in a controlled drug. The first charge related to the trafficking of 499.99g of cannabis, and the second in respect of 749.99g of cannabis mixture. He was arrested on 24 February 2003 at 8.35pm in a flat at Blk 52 Teban Gardens after cutting and packing cannabis from a bigger block of the substance.

2 He was retrenched from his job as an operations executive at Natsteel some time in July 2002. He tried a new job selling food at a coffeeshop but found it hard to make ends meet. He told his friend Raman Selvam about his impecuniosity. Raman then offered to pay him \$100 for each block of cannabis that he helps Raman cut and pack. The prosecution accepts that the accused was not the main trafficker. There were also other mitigating factors in relation to his role. He had refused to transport the packed cannabis and saw his role simply as an assistant, packing the cannabis for his friend to traffic. He had no known previous record for any drug offence. And, finally, the co-operation that he had rendered the Central Narcotics Bureau and the prosecutor in the investigation of his case as well as Raman's.

3 The minimum sentence for the offences which he had pleaded guilty to was 20 years imprisonment and 15 strokes of the cane. In view of the circumstances and facts of his case I sentenced him to 20 years imprisonment for each of the two charges as well as 15 strokes of the cane for each charge. I ordered the terms of imprisonment to be served concurrently. The maximum number of strokes, however, is restricted to 24 by virtue of s 230 of the Criminal Procedure Code, Ch 68.