# Mark Gordon criticises police manhunt for contributing to newborn Victoria’s death



Mark Gordon has laid the blame for the tragic death of his newborn daughter, Victoria, at the feet of a police manhunt, asserting that if events had unfolded naturally, she might still be alive. As he took the stand during his retrial at the Old Bailey in London, Gordon, 50, and his partner Constance Marten, 38, faced charges of manslaughter by gross negligence and causing or allowing the death of their child. The trial has garnered significant media attention due to the harrowing circumstances surrounding the case.

Victoria's decomposed body was discovered concealed in a shopping bag within a shed in Brighton in March 2023, two months after the couple went into hiding. Previously, in a trial earlier this year, Marten and Gordon were convicted of concealing Victoria's birth and perverting the course of justice by failing to report her death. Their initial trial concluded with a hung jury regarding the manslaughter charge, necessitating the current retrial.

Gordon testified that a series of unfortunate events led them to live in transient conditions. After their car caught fire, police were alerted to their situation and initiated a national search. He claimed that the police manhunt disrupted their lives and catalysed their decision to evade authorities, stating, "If that manhunt hadn't happened… who knows what could have happened?" Gordon expressed frustration with the police's decision to escalate their situation into a manhunt, questioning the rationale behind it. "No laws were being broken to justify a national manhunt," he stated, highlighting the potential for worse outcomes stemming from the police's aggressive approach.

In his testimony, Gordon portrayed Marten as a devoted and strong partner, asserting they had no intention of harming their child. He contended that their decisions were rooted in fear rather than malice, arguing that "paranoia… but definitely not criminal intent" drove their actions during that tumultuous period. His personal representation in court has added an additional layer of drama, as he is navigating the legal proceedings without the assistance of barristers, relying instead on the court’s guidance.

The couple's journey through the British countryside over several weeks involved sleeping in freezing conditions, as they attempted to avoid detection while caring for their newborn. Criticism surrounding their preparedness as parents has been rampant, particularly given the extreme environments they reportedly subjected their child to. It has emerged that before their arrest, the couple lived off the grid, relying on the scant resources available to the homeless.

The prosecution is tasked with scrutinising the circumstances that led to the baby's death, with experts revealing that the advanced decomposition of Victoria’s body rendered it difficult to ascertain a definitive cause of death. This has led to compelling debates about negligence and responsibility, with the court previously highlighting a history of poor choices made within the couple’s lifestyle.

In today's courtroom dramas, emotions have run high, with details revealed about the couple’s living conditions and Gordon's responses during police interviews. During one such exchange, he seemed to redirect the focus onto Marten, stating she "would never do anything to harm a child." Such sentiments, while showcasing a protective instinct, also prompt questions regarding their overall care strategy for Victoria.

The complexities of this case extend beyond mere legal ramifications, touching on societal concerns about parental responsibilities, mental health, and the dynamics of familial situations exacerbated by social pressures and legal scrutiny. The upcoming deliberations in the retrial, scheduled for March 2025, will be pivotal in determining how the court interprets the couple's intentions and the impact of external pressures on their actions.

As the narrative unfolds, it stands as a stark reminder of the fragility of life and the serious implications surrounding care and responsibility in challenging circumstances. The ongoing trial not only seeks justice for Victoria but also raises essential discussions about the interplay between authority, parental rights, and the depths of human desperation.

### Reference Map

* Paragraph 1: [[1]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cx2ee74mlwzo), [[2]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cx2ee74mlwzo)
* Paragraph 2: [[2]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cx2ee74mlwzo), [[3]](https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2024/06/26/constance-marten-mark-gordon-guilty-concealing-birth-child/)
* Paragraph 3: [[3]](https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2024/06/26/constance-marten-mark-gordon-guilty-concealing-birth-child/), [[6]](https://news.sky.com/story/constance-marten-and-mark-gordon-trial-mother-asked-where-is-your-baby-as-partner-demanded-food-and-drink-on-arrest-13065415)
* Paragraph 4: [[4]](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cq55x87nqnzo), [[7]](https://news.sky.com/story/constance-martens-partner-mark-gordon-says-aristocrat-accused-of-manslaughter-of-their-baby-was-a-good-mother-13076240)
* Paragraph 5: [[5]](https://news.sky.com/story/constance-marten-woman-on-trial-over-daughters-death-says-wealthy-family-saw-her-as-an-embarrassment-13363817), [[6]](https://news.sky.com/story/constance-marten-and-mark-gordon-trial-mother-asked-where-is-your-baby-as-partner-demanded-food-and-drink-on-arrest-13065415)
* Paragraph 6: [[6]](https://news.sky.com/story/constance-marten-and-mark-gordon-trial-mother-asked-where-is-your-baby-as-partner-demanded-food-and-drink-on-arrest-13065415), [[7]](https://news.sky.com/story/constance-martens-partner-mark-gordon-says-aristocrat-accused-of-manslaughter-of-their-baby-was-a-good-mother-13076240)
* Paragraph 7: [[5]](https://news.sky.com/story/constance-marten-woman-on-trial-over-daughters-death-says-wealthy-family-saw-her-as-an-embarrassment-13363817), [[3]](https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2024/06/26/constance-marten-mark-gordon-guilty-concealing-birth-child/)
* Paragraph 8: [[1]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cx2ee74mlwzo), [[4]](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cq55x87nqnzo)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cx2ee74mlwzo> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cx2ee74mlwzo> - Mark Gordon, 50, and his partner Constance Marten, 38, are on trial at the Old Bailey in London, facing charges of manslaughter by gross negligence and causing or allowing the death of their newborn daughter, Victoria. The couple's decomposed body was found in a shopping bag in a Brighton allotment shed in March 2023, two months after they went on the run. During the previous trial, Marten and Gordon were found guilty of concealing Victoria's birth and perverting the course of justice by not reporting her death. Gordon, who is now representing himself, testified that the police manhunt contributed to the baby's death, stating, "If it had naturally played out, I believe the baby would have been alive today." He also criticized the national manhunt, questioning, "Who gave the command to do a national manhunt?"
3. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2024/06/26/constance-marten-mark-gordon-guilty-concealing-birth-child/> - Constance Marten and Mark Gordon have been found guilty of concealing the birth of their baby daughter and perverting the course of justice in relation to her death. However, they are to face a retrial after the jury in the case failed to reach a verdict on the charge of manslaughter by gross negligence. Marten, 37, and Gordon, 50, were accused of causing the death of their daughter, Victoria, by going on the run and sleeping rough with her in freezing temperatures in January last year. The couple became the subject of a manhunt when their burnt-out car was discovered on the M62 near Bolton, with evidence suggesting Marten had given birth in secret. The couple spent 54 days on the run, criss-crossing the country, before hiding out in a tent on the South Downs. They were eventually arrested in Brighton, East Sussex, at 9.35pm on Feb 27 on suspicion of child neglect, but Victoria was not with them. Her body was discovered hidden in a disused shed two days later. The first trial began in January and had been due to finish by mid-March, but a series of delays resulted in proceedings overrunning by more than three months. The jury found the pair guilty of concealing the birth of a child and perverting the course of justice, but could not reach a verdict on the charge of manslaughter by gross negligence, leading to a retrial being scheduled for March 2025.
4. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cq55x87nqnzo> - An Old Bailey jury has been discharged in the case of Constance Marten and Mark Gordon after being unable to reach verdicts. Marten, 37, and Gordon, 50, denied manslaughter by gross negligence of their newborn baby Victoria, whose body was found inside a shopping bag in a shed in Brighton on 1 March 2023. The jury heard pathologists had been unable to establish how Victoria had died because her body was so badly decomposed. The prosecution will now have to consider whether to seek a retrial. The trial began almost five months ago on 25 January and the jury of five women and five men spent 72 hours and 33 minutes deliberating. On Wednesday, Judge Mark Lucraft KC thanked jurors for their "extraordinary" public service and the "dedication" they have shown in the case. The judge said he was conscious the jurors had put their lives on hold for the trial and excused them from jury service for the rest of their lives. A judge can decide to discharge a jury if they have been unable to reach a majority verdict. Any retrial then requires that a new jury be appointed. A high-risk missing persons manhunt had been launched for the couple and their baby on 5 January 2023, after a car they had been travelling in was discovered on fire on the M61 near Bolton. The couple were eventually found in Brighton on 27 February 2023, two days before Victoria's body was discovered. As well as denying the charge of manslaughter by gross negligence, the couple denied four other charges: concealment of the baby's birth; child cruelty; causing or allowing her death; and perverting the course of justice by concealing the body.
5. <https://news.sky.com/story/constance-marten-woman-on-trial-over-daughters-death-says-wealthy-family-saw-her-as-an-embarrassment-13363817> - Constance Marten, 37, and her partner Mark Gordon, 50, deny the gross negligence manslaughter of their daughter Victoria and causing or allowing her death between 4 January and 27 February 2023. Her body was discovered with rubbish inside a shopping bag in a disused shed near Brighton after the couple were arrested on 27 February 2023, following a high-profile hunt for the missing child. At the Old Bailey on Thursday, Gordon, who is representing himself, asked Marten about if she recalled vehicles randomly stopping during the period they were together.
6. <https://news.sky.com/story/constance-marten-and-mark-gordon-trial-mother-asked-where-is-your-baby-as-partner-demanded-food-and-drink-on-arrest-13065415> - Jurors have been shown the dramatic moment police arrested an aristocrat and repeatedly asked her: "Where is your child?" Constance Marten, 36, was tracked down by officers in Brighton along with Mark Gordon, 49, after the couple went off grid and were reportedly living in a tent with their newborn daughter Victoria in February last year. Victoria's body was found days later in a Lidl supermarket bag covered in rubbish in a disused shed. An officer's bodycam footage showing the moment of arrest sees Marten being told that she is under arrest for child neglect. Marten replied: "For doing what?" She was then asked by officers: "Where's your child? Where's your child? Sorry, where is your child, we need to know?" to which she did not respond. A dog handler then asks her: "Tell me now because I'm going to send the dog into the wood to try and find someone so you tell me where it is now." Marten was then further arrested for concealment of the birth of a child, which she is heard saying was "not an arrestable offence", adding: "You can't arrest someone for hiding a pregnancy." Sergeant Robert Button was one of the officers who assisted in the arrest. He told jurors at the Old Bailey on Tuesday that Marten appeared to be wearing "furniture stuffing" for insulation and the pair smelled "unclean and unwashed". After he approached Gordon, Sergeant Button is heard saying: "Hello. Sorry mate, can you stop for a second? Stop alright, I need to speak to you." When asked why he was running away, Gordon resisted arrest, complaining that he was hungry and "wasn't doing anything". A distressed Marten then intervened saying: "Stop with him please, he's not well. Oh my god, I can't watch. Leave him alone. Let him eat his food. He's starving."
7. <https://news.sky.com/story/constance-martens-partner-mark-gordon-says-aristocrat-accused-of-manslaughter-of-their-baby-was-a-good-mother-13076240> - Marten and Gordon were arrested in Brighton seven weeks later on 27 February 2023. They refused to tell police the location of their baby before officers discovered the girl's body in a Lidl supermarket bag in a disused shed a few days later on 1 March. Gordon originally refused to answer questions when he and Marten were arrested, but in a police interview on 2 March he started by saying he would give his testimony to a jury. A detective then told him that Marten had confirmed a baby who was found dead the day before was their daughter, the court heard. Gordon was also informed that Marten had explained the child died after she fell asleep holding her but that he had advised her to say it was a "cot death", jurors heard. After consulting with his lawyer, Gordon said that "barring a few nuances" that was what happened. Gordon told police: "It had to be very traumatic for her, you have to understand I love her. I love her. I would do anything for her and she loves children and that's our fifth child and we wanted to have that child." Gordon suggested Marten was suffering from "a post-traumatic thing". "She is a very special person. She's an awesome woman and she would never do anything to harm a child under any circumstances," he said. He told police that they had wanted to "safeguard" the child, the "whole thing" was for her and what happened could not have been predicted. Gordon told officers: "What have I done that you don't think is right here? I have done everything I think right. If you listen to me, I have done nothing really wrong. I have supported my wife. Tried my best to be a husband. And I don't think she has done anything wrong, actually, in trying to take care of her child."