

## HIT-AND-RUN TRIAL

# Driver partied hours before crash

DARYL SLADE CALGARY HERALD

Accused hit-and-run driver Colin Jones was happy while celebrating St. Patrick's Day, just hours before his Dodge Durango struck and killed Lindsay Giacomelli last year, a longtime friend testified on Friday.

Norman Starnes, 47, essentially agreed with Crown prosecutor David Torske during cross-examination that he had told police he, Jones and Jones' boss John Apfeld were "standing together having a good old laugh" at the Rose and Crown pub on 4th Street S.W. on the afternoon of March 17, 2005.

"Probably. I don't recall," said Starnes.

When asked about Jones's disposition at the bar, the friend said: "He was fine, happy, carrying on a conversation."

Starnes said he didn't believe Jones was intoxicated when he last saw him at the bar at about 6:30 p.m. He said he'd known him for a long time and never seen him intoxicated, not even at his own stag.

Jones, 49, is on trial before Court of Queen's Bench Justice Allen Sulatycky for hit and run causing the death of Giacomelli, 20, who was struck about 8:14 p.m. while in a crosswalk on Bonaventure Drive S.E. She was going to buy her boyfriend a present at Southcentre mall.

Jones earlier testified he has no knowledge of being in the collision while en route home from the Rose and Crown bar or driving away from the scene, and recalls very few details of anything that occurred that week.

On Friday, Starnes told defence lawyer Balfour Der he did not know at that time Jones was on medication for clinical depression.

Starnes said Jones was very distraught on March 18, 2005, when he called to pick him up after being involved in a collision with a flat-bed truck in Carstairs, 60 kilometres from Calgary, but did not mention the fatal crash from the night before.

When he was told by city police Const. David Alexander about Jones being in the first crash, Starnes replied: "I was pissed off because he (Jones) lied."

Starnes said he gave Jones a ride back to Calgary, then lent him his Jaguar to drive until his vehicle was repaired. He was very surprised when he found the Jaguar parked on his street on March 19 with some of Jones' clothes and a note on the seat instructing him to sell Jones' house and how to dispose of some of his assets.

"I thought he'd committed suicide," the friend told Der.

David Jones, 47, the accused's brother who lives in England but is currently staying in Calgary, later told Der he received a call from Colin at about 3 a.m. on either March 18 or 19 and was told he had skidded into the back of a truck and was coming to visit family in England. He said Colin's wife, with whom he was separating, phoned him a few hours later and told him about the fatal crash.

Colin Jones denied any involvement in that crash when he spoke to David several hours later.

He was arrested getting on a plane headed for England and charged with the offence March 22, 2005. David Jones said he did not know about his brother's illness until he stayed with him in Calgary in 2001, but added his mother, sister and another brother all have been afflicted with clinical depression. "He had mood swings . . . and very strange sleeping patterns," said David Jones. The case is adjourned until February.

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