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Hit and run driver given longest term for crime

Colin Jones handed 30-month sentence

By [KEVIN MARTIN](#), SUN MEDIA

Calgarian Colin Jones has been sentenced to the harshest punishment ever given a motorist for leaving the scene of an accident.

But the father of the woman Jones struck and killed in a southeast crosswalk suggested the precedent-setting, 30-month term will do little to prevent similar crimes.

Gerald Giacomelli said motorists who flee to avoid detection of serious crimes, such as impaired driving, still don't have the incentive to stay and wait for police.

"If he had stayed my understanding is the sentence could've been worse," said Giacomelli.

"To me the message is clear: it's run, if you do this run 'cause you'll get off with a (lighter) sentence," he said.

Outside court, Crown prosecutor David Torske acknowledged if Jones was charged with and convicted of impaired causing death he would have faced a harsher punishment.

But Torske noted there was no evidence to establish Jones was drunk at the time of the March 17, 2005, collision in which he killed 20-year-old Lindsay Giacomelli.

And the prosecutor said drivers now know if they don't stop, they'll be looking at federal penitentiary time if they kill someone.

"The message here is ... if you run and flee the scene, the police will catch you, we will prosecute you and you will go to jail," Torske said.

Justice Allen Sulatycky agreed with the prosecution a sentence in excess of two years was warranted.

Defence lawyer Balfour Der had sought a conditional term which could be served in the community of as little as six months.

Der said his client shouldn't receive the same sort of penalty given someone whose behaviour — such as dangerous driving — caused a death.

But Sulatycky rejected that proposal noting the crime for which Jones was convicted presumes he did something illegal before leaving the crash site.

"A person leaves because they sense they're going to be in some trouble, civil or criminal trouble," the Queen's Bench judge said.

Torske said the highest previous sentence for hit and run where someone died was the two-year term handed Calgarian Samrat Dhuna for running down a woman outside a New Year's party.

Dhuna also received eight years for manslaughter in the death of Raminder Dhadda because jurors ruled he intentionally drove his van into a group of revellers.

While Gerald Giacomelli was unimpressed with Jones' sentence, his wife, Leslie, took some solace in the penalty.

"I would've been really unhappy if he'd just walked out of the front door of the courtroom the way he has every day," she said.