

December 12, 2007

## Killer driver freed after 7 months

By [NADIA MOHARIB](#), SUN MEDIA

Notorious killer-driver Colin Jones is out of prison less than seven months after he began serving a sentence for the hit-and-run death of Lindsay Giacomelli.

And her family, still reeling from the hell of enduring a dragged-out court process, is sickened to see the man responsible for the 20-year-old's death granted parole to a Calgary halfway house.

Her dad Gerald Giacomelli said yesterday's decision by a two-member National Parole Board panel is an emotional blow, and more proof the justice system is a joke.

"That's pathetic," he said.

"It just substantiates what I said all along -- the system is screwed up."

The court process "just ended and the next thing you know this clown gets out and his life carries on," he said.

Jones was sentenced in May to the harshest punishment ever given to a motorist for leaving the scene of a crash after he hit Lindsay on March 17, 2005, while she was crossing Bonaventure Dr. S.E.

Justice Allen Sulatycky, in explaining reasons behind the precedent-setting, 30-month term, said Jones' "strange" behaviour after learning of the death of a pedestrian was proof he consciously fled.

Court heard he drove home, ordered a pizza and watched a pay-per-view movie. He had been drinking prior to the crash, but there was no evidence he was impaired.

Jones was arrested on a London-bound plane, testifying he had no recollection of the crash.

National Parole Board spokesman Darren Caul said Jones will automatically get full parole on March 15, 2008.

Lindsay's family presented a written statement to be read in at the hearing, hoping it would sway the panel to keep him in custody. In it, they described the horror of seeing their unconscious daughter hooked up to machines before she died -- and the pain, on the day of her memorial, to see Jones "flashing a side, happy grin," in a newspaper photo as cops brought him back to Calgary.

"We take it as an insult the criminal is potentially going to be freed to start to rebuild his life after only six months of serving a sentence (and) as an insult to our daughter, Lindsay, and the value of her short, young life," they wrote.

"The judge indicated he had to send a message to society this action was unacceptable and imposed a sentence of 30 months, the longest ever given in Canadian history.

"I find it hard to believe and accept ... this criminal is a new man, and now able to see the errors in his ways."

Jones was allowed to apply for parole eligibility after serving one-sixth of his sentence.

The board has little discretion and had to make a decision based on determining the likelihood of him committing violence prior to his sentence ending on Nov. 14, 2009.

Giacomelli's mother, Leslie, said they chose not to attend the hearing. "Honestly, I didn't want to hear them let him out and if they did, I didn't want to hear them justify that," she said. "It's getting difficult particularly as we get towards Christmas ... right after Halloween, Lindsay would start playing Christmas carols and loved shopping and did all the baking."