

Convict in fatal hit-and-run released on day parole

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The National Parole Board has released a man responsible for the hit-and-run death of a Calgary woman to a halfway house.

In a decision this week, the two-person panel granted day parole to Colin Jones, 50, just seven months into what was a precedent-setting, 30-month sentence for leaving the scene of a collision.

Jones hit Lindsay Giacomelli, 20, as she crossed Bonaventure Drive S.E. on March 17, 2005.

He continued driving home, ordered a pizza and watched a movie before embarking on an elaborate effort to conceal the crime the next day.



Lindsay Giacomelli

Jones drove his Dodge Durango to Carstairs and ran into a parked vehicle to cover up the damage.

Then he rented a car and drove to Regina, where he took a series of flights, to Winnipeg and Toronto, before police arrested him on a flight bound for England.

"It's clear he knew what he did and he tried to avoid the consequences by trying to flee the country," said Shawn Howard of the Canadian Justice Foundation.

"If I was the family, I'd be outraged by this."

Giacomelli's family declined comment.

Day parole requires Jones to live at a halfway house under a curfew, but he is scheduled for full parole — meaning he can live on his own — in March.

He will remain under supervision, however, until his sentence expires in November 2009.

"He is not free and clear of the Canadian justice system," said Doug King, chair of Mount Royal College's justice studies program.

The Canadian correctional system mandates early release to help offend-



Colin Jones, who left the scene after the SUV he was driving struck and killed Lindsay Giacomelli in 2005, is headed to a halfway house.

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ers readjust to life after prison, said King, who added statistics show the approach makes communities safer.

In 2005, the National Parole Board found that 139 of 8,365 federal prisoners released into the community committed a violent offence while under supervision — a rate of 1.6 per cent.

During the same year, 3.2 per cent of offenders held in jail until the end of

their sentence committed a violent offence after prison — double the rate of those on parole or statutory release.

"I can empathize with those who are affected by this crime, but from a societal perspective . . . there's solid research that shows release into the community is better for society," King said.