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Victim's father calls for tougher hit-and-run sentences

Wants to encourage drivers to stay at scenes of collisions

By [NADIA MOHARIB](#), CALGARY SUN

Only stiffer sentences for motorists who leave the scene after striking a pedestrian will send a message for others to stay, says the father of a woman killed by a hit-and-run driver.

Gerald Giacomelli said the law allows for stiff sentences for hit-and-runs but rarely is it the case that tough ones get doled out to those convicted of the crime.

This week he and his wife Leslie sat through heart-wrenching testimony at the trial of Colin Jones, the man accused in the fatal hit-and-run of their daughter, 20-year-old Lindsay, March 17, 2005.

But the couple are acutely aware they are not alone in enduring the pain of knowing a loved one was left abandoned by a motorist who drove off rather than staying and offering aid.

"This story is bigger than Lindsay," he said.

"This is a system that needs shaking up."

Giacomelli said weak sentences for hit-and-run convictions hardly offer encouragement from others to stay at the scene.

"I've seen six months to two years of jail time or a conditional sentence," he said.

Jones, in an agreed statement of facts said he struck Lindsay, but during last week's testimony he said he has no recollection of doing so.

His lawyer Balfour Der said his client has suffered depression for many years and therefore did not have the required intent.

The trial resumes in February.

Giacomelli hopes to see an amendment to the Criminal Code which calls for requiring a minimum sentence for those who fail to remain at the scene of an accident where someone is hurt.

It proposes a mandatory minimum penalty of seven years to a maximum of life in prison for failing to remain at the scene where an individual dies.

The bill, previously dubbed Carley's Law to recognize a B.C. teen struck and left to die by a repeat drunk driver was defeated in parliament in June of 2005, but recently a B.C. MP has taken up the task of trying to push for a similar bill again.

Sandy Jervis still hopes the motorist who struck and killed her husband, Jerry, nearly

two years ago comes forward.

"I've thought about it and thought about it," she said.

"Maybe it was an accident but I'd like to know what happened."

She said she tougher sentences may be deterrents to drivers driving away after hitting someone but nothing can make amends for the loss of life.