

Murder conviction 'relief' for family of victim

BY JOE FANTAUZZI
Staff Writer

Justice has prevailed. That's how Laurie Thornhill feels following the conviction Tuesday of Rian Quincy Dix, charged with stabbing to death her son, former Stouffville resident Michael Thornhill, in July 2004.

Following a jury trial in the Superior Court of Justice in Newmarket, Mr. Dix was found guilty of second-degree murder before Justice Alexander Sosna.

"It was a really hard time waiting for the verdict, but it was just such a relief," Ms Thornhill said, adding Mr. Thornhill's grandmother broke into tears of relief after the verdict. "This trial took an awful long time to come (forward). It was quite a day."

"There's no closure. The wounds are opened back up."

A young offender, now 18, had previously pleaded guilty to manslaughter in connection with the case. He was sentenced to time served and has since been released.

Mr. Thornhill, 19, was stabbed July 15 of that year in the parking lot of the Tim Hortons at Davis and Longford drives in Newmarket. He later died from his injuries.

Mr. Dix had fled to the Sudbury area after the stabbing and was picked up in a stolen car by local police and the OPP.

Ms Thornhill thanked the Crown attorney's office and York Regional Police Det. Doug Conley for their efforts during the case.

"They presented a wonderful case and I believe that's why we reached the verdict we did," she said.

The family had moved to Newmarket after falling on hard times and was

approved for social housing, living there only eight months before Mr. Thornhill's murder. They were previously residents of Stouffville and Thornhill.

'There's no closure. The wounds are opened back up.'

Laurie Thornhill on legal process during trial of son's murderer

The trial has been hard on the family and has at times slowed the healing process, she said.

"There's no closure," Ms Thornhill said of going through the process. "The wounds are opened back up."

While a guilty verdict helps ease some of the pain, Ms Thornhill is all too aware

that it cannot bring her son back.

"I do feel better today than I did two-and-a-half years ago," she said.

As the events following her son's murder played out, Ms Thornhill began suffering post-traumatic stress and will now seek therapy.

"I've kept most of those emotions to myself and that hasn't been healthy," she said.

Ms Thornhill believes the crime was senseless and that her son was murdered because someone misinterpreted a comment.

The victim could have been anyone that night, she believes.

"A lot of things in this case were really horrific," Ms Thornhill said, adding she left the courtroom during the presentation of some forensic evidence. "I saw the stab wound and it was vicious."

900 customers without power

About 900 homes and businesses were without power until early Thursday morning in Stouffville.

A broken insulator caused the outage about 9 p.m. Wednesday.

The power went back on at 12:15 a.m. Thursday, according to Hydro One.

York Regional Police stationed a cruiser at the Main and Stouffer streets, where a traffic signal was out.

—Jim Mason

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Call 905-640-4440 to reservations.

CORRECTION NOTICE

SANDY'S AUTO SERVICE LTD.

The editorial in last week's Focus On Business read incorrectly. It should have read: Sandy or Steve are both licensed technicians, licensed by the province of Ontario, Ministry of Transport, Ministry of Environment and by the Institute of Automotive Service Excellence (ASE), which is based in Herndon, Virginia, USA. Sandy's Auto Service Ltd. is committed to serving you, our customer, with professional automotive repair at a reasonable cost, with qualified technicians.

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