

# Manslaughter verdict 'hard' for family: ex-cop

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A manslaughter verdict is likely to deeply affect the family and friends of Det.-Const. Robert Plunkett, a former police officer said.

Nadeem Jiwa, 23, of Scarborough was convicted of manslaughter Thursday at the Newmarket courthouse after about two and a half days of deliberation.

After the verdict, the officer's widow, Sonja Plunkett, sobbed while other members of the Plunkett family glared at Mr. Jiwa as they stormed out of the courtroom.

The Plunkett family declined comment after the verdict.

"This is going to be very hard for them," said Morley Lymburner, a 25-year veteran of Toronto police, who now publishes Blue Line, a national magazine for the law enforcement community, on Stouffville's Main Street.

Mr. Jiwa was charged with first-degree murder, however a finding of manslaughter was one four options presented to the jury.

While many officers identify with an on-duty death, the typical rank-and-file officer will not allow either that or a verdict in the courts to affect the way they do their job, Mr. Lymburner, a Whitchurch-Stouffville resident, said.

"It's nothing new for police officers to be dissatisfied with judgments that come down," he said.

York police Supt. Bill Faulkner read a statement outside the courthouse saying the force respects the judicial system and must accept

the jury's finding.  
"The death of Rob Plunkett was a devastating blow to his family, his wife, Sonja, their three children and to all of Rob's friends and colleagues at York Regional Police," Supt. Faulkner said. "Rob has been deeply missed."

He called Det.-Const. Plunkett an "exceptional" person and police officer.

Meanwhile, Mr. Jiwa showed little emotion following the verdict, other than to glance at his family and the Plunkett family.

The incident was a tragedy for everyone involved, said Laurence Cohen, the Scarborough man's lawyer.

"Obviously (Mr. Jiwa's family) are relieved that their son is not going to be facing a murder conviction," he said. "While we're not happy with the verdict necessarily, we're relieved that it wasn't a murder conviction."

A manslaughter conviction carries a wide-ranging sentence, from a conditional discharge to life in prison, according to legal experts.

Mr. Jiwa was arrested Aug. 2, 2007 on Ascot Crescent near Birchmount Road and Steeles Avenue East in Markham after Det.-Const. Plunkett, a 22-year policing veteran was crushed to death by a stolen gold Honda Accord. Det.-Const. Plunkett was clinging to the Honda's door while attempting to arrest Mr. Jiwa for the theft of airbags when it began reversing.

Mr. Jiwa was initially charged with manslaughter but that charge was upgraded to first-degree murder. He is to be sentenced June 21.

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