

Pair to be sentenced Jan. 3 in manslaughter

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"... When we brought Pam home we couldn't even open the coffin because she was beaten so badly and these boys are using alcohol as a defence. If these boys were men, they'd own up to what they've done."

Defence lawyers contend that alcohol played more of a role in the crime than did race.

The all-white, eight-woman, three-man jury (a 12th juror was excused for health reasons) took 12 hours over two days to reach the verdict.

"The jury made a fair decision," Mr. Ternowetsky said on the way to the prison van. "But most importantly I'd like to reiterate my apology to the George family. I didn't mean for anything to happen and I'm sorry it did."

During the trial, the court was told how the two men, fuelled by liquor and testosterone, cruised the streets of the Saskatchewan capital on the night of the killing looking for a hooker. Rebuffed by several prostitutes, one of the men hid in the trunk of their car as they finally lured Ms. George into the vehicle, the court also heard. According to testimony, she was taken to a remote area near the airport, performed oral sex on the men and then was hauled from the car and beaten to death.

The court heard that the men split a bottle of Southern Comfort and a case of strong beer before venturing out in Mr. Kummerfield's father's car.

According to testimony, a friend asked Mr. Kummerfield the next day what he'd done the night before. "Not much," was the reply. "We drove around, got drunk and killed this chick."

The court heard that Mr. Ternowetsky also told a friend after Ms. George's body had been discovered that "she deserved it. She was an Indian."

During the trial, the men admitted beating Ms. George but claimed she was still alive when they left her battered and face down in a muddy field. An autopsy showed she had a broken nose, swollen eyes and hands, and cuts on her face and lips. She died of brainstem hemorrhaging.

Members of the Saskatchewan Coalition Against Racism demonstrated outside the courthouse during the trial, noting the gulf between the social and economic backgrounds of the killers and their victim.

Mr. Kummerfield, the grandson of a former New Democratic Party cabinet minister, starred on his university basketball team. Mr. Ternowetsky's father

economic insecurity. A single mother while still a teen-ager, she lost a two-year-old son in a 1989 drowning accident. Her friends said she worked as a prostitute twice a month to help support her two other children.

"Pam very much loved her family and her children, and she was always there for them," said her father, Terry Sangwais.

During the trial, the men offered backhanded apologies to Ms. George's family.

"I just apologize for whatever part we played in this," Mr. Kummerfield told the jurors. "I don't know what happened — if we were the ones who did it or not."

His words were echoed by Mr. Ternowetsky. "I just apologize to the George family for the way I treated Pamela. She didn't deserve it and there's no excuse for what I did. I'm just sorry."

Throughout the trial, a few of Ms. George's relatives sat quietly in the courtroom, hugely outnumbered by friends and family of the accused.

The defence argued that the pair were too drunk to know what they were doing: Each had an estimated blood-alcohol level of at least 0.31 to 0.34 — four times the legal limit for driving. However, the Crown said that although alcohol may have lowered their inhibitions and affected their judgment, the men still could form the intent to kill.

University of Regina criminologist Barrie Anderson said the case has captured the public interest because it illustrates so starkly the two cultural solitudes in Saskatchewan, where natives make up about 14 per cent of the population. In Regina, three out of four prostitutes are aboriginal, a statistic attributed mainly to economic circumstances.

"You've got two middle-class white boys who killed a native woman — look at the media interest," Mr. Anderson said. "We've had seven murders in Regina this year and most of those were natives killing natives. Nobody can recall the names of the victims or the accused. If it was a native man who was responsible here, you wouldn't be interviewing me right now — that's the racist aspect of it."

He added that "obviously they [the men] wanted a native prostitute," noting they could have gone to an area where non-native women work the streets.

There is some disbelief and denial among mainstream Regina residents that two young men with

1996
Saskatchewan
Pamela George
raped murdered
by 2 white men
grandson of NDP
Cabinet Minister

Pam's family
outnumbered
in
courtroom
by
rapists'
supporters

fuelled
by
Liquor +
testosterone

"would they have
beaten up a white prof