Man who ran over, killed Sask. Mountie sentenced to 18 years

Alphonse Stanley Traverse ran over Const. Shelby Patton with a stolen truck in 2021

[Jeremy Simes](#) · The Canadian Press · Posted: Feb 29, 2024 10:23 AM CST | Last Updated: 4 hours ago

Saskatchewan RCMP Const. Shelby Patton, 26, was killed on duty on June 12, 2021, when he was struck by a stolen vehicle, according to RCMP. (Saskatchewan RCMP)

A man who ran over and killed an RCMP officer in Saskatchewan was sentenced to 18 years in prison Thursday in a decision both prosecutors and police say sends a message to future would-be offenders.

Alphonse Stanley Traverse of Winnipeg pleaded guilty last year to manslaughter in the death of Const. Shelby Patton.

Patton, 26, died in June 2021 after pulling over a suspected stolen truck in the town of Wolseley, east of Regina.

Court heard the officer asked Traverse to get out of the truck and stepped on the running board to seize the keys when Traverse started the vehicle to drive away. Patton fell when the truck jerked and was run over by a rear tire.

WATCH | *Parents, police, prosecutor react to 18-year sentence:*

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Const. Shelby Patton's mother, Melanie Patton, spoke to reporters outside court after Alphonse Traverse received a sentence of 18 years in prison for manslaughter in relation to her son's death. Saskatchewan RCMP's commanding officer and a senior prosecutor also shared their reaction. "This chance encounter lasted mere seconds but will forever have an unimaginable impact on many lives," Court of King's Bench Justice Michael Tochor said while handing down the sentence in Regina.

"All I'm able to say is, sincerely, that the Patton family — and I think this even applies to Mr. Traverse — that I hope all of you can someday, somehow find some peace."

Traverse also received a concurrent sentence of 18 months for theft of a motor vehicle and was given about four years' credit for time spent in pretrial custody.

The Crown had been seeking a life sentence, while the defence recommended 16 years.

'Significant sentence': prosecutor

Prosecutor Adam Breker told reporters outside court that 18 years is significant for manslaughter.

"It's one of the highest that we've seen in the province," Breker said.

"It's never going to be a fun day or an easy day, but it's a significant sentence."

Melanie Patton, the Mountie's mother, said the family is relieved by the sentence despite hoping Traverse would face a longer stint behind bars.

"I think the important thing here is to focus on the safety of the police officers who are out there trying to serve and protect us as a community," she said.

Assistant Commissioner Rhonda Blackmore, commanding officer of the Saskatchewan RCMP, said outside court that the sentence sends a message.

"We need to make sure that people understand that if they commit these types of crimes that it's going to be taken very seriously and the courts are going to hold them accountable," Blackmore said.

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An agreed statement of facts said Traverse was on warrant status for various offences, at the time of Patton's death.

He and a woman had decided to drive from Winnipeg to play on video lottery terminals in Saskatchewan, as bars in Manitoba were closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. When their truck broke down, they stole another near Pipestone, Man.

Traverse and the woman had also been using crystal meth, the statement said.

The woman faces an accessory charge, said the Crown, and no trial date has been set.

Aggravating, mitigating circumstances considered

The judge said he wasn't persuaded to impose a life sentence or a 16-year sentence on Traverse.

Tochor said Traverse would have been aware that driving away while Patton was on the running board would cause serious injuries.
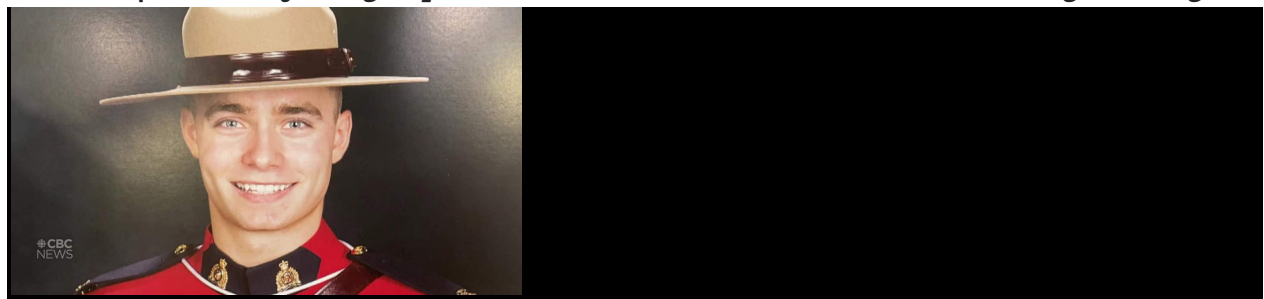
The judge said he also weighed aggravating factors, including Traverse's previous criminal history and the effect the killing had on Patton's family and the community.

Traverse's guilty plea, his expression of remorse and his Indigenous background were all mitigating factors, Tochor said.

Court had heard Traverse experienced intergenerational trauma and was abused at a day school and in a foster home.

Traverse's family was in court during the sentencing. One woman said, "Love you," as he was led out of the prisoner's box.

WATCH | Patton's family expresses devestation at Traverse's sentencing hearing:

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Court heard victim impact statements in the case of Alphonse Stanley Traverse Friday. Traverse pleaded guilty to manslaughter in the death of Shelby Patton, a Saskatchewan RCMP officer.

https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatchewan/man-who-ran-over-killed-sask-mountie-sentenced-to-18-years-1.7129427