

Man sentenced in exotic dancer's drug death

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A middle-aged house painter apologized to the family of a 35-year-old Hamilton woman, whose body he wrapped in garbage bags and dumped in rural Ancaster after her death from a cocaine overdose.

Alfred Bernhard Napierala, 41, was sentenced to time served for manslaughter and given an additional two years in prison for offering an indignity to a human body.

Cynthia Watson, who worked as an exotic dancer and left behind a seven-year-old son, died of a drug overdose in the basement apartment where Napierala lived in his parents' Brantford home.

Napierala told his lawyer Beth Bromberg he panicked on awakening Jan. 6, 2007, to find her naked, lifeless body in his bed. Unable to face his parents, he did not call 911. Instead, he tried to dress and cover Watson's remains. He then loaded her body into the back of his van and disposed of it in some woods off Powerline Road West.

The white sheet of paper shook in his trembling hand as Napierala stood in the prisoner's box and read his apology. "When Cynthia died, I was in shock and heavily under the influence of cocaine," he said.

"I was totally freaked out and scared. I understand that is not an excuse for my terrible judgment and for the pain I've caused by lying and trying to hide her body."

Assistant Crown attorney Michael Fox said Watson lived a high-risk lifestyle. She was involved in a physically abusive relationship and both she and the father of her child were heavy users of crack cocaine.

At the time of her death, Watson had changed the lock on her door to keep her boyfriend out because he took money from her bank account.

Watson worked freelance as an exotic dancer at Hamilton Strip and Seductions in Brantford.

On the afternoon of Jan. 5, 2007, she was seen shooting pool with Napierala at a Brantford bar called Two Doors Down.

Napierala, who had a minor criminal record for impaired driving and mischief-related charges, had not known her before that afternoon. They left together at about 4:30 p.m.

Hamilton police traced the pair to the home of one of Napierala's co-workers, where they consumed cocaine until midnight.

The two continued to party into the next morning, doing more cocaine at Napierala's apartment, where they had sex, before going out again in search of drugs.

Her body was found by a passing motorist at 11 a.m. on Jan. 7. A grey T-shirt was pulled up around her shoulders and her head and legs were wrapped in black garbage bags bound with packing tape.

A forensic pathologist determined the cause of Watson's death was a lethal dose of cocaine. There was also a concentration in her system of a cardiac drug, which drug dealers sometimes use to cut the coke they sell on the street.

Watson's son, who went to live with his grandparents in another city, told Ontario Court Justice Don Cooper in a victim impact statement how sad he was after his mother died.

"I know my mom is an angel in heaven. I miss (her) very much. I have a different life now," he said.

Fox said Napierala lied to police and prolonged the investigation by telling them he dropped Watson at the bus station after spending the night with her. But a footprint found on one of the garbage bags covering her body later proved a match to Napierala's foot print, conclusively linking him to the disposal of her body.

He was arrested Aug. 15, 2007, on a first-degree murder charge.

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