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Suspects bragged about street race

By TRACY MCLAUGHLIN -- Special to Sun Media

BARRIE -- On Internet web sites, they are called "speed demon," "champ" and "cut king."

They pose proudly in photos in front of gleaming, expensive cars, bragging of the latest street race. They stand in group photos wearing backward ball caps or bandannas, looking tough, like the "gangstas" they and their friends call each other.

They are the same two young men who sat in the prisoner's box yesterday, wearing handcuffs, hanging their heads, dabbing at their tears, faced with maximum sentences of life in prison for criminal negligence causing death by street racing.

Nauman Nusrat, 20, and Prabhjit Multani, 20, both of Etobicoke, are accused of racing with each other along Hwy. 400 last week, forcing trucker David Virgoe, 48, to swerve out of the way and career across three lanes and crash.

The husband, father and grandfather was cremated this week.

On one web site called Hi5, Nusrat has his own page that displays a photo of himself coolly leaning against his Grand Am with the caption, "Nauman, Aka Cut King, (undefeated Champion) Pontiac Grand AM V6 170HP." It is the same type of vehicle police allege was involved in the deadly race.

In other photos, Nusrat calls himself "Nauman the Great" and boasts of his "newly bought" Grand Am. His profile on Hi5 lists his interests as "speed racing, war & love, military weapons and cars." He said his favourite book is the Bible, he listens to hip-hop, gospel and Hindi music and he works for the family business earning "\$75K to \$100K."

Also on the web page is a list of his friends, including co-accused Multani. Click on Multani's photo and up comes his profile page that shows a black convertible Mustang with the title "my ride," identical to the one in the accident.

Multani's profile shows he is a college student and loves "carz, carz, carz."

"Owww, you are the gangsta!" writes one of his friends on his photo page.

'RAMPANT' CULTURE

Virgoe's grieving widow, Debbie, said she is shocked with the web pages that show off the cars and the "rampant" culture of street racing.

"What's ironic is my husband loved racing. But it was on the race track where it belonged," she said. "I buried him in his NASCAR T-shirt."

York Regional Police Sgt. Dave Mitchell of Project ERASE (Eliminate Racing Activities on Streets Everywhere) said he's not surprised to learn of the web pages.

"It used to be that street racing took place on back roads in the middle of the night," he said. "Now they are doing it on busy highways ..."

Yesterday outside of court, lawyers for both accused had no comment and were not aware of the web pages.

Meanwhile, yesterday's bail hearing for Multani and Nusrat was delayed by questions that had to be translated before they could be posed to the witnesses. For the second day, witnesses often became confused and began to weep. Tears also flowed from Multani and Nusrat.

The hearing will continue today but justice of the peace Linda Kay does not expect to announce whether or not the two will be released from jail until tomorrow.