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Widow vows to follow racing trial

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JIM WILKES
STAFF REPORTER

BARRIE — Debbie Virgoe stared at two men slumped in the prisoner's dock of a Barrie courtroom today and struggled to control her emotions.

And then she vowed to attend each day of their journey through the justice system as they face street racing charges in the death of her trucker husband David.

"I'm having a hard time not jumping up and grabbing them," she said outside the court where bail hearings began today for Prabhjit Multani, 20 and Nauman Nusrat, 19.



JIM WILKES/TORONTO STAR
Debbie Virgoe, widow of Innisfil trucker David Virgoe, is comforted by his younger brother, Dean, outside the Barrie courthouse today. She attended the first day of bail hearings for the two men accused in the street racing accident on Highway 400 that claimed Virgoe's life last Monday.

"I have to know what happened that day," she said. "I don't want to see another family have to go through this."

The Toronto men face a string of charges, including criminal negligence causing death while street racing, in an accident on Highway 400 last Monday that killed Innisfil trucker Virgoe.

Convictions on street racing charges carry sentences of up to life in prison.

A court-ordered ban prohibits publication of testimony from today's hearings.

Multani and Nusrat were arrested on Monday last week after two cars were spotted weaving in and out of traffic at high speeds.

One car clipped a transport truck driven by Virgoe, whose rig slammed into the centre guardrail, veered across the highway and rumbled down an embankment. Virgoe was hailed a hero for the emergency manoeuvres he took to sacrifice his own life in order to save the lives of other motorists.

Today, the accused men rarely shifted their gaze from the floor of the prisoner's dock.

Nusrat slumped on the long wooden bench, holding his head in both hands. Multani bent over, head in his lap, occasionally wiping his eyes with the sleeve of his wrinkled white t-shirt.

Crown counsel Catherine Kehoe is seeking to keep both men in custody. Defence lawyers are expected to argue Wednesday that their clients be released into the care of family members until their trials are completed, a process that could take up to two years.

Debbie Virgoe said she would follow the case "forever" if necessary.

"If it can go forever, so can I," she said, comforted by her dead husband's younger brother, Dean, also a trucker. "I have a lifetime sentence now."

"All of a sudden I have all the time in the world and I'm going to make it for David."