

Humboldt Broncos crash driver made a mistake that anyone could have made

EDITORIAL

Humans are imperfect beings.

We make mistakes all the time. Many of us do things we shouldn't out of carelessness when we know better. We speed when we shouldn't, cut drivers off when we miss an exit or take our eyes off the road for a split second.

Even if we proclaim ourselves as perfect drivers, many of us become complacent with our driving abilities. We're lucky that our mistakes don't damage someone's car, let alone kill someone on the highway.

Jaskirat Singh Sidhu, the driver of the semi-trailer trucks that struck a bus carrying the Humboldt Broncos hockey team in Saskatchewan last April was not lucky.

It was supposed to be a day, like any other except it wasn't. He killed 16 people and seriously injured 13 more after his truck blew through a stop sign.

He apologized to the families of the victims numerous times pleading guilty to 16 charges of dangerous driving causing death and 13 charges of dangerous driving causing injury, according to the Toronto Star.

He faces a maximum sentence of 14 years and 10 years in prison, respectively, for each count of dangerous driving causing death and dangerous driving causing bodily harm. He appeared selfless dozens of times in videos and photos. He said the crash happened because of his inexperience. The defence focused on his intent arguing his actions were negligent and not intentionally reckless.

Sidhu could have challenged the charges and drawn out an already lengthy case, but he didn't. He has taken responsibility for what had happened.

He was not speeding, drunk or distracted at the time of the collision, according to the CBC. There was nothing blocking his way at the intersection and the stop sign where he could have yielded was visible. Maybe he zoned out. Maybe the sun was in his eyes. We don't know.

All we know is that he still missed those signs while driving in broad daylight and clear roads.

The Crown said that based on the facts of the case, current legal statuses, other case laws and the victim-impact statements delivered, a 10-year-sentence is fitting.

Many may want him to be locked up in prison for the rest of his life. He did kill 16 people and destroyed many families after all. He was the one driving but he made a mistake anybody could have made.

A sentence may stop people from driving carelessly, and if anything, it could reinforce people's faith in the justice system. However, considering that he took ownership of his actions, there's no purpose to impose an extended prison term, especially when he's of low risk to reoffend.

Compare Sidhu's case with that of Marco Muzzo. Muzzo, who was recently denied parole after serving two years of a 10-year-sentence, drove his car and killed three young children and their grandfather in Vaughan. Muzzo also pleaded guilty to the charges against him.

Muzzo was drunk, speeding, drove past a stop sign and had a blood alcohol level of about three times the legal limit. Muzzo made a

choice to drink and drive instead of calling for a cab ride home. Many of us, who are responsible, would leave our keys at home or called a friend if we think we drank too much to drive. His case may be a lesson for drivers to stop drinking and driving when we know we shouldn't.

An extended sentence for Sidhu on the other hand won't remind people to drive carefully on the roads. It was a freak accident and one that will haunt him for the rest of his life.