

Corbett gets five years for killing friend over TV and rent money

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He fatally stabbed his childhood pal in the neck and left him to bleed to death on a central Hamilton street.

All over a tussle over a television set and a dispute over owed rent money.

But a judge ruled Friday he found Steven Corbett had good prospects to be a useful citizen and a good father to his young daughter, now five years old.

"Although he has been no angel, these events would seem to be out of character for him," Ontario Superior Court Peter Hambly said before sentencing Corbett to five years in prison for the December 2012 slaying of Shawn McCann, 27.

Hambly reduced the sentence by 14 months to account for pre-sentence custody and stringent bail conditions, leaving Corbett, who was 24 at the time of the stabbing, with just three years and 10 months left to serve.

A beaming Corbett, who was convicted by a jury of manslaughter in July but found not guilty of second-degree murder, raised three fingers toward family members in the courtroom. He had testified that McCann had been the one to produce the knife.

On the other side of the room, stunned McCann family members left silently and poured into a victim services room to huddle with assistant Crown attorney Todd Norman. They sent word via a police officer that they would not be commenting on the sentence to the media.

The Crown had sought a sentence of eight to 12 years. Defence counsel Jordana Goldlist had sought a sentence of four to five years minus credit for pre-sentence custody and stringent bail conditions over 16 months.

McCann was stabbed in the neck in an afternoon scuffle with the smaller Corbett. McCann was retrieving his television set from Corbett's Blake Street apartment — a television set Corbett was keeping as collateral for rent money he believed McCann owed him.

A heavily bleeding McCann stumbled down a set of porch steps before collapsing in the middle of Maplewood Avenue.

Because McCann had no documents on his person, police were unable to notify his family immediately of his death. McCann's mother did not learn on her son's demise until the following evening when police showed up at her workplace.

Corbett fled with his then two-year-old daughter and his girlfriend, Kathleen McKenna. He later turned himself in.

Hambly said in mitigation Corbett is young, had a minor record, has a good work record, was a good father and there was an element of self-defence in his altercation with McCann.

The judge noted the Crown suggested Corbett lacked remorse.

"However, he has consistently expressed remorse from the moment he left the scene for the incident happening and the death of a man he described as his best friend," Hambly told court.

Indeed Corbett spoke Thursday of how the McCann family had offered him refuge when he was a troubled teenager.

"The death of Shaun will haunt me the rest of my days ... There are no words I can say to bring you comfort. I am deeply and truly sorry it ended this way."

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Shaun McCann was killed by his childhood friend Steven Corbett in a fight over rent money. Corbett will serve another three years and 10 months for the killing.