

Shot at prostitute could end in long jail sentence

By CHERYL JAHN

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The defence wants a sentence of between two and four years in jail, but the Crown says something closer to nine years is more apt for a 42-year-old Fort St. James man who shot at a former Prince George prostitute.

Darryl George Vankoughnett came to Prince George last October 10 to visit a buddy. While at his friend's home, he met up with the prostitute and heroin addict.

Later that evening, he drove the woman home, and they had a drink together. That is when they decided to make a trip to Fort St. James to "scout out" the prospects of setting up an escort service, of sorts, in Fort St. James. As part of the deal, he would pay for her habit.

During the trip to Fort St. James in his pickup truck, Mr. Vankoughnett became enraged at the woman. He stopped and ordered her out of the truck. When she

questioned him, he pulled her from the passenger side, out the driver side door. As she began to walk away, she testified at trial to hearing an unusual sound, similar to taking a knife from the sharpener. It was, she believed, the bolt action on the rifle. When she looked over her shoulder, Mr. Vankoughnett was propped up where the door meets the truck, rifle in hand. He fired a shot. After seeing the shell-casing fly out of the rifle, she saw him load another round. He fired a second shot in her direction.

Mr. Vankoughnett got back into his truck at that point and began to drive away. But he backed up, picked the woman up and drove her to Fort St. James.

Six days later, he was arrested and charged.

In total, the court has found him guilty of pointing a firearm, discharging a firearm with the intent to wound or kill, and possessing a firearm while prohibited. He was also convicted of possession two rifles while prohibited, two counts of possessing ammuni-

tion while prohibited and possessing two bows while prohibited.

The Criminal Code sets out a four-year minimum sentence when a firearm is used in the commission of an offence.

"Parliament got it right when it said four years is the minimum and you go from there," stated Crown Counsel James Swales in the sentencing proceeding, adding that a sentence in the range of four years to nine years in prison would be appropriate. He pointed to Mr. Vankoughnett's prior criminal record for firearms offences, calling him a "dangerous man."

But Mr. Vankoughnett's defence counsel argued for an exemption from the four-year minimum sentence, saying his client is a man with human frailties. The circumstances of this case, argued Steven Peleshok, warrant a sentence of between two and four years in jail.

Judge Bruce Macfarlane will deliver his decision on June 29.

Attempted murder case goes in January

A Fort Fraser pair made a brief appearance in court here on Monday, setting two separate trial dates in relation to a series of events in that community last summer.

Last July, the Fraser Lake Mounties were called to Fort Fraser, after getting a report of shots fired.

When officers arrived, they allegedly seized 1,600 marijuana plants and a replica AK-47 semi-automatic rifle. Mark Todd Rickard, Sophy Richard and Robert Sidney were arrested at the scene.

All three were charged with possessing and cultivating marijuana, while Mr. Rickard and Ms. Richard were also charged with attempted murder.

Mr. Sidney has since been sentenced to serve two years less a day in jail on charges of cultivating and possessing marijuana.

Mr. Rickard and Ms. Richard appeared in B.C. Supreme Court in Prince George to set their trial dates.

A jury will be selected on January 2 in relation to the attempted murder charges and the trial will start January 8. The drug trial goes January 22.

Guess who won tickets?



Jan-Leigh Fleck and Peter Blishen from the Pacific Western Brewery present Christine Wilderman 6 tickets (in a private box) to The Guess Who concert. Christine is the winner of The Guess Who "Brew Clue" contest.

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Together, let us meet as a community - and work together for solutions. The people of Northern B.C. have a unique spirit. We build universities and strong communities. Now, it's time to come together to help restore confidence in our health care system.

Thursday, June 22 • 5:30 PM
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Community Health Care Rally
Chaired by Dr. Lance Morgan
Speakers representing local government,
the disciplines in the health care system,
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