

## Toronto officer Const. James Forcillo sentenced six years for shooting death of teen Sammy Yatim



**James Forcillo**

Toronto Star

Const. James Forcillo (left) has been found guilty of attempted murder of Sammy Yatim in July 2013.

City Centre Mirror

Constable James Forcillo, the police officer who shot 18-year-old Sammy Yatim several times on an empty TTC streetcar, resulting in the teen's death, has been sentenced to six years in prison.

Forcillo was found guilty of attempted murder in January of this year, but was acquitted of second-degree murder.

The Toronto police constable fatally shot Yatim in July, 2013 when the teen was seen brandishing a knife on a TTC streetcar. The officer shot Yatim three times, then unleashed a second volley of shots.

In rendering his verdict, Ontario Superior Court Justice Edward Then noted Forcillo deserved "at least the mandatory minimum of five years," though he acknowledged the Crown's requests for eight to 10 years was excessive.

The trial hinged largely on video footage of the shooting, which Ed Upinieks, a lawyer for Yatim's family, noted bolstered the case. Forcillo's defence team had attempted to argue the second volley of shots came as Yatim was trying to get back up, something Justice Then disagreed with, calling the shots "unreasonable, unnecessary and excessive."

"The video doesn't lie," Upinieks told reporters outside the courthouse. "(Videos) were compiled second by second, movement by movement, so everybody could see what actually happened."

Yatim's parents spoke emotionally in front of the courthouse, saying they hope the verdict will prevent similar shootings from taking place in the future. They noted, however, that no sentence handed down by Justice Then would allow them to feel justice had been served.

"We lost our son, so even if (the sentence) is 100 years, it will not bring our son back," said Yatim's mother, Sahar Bahadi.

She added that Forcillo did not appear remorseful at any point following the shooting.

"He destroyed our family, he destroyed our life but he didn't show any kind of remorse," she said.

Yatim's father, Nabil Yatim, remembered his son as a "kind, nice, beautiful, talented young boy" and said he hopes police focus more on learning and using de-escalation techniques. As for the sentence, he said there was nothing that could have brought the family peace.

"No term is too much," he said. "(Forcillo) was wrong, what he did was wrong and he should have admitted it."

Forcillo will appeal the sentence this afternoon.