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NORFOLK - BY MICHELLE WASHINGTON THE VIRGINIAN-PILOT

NORFOLK - After the wreck, **Michael Shawver** held his best friend's lifeless body in his arms and cried, "Somebody please save Stewie. Save Stewie."

Michelle Becker, an emergency room nurse who was in her car near the scene, still wearing her medical garb from the end of her shift, testified Tuesday that someone asked her to help. Her first impression was that Steven Sheaffer was already gone. But she knelt down, felt for a pulse and gave Sheaffer two breaths. She got blood back.

**Shawver** hovered around her.

"He was holding onto me, begging me to please save his Stewie," Becker testified.

That image struck Judge Charles E. Poston, who presided over **Shawver's** sentencing hearing on charges of drunken driving and involuntary manslaughter. The bond between two sailors can be stronger than that of brothers, Poston said.

"There's no reason to punish him more," Poston said. "He'll carry that with him forever."

Poston ordered that **Shawver**, 25, serve 10 days for the drunken driving charge, the mandatory minimum term. On the involuntary manslaughter charge, Poston imposed a 10-year sentence but suspended all of the time.

Poston suspended **Shawver's** license for a year and fined him \$500. He also ordered **Shawver** to continue treatment for alcoholism.

Poston, usually taciturn from the bench, spoke at length at the end of the testimony. He noted that **Shawver** had done everything possible to try to make amends since the night of April 30.

**Shawver** was supposed to be the designated driver that night. When the friends left Waterside in downtown Norfolk, **Shawver** got behind the wheel, although he had been drinking. His blood-alcohol concentration was .20. A level of .08 is considered legal evidence of intoxication.

As **Shawver** pulled onto the on-ramp for Interstate 264 East from Waterside Drive, he ran off the road and hit a guardrail. The truck then careened across all lanes of traffic, hit the guardrail on the other side and turned over.

Sheaffer was thrown from the truck. He was 28.

Doug Fredericks, **Shawver's** sponsor from Alcoholics Anonymous, testified that **Shawver** has attended meetings five times a week since his first meeting last summer. **Shawver** has recounted his story to Navy audiences and in AA.

Two Navy chiefs testified that **Shawver** had been a model sailor who came to work every day with a good attitude.

Sheaffer's mother, Sharon Lamprey, and his grandmother Deloris Galaspy shook with tears throughout the hearing. They told Poston that Sheaffer had dreamed of being a sailor since grade school. He got in trouble during study hall for drawing pictures of ships and planes. When Galaspy asked Sheaffer when he was going to get a wife and children, he told her he was married to the Navy.

"He was my proudest accomplishment," Lamprey testified.

**Shawver** did not testify but used his opportunity to speak to the judge to apologize to Sheaffer's family. "I am without a doubt sorry about what happened," **Shawver** said.

"My apologies to his family, to Ms. Lamprey, to Ms. Galaspy will never bring their son back. I know it's not going to ease their pain. I know what it's like to try and forgive somebody. I'm still trying to forgive myself."

Sheaffer's family filed a wrongful death lawsuit against **Shawver**, which was settled in March.

The 10-day sentence was not what they had been expecting. "He can rebuild his life," Galaspy said. "Steven remains in plot 905, section 35 at the Indiantown Gap National Cemetery. He walked."

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