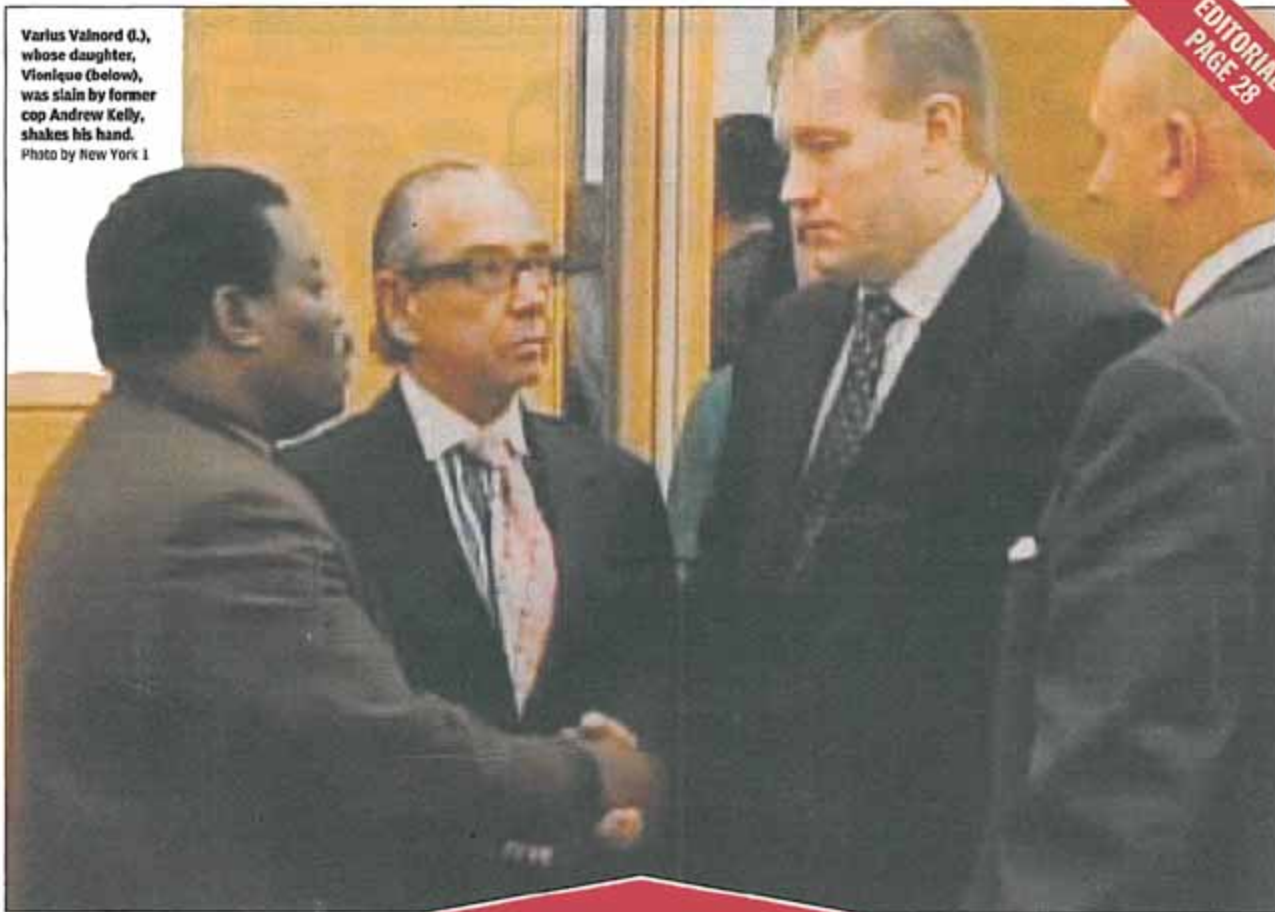


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Varius Valnord (l.), whose daughter, Vionique (below), was slain by former cop Andrew Kelly, shakes his hand. Photo by New York 1



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DAILY NEWS STAFF WRITERS

A GRIEVING Brooklyn preacher set aside his broken heart yesterday and — with a simple handshake and a few touching words — forgave the disgraced cop who killed his daughter.

Grasping Andrew Kelly's hand, the Rev. Varius Valnord looked into the former officer's eyes and told him, "I forgive you." "I don't want any more pain to be caused to anybody."

Valnord said he also told Kelly, a 32-year-old father of two young girls, to put himself in his place.

"If anything happened to your daughters, you would feel the same way I feel," the preacher said. "I wish nothing happens to your daughters."

The remarkable gesture of forgiveness came shortly after Kelly pleaded guilty to drunkenly mowing down Valnord's 32-year-old daughter, Vionique, last September.

Valnord said he did not see tears in Kelly's eyes when the officer suddenly walked up to him, extended his hand and said, "I'm sorry for what happened." Still, he could tell that Kelly "feels sorry" and that "he was very sad."

Valnord, who is pastor of the Haitian Church of God on Rogers Ave. in Brooklyn, said he was

HANDSHAKE SPEAKS VOLUMES

'I forgive you,' dad tells daughter's killer



compelled to practice what he preached. "I believe in forgiveness, and I believe that after they put him away [in jail], all the rest is in God's hands," he said.

Kelly's lawyer, Arthur Aidala, said the officer asked to speak with Valnord and that he checked with the preacher's lawyer, Sanford Rubenstein, to see if that was okay.

"It was more generous than I could have imagined," Kelly later told his lawyer.

That handshake closed an es-

pecially painful chapter in a New York tragedy, but not the book on the case.

Kelly, who lives in Queens, gave up his shield last Friday when he resigned from the NYPD. He faces 90 days in jail and five years' probation when he is sentenced Sept. 27.

The ex-cop also has agreed to undergo alcoholism rehab and is barred from driving for a year.

Kelly faced up to seven years in prison but agreed to a plea agreement that was worked out

with prosecutors and Valnord's kin.

The dead woman's husband, Seni Kassime, said he was satisfied with the sentence.

"The three months in jail doesn't matter," Kassime said. "He was drunk driving, and he took responsibility for that."

Dressed in a black suit, Kelly stood through the 20-minute hearing in Brooklyn Supreme Court and admitted he had been drinking beer before the deadly crash.

Asked if it was his intention to plead guilty to vehicular manslaughter, Kelly cleared his throat and answered, "Yes, it is, your honor."

Valnord said that as he watched Kelly, he felt pity.

"It not only cost me my daughter, but it also cost him his life," he told the Daily News. "I listen exactly how the judge ordered him to go to rehab and that will be a good thing for him. I hope he will be a good man."

Once assigned to the 68th Precinct, Kelly was off-duty and driving home with police officer buddy Michael Downs after a night of drinking when he ran over Valnord in the Flatlands on Sept. 27, 2009.

Reeking of booze, Kelly refused a Breathalyzer test. Seven hours passed before a blood-alcohol test was done, and by then he was alcohol-free.

Suspecting a coverup, the NYPD suspended Kelly, Downs and Officer Robert McGinn, who gave Kelly chewing gum and two bottles of water at the crash site.

The NYPD also issued new guidelines to speed up the process of getting warrants for suspected drunken drivers who refuse Breathalyzers.

The Valnord family still has a civil suit pending against Kelly and the NYPD.

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