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## DIVINE FORGIVENESS

### Pastor's mercy on DWI cop who killed daughter

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A grieving Brooklyn family yesterday accepted a tearful apology from the drunk-driving former cop who killed their daughter — as a judge let the officer off with just 90 days in jail.

The family of 33-year-old Vionique Valnord had agreed to the light sentence for Andrew Kelly, 32, who pleaded guilty in Brooklyn Supreme Court to vehicular manslaughter.

With tears welling in his eyes, Kelly approached Valnord's family and apologized for taking the young woman's life.

"He came up to me and said, 'I'm sorry,'" the victim's father, Varius Valnord, said outside court. "I told him that I forgive him."

"I think of my daughter every day," said the dad. "Nothing will ever bring my daughter back."

But Varius, a pastor at the Church of God in Crown Heights, added, "This helps us move forward."

Under the plea deal, Kelly, a seven-year NYPD veteran, will also get five years' probation. He'd been suspended since the tragedy and resigned on Friday.

Kelly ran down Valnord, who was studying to be a missionary, as she left a wedding in Flatlands on Sept. 27, 2009. He had spent the night drinking beer and watching football with friends.

Kelly, who refused to take a Breathalyzer test and allegedly asked cop pals to cover up his



**JAIL TIME:** Andrew Kelly (right) yesterday receives a 90-day sentence for drunkenly mowing down Vionique Valnord (above) as she left a wedding.

drinking, had faced up to seven years in prison.

One of his friends in the car, Officer Michael Downs, remains on modified duty as Internal Affairs continues the investigation. Another officer, Robert McGinn, also remains under investigation for allegedly giving Kelly gum and two bottles of water at the crash site.

Lawyer Arthur Aidala said his client did a lot of soul-searching before taking the plea. He didn't want to put his family through a long trial.

"He was most relieved when her family forgave him," said Aidala.



"He had tears in his eyes."

A lawyer representing the family said they are planning a civil suit against the city.

"I felt that her father was forgiving, as only a reverend could be. The length of the sentence never mattered to the family. He will never be a cop again

and he's a convicted felon for the rest of his life," the lawyer said.

"Cops everywhere need to know, if they get behind the wheel of a car drunk and kill someone, they will lose their jobs," he said.

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