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## Drug-fuelled driver fled country after killing man in head-on crash

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By DAVE FINLAY

A CONVICTED criminal killed a man after driving his Mercedes car while under the influence of cocaine following his early release from jail for a murder bid.

Craig Douglas, 44, crashed head on into university lecturer Richard Greig's vehicle after veering onto the wrong side of the road.

Douglas later discharged himself from hospital and fled abroad, partly to "recuperate" from the crash in which he w

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as injured.

Yesterday, he was jailed for five years and seven months at the High Court in Edinburgh, after admitting causing the fatal crash.

Lady Dorian, the judge, told him: "It was only driving in the circumstances of having consumed cocaine that led to the tragic consequences for the Greig family."

She added:

"Only a lengthy sentence of imprisonment will suffice in this case."

The judge told Douglas she would have jailed him for seven years for his latest offence, but it would be reduced following his guilty plea.

Douglas admitted causing the death of Mr Greig, 58, on 13 April last year on the A96 Inverurie to Huntly road at Broomhill, in Aberdeenshire, by driving dangerously while unfit through drugs.

He crossed over a double white line into the path of the oncoming Nissan car driven by the other motorist.

At the time of the offence Douglas, of Lumsden Way, Balmedie, in Aberdeenshire, was out on licence from prison following a serious knife attack.

He was jailed for seven and a half years in June 2001 after being found guilty of the attempted murder of Andrew Guthrie.

Advocate depute Adrian Cottam said a witness driving westwards on the A96 was overtaken by Douglas, and watched as he continued to drive erratically.

Father-of-two Mr Greig, an Aberdeen University business education lecturer, of Braehead Way, Bridge of Don, in Aberdeen, was driving east along the road with his wife Lynne.

Mr Cottam said: "The accused made no attempt to brake or take evasive action and collided head on with the deceased's vehicle. This resulted in a sudden fireball which dissipated instantly."

Mr Greig died from multiple injuries and his wife

required surgery.

The following morning police took a blood sample from Douglas which was found to contain traces of the Class A drug cocaine when analysed.

The advocate depute said: "From the concentration of cocaine found, this was sufficient to impair the accused's ability to drive."

Days later Douglas discharged himself from hospital and absconded. A European arrest warrant was issued for him but he returned and handed himself in to police in Aberdeen.

He was returned to prison and his earliest release date from the sentence for attempted murder is now in August 2009.

Defence solicitor advocate Murray Macara said at the time of the fatal crash Douglas's marriage had been going through a difficult phase.

He said Douglas had taken a "significant quantity of cocaine" the previous night.

Lady Dorrian also banned Douglas from driving for ten years and ordered he resit a test.

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