

SPORT

THE JUDGE'S KEY QUOTES

AFP, Pretoria

Judge Thokozile Masipa on Thursday started handing down her judgement in the trial of Oscar Pistorius, finding him not guilty of murder. Here are some key quotes from the judge so far:

On the state's case:

"The state clearly has not proved beyond reasonable doubt that the accused is guilty of premeditated murder."

"Viewed in its totality, the evidence failed to establish that the accused had the requisite intention to kill the deceased, let alone with premeditation."

"The accused therefore cannot be found guilty of murder."

On Pistorius's actions:
"He took a conscious decision, he knew where he kept his firearm and he knew where his bathroom was. This is inconsistent with lack of criminal capacity."

"The intention to shoot however does not necessarily include the intention to kill."

"Clearly he did not objectively foresee this as a possibility that he would kill the person behind the door."

On Pistorius's own testimony:
"The accused was a very poor witness."

"The accused was, amongst other things an evasive witness."

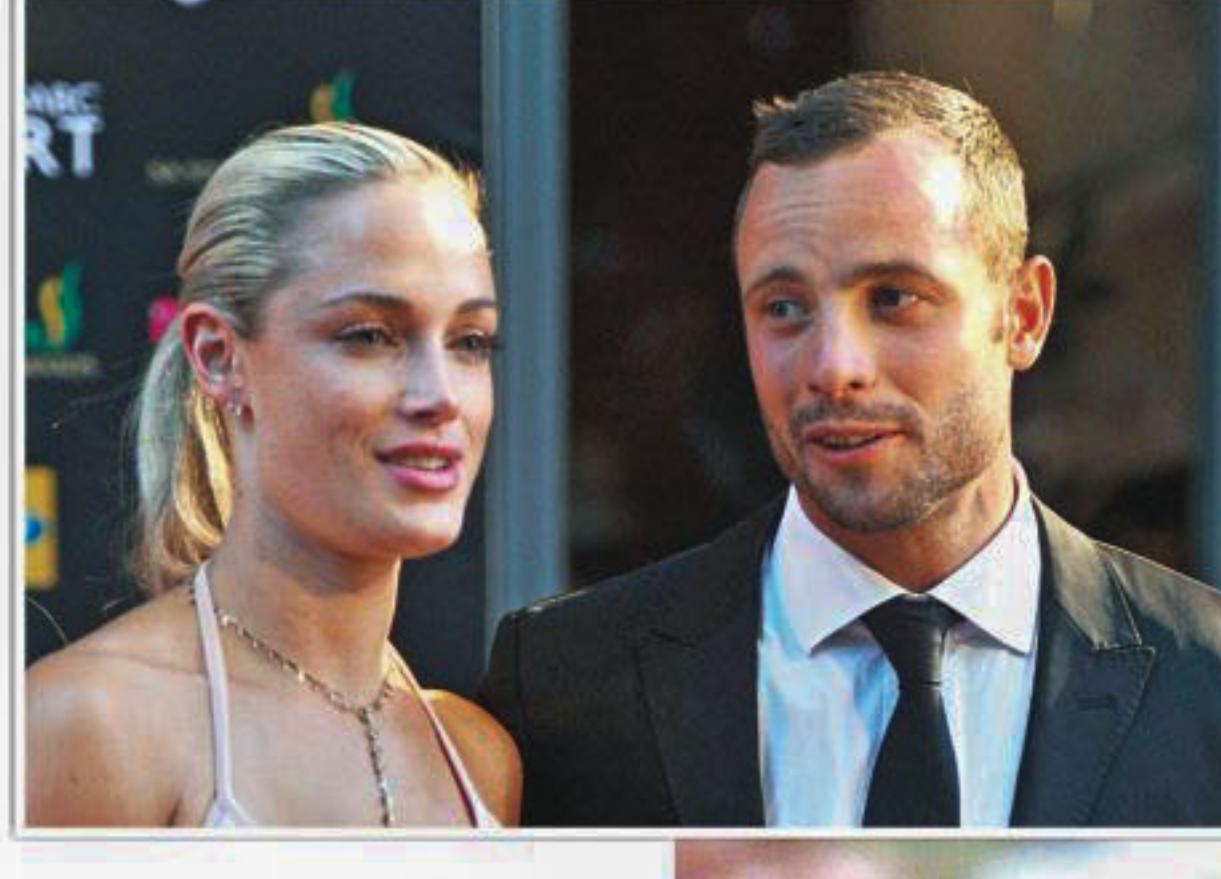
"He failed to listen properly to questions put to him under cross-examination, giving the impression that he was more worried by the impact his answers might cause rather than the questions asked."

On neighbour's testimony:
"Most witnesses had their facts wrong."

"I am of the view that they failed to separate what they knew personally or what they heard from other people or what they gathered from the media."

On relationship between the two:

"Neither the evidence of the loving relationship or a relationship tour can assist this court to determine whether the accused had the requisite intention to kill the deceased."



South Africa's Paralympian athlete Oscar Pistorius, sitting in the dock, tries to keep his composure as a High Court judge in Pretoria hands down her verdict yesterday on whether the Blade Runner was guilty of murdering his girlfriend Reeva Steenkamp (left above).

PHOTOS: AFP



Not guilty of murder

Pistorius to know his fate today

AGENCIES, Pretoria



"Blade Runner" Oscar Pistorius was found not guilty of murdering his girlfriend Reeva Steenkamp Thursday, a shock decision that left the South African celebrity athlete sobbing with emotion in the dock.

The high-profile trial was adjourned until Friday when the 27-year-old Paralympian will hear whether he has been found guilty of culpable homicide, a lesser charge roughly equivalent to manslaughter.

"The state clearly has not proved beyond reasonable doubt that the accused is guilty of premeditated murder," Judge Thokozile Masipa told the High Court in Pretoria.

The double amputee could still face anything from a suspended sentence to a lengthy prison stretch if found guilty of culpable homicide. Or he could be acquitted altogether.

Masipa's introductory comments on the lesser count appeared to lean towards a guilty ruling.

"I am of the view that the accused acted too hastily and used excessive force. In the circumstances, it is clear that his conduct was negligent," she said before adjourning the trial.

When he heard the judge clear him of murder, the Paralympian sprinter sat in the dock bowed and burying his head in his hands.

His sister Aimee rushed from the first row of the public gallery to hug her older brother, who was wiping tears from his eyes with a handkerchief.

The victim's parents, Barry and June Steenkamp, left the courtroom with stony faces.

When asked if this is good news for Pistorius, his Aunt Lois replied, "It's not the end you know, we're still listening."

Legal experts voiced shock after he was found not guilty of murder, and predicted the case that has gripped South Africans for a year would not rest with the verdict.

Both defence and prosecution agree that Pistorius killed Steenkamp, a law graduate and fashion model, when he fired four shots through a locked toilet door in his upmarket Pretoria home.

But the sprinter says he thought he was shooting at an intruder while Steenkamp was safely in bed.

The prosecution says he killed her in a fit of rage after an argument.

Judge Masipa moved quickly through her

judgement, rejecting state evidence that pointed to an argument between the couple.

The judge also reviewed evidence by neighbours who testified to hearing shots and screams, saying many "had their facts wrong".

She said the huge media coverage of the case could have affected some witnesses.

But Masipa also said Pistorius himself was "evasive" on the stand, and that his evidence showed "a number of defences, or apparent defences".

The verdict is the climax of a six-month murder trial that has cast a harsh spotlight on the fallen hero's private life.

During proceedings Pistorius has broken down, weeping and at times vomiting as he heard how the 29-year-old blonde's head "exploded" like a watermelon under the impact of his hollow-point bullets.

Thursday's verdict, also broadcast live to audiences worldwide, is unlikely to be the end of the case.

There will be more courtroom arguments before a sentence is handed down and, most likely, an appeal to a higher court.

"I'm shocked," Martin Hood, a Johannesburg-based criminal lawyer, said of Masipa's initial rulings. "I think she's going to get quite a lot of criticism from the

judiciary and the legal system."

"The consensus among the legal community was that he is guilty of murder. This could really open the door to systematic abuse of our legal system by people who shoot their partners and claim self-defence."

Whatever happens, Pistorius's glittering sporting career is likely to be over.

Once a poster boy for disabled sport, he has been stripped of lucrative endorsement deals by global brands and has withdrawn from all competition.

The case continued to inflame passions even after Masipa delivered her decision.

"We are here in support of all women who have been abused or killed by their partners," said supermarket worker Joyce Radebe, who took the day off to demonstrate outside the court with members of the African National Congress Women's League.

Prosecutor Gerrie Nel -- the theatrical face of a prosecution that has watched its case stripped away by Masipa -- painted Pistorius as a gun-obsessed hot-head who whooped with joy when he blew apart a water-melon with a high-calibre pistol, democratic South Africa -- glued to the live television feed -- was forced to ask itself some uncomfortable questions.

Taskin on for Asiad

SPORTS REPORTER

Chief cricket selector Faruque Ahmed informed yesterday that pacer Taskin Ahmed will play the Asian Games as the bowler's knee injury is manageable. The T20 competition at Incheon is scheduled to begin on September 27.

The right-arm paceman's right knee has been bothering him more than before but Faruque said, "We saw him today in practice and he is doing well in both batting and bowling. So, he will go with the team."

But another change to the Asian Games team is expected as pacer Rubel Hossain may take the place of Al-Amin Hossain, who has been reported for a suspect action.

Earlier Shohag Gazi, who has been reported with a suspect action, was replaced by Shakib Al Hasan.

Mashrafe Bin Mortaza will lead a strong team in their quest to retain the gold medal in the Games.

From fame to the dock

AFP, Pretoria

South African amputee sprinting star Oscar Pistorius was found not guilty Thursday of murdering his model girlfriend Reeva Steenkamp in 2013. He could still be found guilty of culpable homicide. Here is a snapshot of the events that began on a fateful Valentine's Day:

February 14: South African police arrest Pistorius, a Paralympic and Olympic sprinter nicknamed the "Blade Runner", for the murder of Steenkamp, shot four times with one of his guns at his house near Pretoria.

February 15: Pistorius bursts into tears as he is charged, denying the murder "in the strongest terms".

February 19: Pistorius claims in an affidavit that he mistook Steenkamp for an intruder and was "filled with horrible fear" that someone had sneaked into his home through an open window.

He insists he did not intend to kill Steenkamp, but is accused of firing through a locked bathroom door in what prosecutors term a "premeditated" murder.

February 20: Witnesses testify they heard arguing, a woman screaming and gunfire at Pistorius's house the night of the slaying, police tell the court.

The French cosmetics firm Clarins drops an advertising campaign featuring Pistorius.

February 21: US sportswear giant Nike suspends its contract with Pistorius.

South African police name a top detective to the case after it emerges that the officer initially assigned to it faces attempted murder charges.

February 22:

Pistorius is granted bail by a magistrate. It is set at 100,000 dollars after the sprinter spent more than a week in custody and sat through a tense four-day bail hearing.

March 28:

A court clears Pistorius for international travel, easing his strict bail terms.

April 14:

Pistorius is seen partying at a trendy Johannesburg hangout, media report.

May 20:

Pistorius will not race this season, his agent says.

June 28:

Pistorius is to resume limited training for his mental wellbeing, but does not plan a return to competition, his family announces.

August 13:

A magistrate orders Pistorius to stand trial in March.

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January 23:

Pistorius's lawyers and Steenkamp's family are discussing an out-of-court financial settlement, a lawyer says.

February 25:

A judge rules that most of Pistorius's trial can be broadcast live, but not his testimony.

March 3:

The trial opens in Pretoria, before an army of journalists from around the world, with the testimony of a neighbour who told the court she heard "terrible screams" from a woman and shots.

August 7:

State prosecutor Gerrie Nel, in his final argument before the court, accuses Pistorius of concocting an alibi that led to a "snowball effect" of lies.

August 8:

The trial concludes with closing arguments from the defence.

March 13:

Pistorius vomits when a picture of the dead

model's body was accidentally flashed on the court's television screens.

April 7-15: Pistorius takes the witness stand and begins with a tearful apology to the family of the woman he shot dead.

This is followed by five days of hell for the accused, including intense cross-examination, marked by several bouts of tears and breaks in the session.

But while he admits to having fired the shots, he refuses to admit any intention to kill his girlfriend.

May 5: Witnesses called by the defence say that Pistorius was "broken" after killing his girlfriend. "He cried, he cried, he prayed..." says Johan Stander, the manager of his residence.

Pistorius told him: "I shot Reeva, I thought it was an intruder!"

May 14: Judge rules that Pistorius be sent for psychiatric tests after a defence witness testified that he suffered from a "general anxiety disorder".

June 30: After a six-week interruption, a panel of three psychiatrists and a psychologist conclude that Pistorius was not suffering from mental illness.

He faces up to 25 years in prison if convicted.

July 12: Pistorius, who is on bail, is expelled from a night-club after a scuffle with another patron.

August 7: State prosecutor Gerrie Nel, in his final argument before the court, accuses Pistorius of concocting an alibi that led to a "snowball effect" of lies.

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Women's swimming meet ends

SPORTS REPORTER

Faria Amin grabbed her third gold medal on the final day of the Inter-District Women's Swimming Competition at the Sultana Kamal Women's Sports Complex in Dhanmondi yesterday.

Faria, who won gold in the 50m breaststroke and 50m freestyle on the opening day, grabbed gold in the 100m butterfly in eight-ten age-group and helped Meherpur become champions with six gold, one silver and one bronze medal.

Faria also became individual champion with three gold medals followed by Bholia's Farhand Yeasin Ria, who finished behind Faria with two gold medals. Jessore finished runners-up with two gold, three silver and two bronze medals in the two-day meet.

State Minister for LGRD Moshiur Rahman Ranga distributed prizes among the winners as chief guest, while Bangladesh Women's Sports Association president Rafia Akter Dolly and general secretary Qumrunnahar Dana were among

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