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### Acquittal on charges from fatal crash

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ST. JOHN'S — Juanita Warren of Bay Bulls has been found not guilty in Supreme Court on two charges of impaired driving causing death.

She had been charged in connection with the deaths of her boyfriend Donald Murphy, 37, and Richard O'Driscoll, 23, in May 1999.



Juanita Warren

The Crown tried to prove Warren was driving the pickup truck that crashed near Bay Bulls on the Southern Shore highway. All three of them had blood alcohol levels almost double the legal limit.

But Justice Kendra Goulding said the prosecution failed to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that Warren had been the one behind the wheel.

Goulding said there was too much contradictory evidence. No eyewitnesses could definitively say Warren was driving, and some evidence from Crown witnesses helped the defence. Shaking uncontrollably as she left the courtroom, Warren had a simple message.

"Everybody blamed me for so long, I didn't know anything anymore. But, now I know," Warren says. "Now they can go blame someone else."

#### Victims' families 'devastated'

Catherine Burse, Murphy's sister, says the family isn't satisfied with the outcome of the trial. "We're devastated. it's been a rough four years," Burse says. "When it happened, it was really hard for my Mom, and she has passed away since then." Warren, who lost her right hand in the accident, has to undergo more surgery for her injuries. She says with the charges dismissed, she can concentrate on getting better. The Crown will consider whether to appeal the verdict.



Justice Kendra Goulding

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CBC Radio's Jacquelyn Howard reports on Juanita Warren's acquittal (runs 1:16).

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