

Man is guilty ⁷⁻¹⁶⁻⁹⁷ in death of wife

Jury didn't believe his claim that she stabbed herself in the neck.

By TONY RIZZO

Staff Writer

Steven R. Jordan hired medical experts, a jury consultant and one of Kansas City's top defense lawyers, but the case ultimately turned on one simple fact: Jurors did not believe him when he said Krista Jo Jordan plunged a butcher knife into her own neck.

On Wednesday, a Johnson County jury found him guilty of voluntary manslaughter.

Most of the jury's 11½ hours of deliberations were spent deciding the degree of the crime to convict him of, not his guilt, jurors said afterward.

Prosecutors had sought to convict Jordan of the more serious charge of second-degree murder but said they were satisfied with a voluntary manslaughter conviction.

So were members of Krista Jordan's family, who praised the work of Overland Park police and Johnson County prosecutors in pursuing criminal charges.

"I want to thank them for not believing that fish story," said Krista Jordan's sister, Deborah Casto, who testified during the trial that her sister would not have committed suicide.

Krista Jordan's father, Gene Osborne, referred to Steven Jordan's version as "tremendous lies."

"I hope the judge will keep in mind that this was not just a

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killing, it was a slaughter when he passes sentence on this animal," Osborne said.

Assistant District Attorney Mike Warner said he thought the jury's verdict was fair.

Defense attorney John P. O'Connor said he was "truly disappointed" by the verdict. "I believed in my client's innocence, and there will be an appeal," he said.

O'Connor said he did not know what would happen to Jordan's three daughters. They have lived with Steven Jordan since Krista Jordan's death March 29, 1996.

Jordan, 39, was allowed to remain free on bond pending his sentencing, which is scheduled for Aug. 29.

O'Connor said he hoped a reasonable appeal bond would be set to allow Jordan to remain free while his conviction is appealed.

He faces about four years in prison under sentencing guidelines. He could have received twice that

much time if convicted of second-degree murder.

He told police and testified at his trial Monday that his wife, distraught because he was leaving her, stabbed herself in the neck with a large kitchen knife.

Even though the evidence showed Krista Jordan brought the knife into the bedroom where she died, prosecutors argued that the cuts to her hands were signs that she had fought an attacker.

Warner said in his closing argument Tuesday that her hands looked like she had "gone one-on-one with a hammerhead shark."

Some of the jurors said after the verdict that most of the time in their deliberations was spent deciding between second-degree murder and voluntary manslaughter.

Second-degree murder is an intentional killing done without premeditation.

Voluntary manslaughter is an intentional killing "done upon a sudden quarrel or in the heat of passion."



Jordan