

Woman convicted in murder of homeless advocate

TOPEKA (AP) — A Shawnee County jury took a little more than four hours Monday before convicting a woman of first-degree murder and kidnapping in the death this summer of homeless advocate David Owen.

Kimberly Sharp, 27, sobbed at District Judge Thomas Conklin read the verdicts. Sentencing is scheduled for Feb. 2.

Owen's family showed little emotion after the verdicts were read, and Darrell Owen, the victim's father, said family members wouldn't have a statement, noting they still have two more trials to go through.

Sharp's defense attorney, Wendell Betts, said he would appeal the verdicts.

On July 2, investigators found David Owen's badly decomposed body in tall grass along the north

bank of the Kansas River. Authorities during the trial said they believed he died around June 15.

Prosecutors charged four people, including Sharp, with first-degree murder.

John Ray Cornell, 35, pleaded guilty on Oct. 6 to a lesser charge of reckless involuntary manslaughter and a charge of kidnapping. He will be sentenced Feb. 9.

Carl Baker, 60, will go to trial on Jan. 8; Charles L. Hollingsworth III, 18, will go to trial on Jan. 22.

Deputy District Attorney David Debenham said Sharp could face up to life in prison and be eligible for parole in 20 years.

During the trial, witnesses testified that Sharp didn't personally help tie up Owen, drag him to the edge of the river and leave him to die in the extreme June heat.

There was also conflicting testi-

mony about when she actually found out Owen died.

But Debenham, in his closing statements, told jurors Sharp knew a crime was being committed and did nothing to stop it, which would make her as responsible as the others.

"When you have a basketball team, every member of the team gets credit for a win," he said. "This was a team effort."

Defense attorney Stacey Donovan said Owen would have died that night regardless of whether Sharp had been there.

"She was not a member of any

team," Donovan said.

She also repeated testimony from Cornell, who was with Sharp when Hollingsworth and Baker allegedly tied up Owen and carried him out of sight to the river.

"He said over and over again, 'We didn't know,'" Donovan said.

Sharp testified that she was told weeks after the incident that the men had released Owen the next day and he was fine.

But Cornell also testified that Sharp asked Hollingsworth about Owen soon after they returned from the river and was told that he was probably dead.

Today's answer from page 7

3	4	6	9	2	8	7	1	5
9	2	1	5	7	6	4	3	8
7	5	8	4	1	3	2	6	9
2	6	3	1	9	4	5	8	7
8	1	4	7	3	5	6	9	2
5	9	7	8	6	2	3	4	1
1	3	9	6	5	7	8	2	4
6	8	5	2	4	1	9	7	3
4	7	2	3	8	9	1	5	6

Difficulty Level ★★ ★ 12/20

Insurance costs rising five times faster than wages

TOPEKA (AP) — Health insurance costs are increasing nearly five times faster than wages in Kansas, burdening families and employers who provide their coverage, a national advocacy group said Monday.

The report from the Washington-based Families USA came only three weeks before the 2007 Legislature was scheduled to convene. Gov. Kathleen Sebelius, fresh off winning a second term, already has said health care is among her biggest issues.

"Health care costs are absorbing an ever-larger portion of family budgets, and it is clear why many Kansas families feel worse off economically than they did six years ago," the report said. "For many, the growing costs are hindering their ability to pay for other necessities — and reducing their standard of living." The group, which represents health care consumers, began releasing reports in October, documenting how insurance costs are outpacing wages, state by state.

She said in a written statement, she hopes the Families USA report will inspire legislative action.

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Public Comment on Northwest Kansas Technical College
The Higher Learning Commission
30 North LaSalle Street, Suite 2400
Chicago IL 60602-2504

Comments must address substantive matters related to the quality of the institution or its academic programs. Comments must be in writing and signed, and include the name, address and telephone numbers of the person providing the comments. The Commission cannot guarantee that comments received after the due date will be considered. Comments will not be treated as confidential. All comments must be received by January 12, 2007.

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