

Jensen guilty in sons' deaths

She's convicted of abuse charge, acquitted of negligent homicide

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An eight-woman, four-man jury said Heather Jensen was guilty of fatal child abuse in the deaths of young sons William and Tyler, but the same jury said she couldn't have known they might die in her overheating Toyota 4Runner.

Arms clasped with her lawyers as Friday's verdict was read, Jensen, 25, cried in their arms when jurors left District Judge Valerie Robison's courtroom and after the judge announced guilty verdicts on the two most serious charges in the case: Class-3 felony child abuse resulting in death, with negligence. That's one count each for William and Tyler.

Jensen was acquitted on two lesser charges, Class-5 felony criminally negligent homicide, but convicted of misdemeanor false reporting.

Unlike the negligent homicide charge, the child abuse counts required prosecutors to prove Jensen failed to perceive a risk to the "life or health" of the boys.

She'll be sentenced March 21 and faces 4 to 16 years for each child abuse count; a maximum 32 years for each count if Robison finds aggravating factors.

Jensen's mother, Sherry Holesapple of Florida, declined to speak to reporters Friday, walking out of Robison's courtroom stone-faced and locked arm-in-arm with family.

"We will be back," a woman



GRETEL DAUGHERTY/The Daily Sentinel

Heather Jensen, center, struggles to maintain her composure after a guilty verdict was reached in her trial on Friday. Jensen was found guilty of child abuse resulting in death and false reporting. Public defenders Thea Reiff, right, and Elsa Archambault, left, turn to comfort her. Jensen was found not guilty of the lesser charge of criminally negligent homicide. **See a photo gallery of the trial proceedings at GJSentinel.com**

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