



John Jonchuck convicted of first-degree murder in death of daughter Phoebe

John Jonchuck dropped his 5-year-old daughter Phoebe off a St. Petersburg Bridge in 2015.

CLEARWATER, Fla. — Four years after 5-year-old Phoebe's death, a jury has reached a verdict in her father's murder trial.

A jury on Tuesday unanimously convicted John Jonchuck of first-degree murder for dropping his daughter off a St. Petersburg bridge in 2015.

He will spend the rest of his life in prison; the death penalty was not an option in this case.

The jury deliberated for six and a half hours.

"I never had a trial this long and I've been here 10 years," Judge Chris Helinger said before the jury read its verdict.

The first-degree murder conviction automatically comes with a life sentence even as Jonchuck's defense team asked to postpone sentencing.

"You're sentenced to life in prison," Helinger said.

After the verdict and sentence were delivered, Jonchuck was fingerprinted and escorted out of the courtroom by two Pinellas County deputies.

The trial lasted nearly three weeks. Prosecutors got the murder conviction they were arguing for while Jonchuck's defense team vehemently argued that he was insane when he dropped Phoebe off the bridge.

During closing arguments on Monday, prosecutors relied on three key points, which led to their victory: a police officer saw Jonchuck kill his daughter, Jonchuck was jealous of his mother and Phoebe's mother, and the fact that Jonchuck did not jump off the bridge with his daughter.

A little after midnight Jan. 8, 2015, a St. Petersburg police officer saw Jonchuck's car speeding south on Interstate 275 toward the Sunshine Skyway Bridge. He followed Jonchuck through the toll booth and to the Dick Misener Bridge, where Jonchuck pulled over.

Jonchuck got out of the car, took Phoebe out of the back seat and dropped her over the edge of the bridge into the waters of Tampa Bay. She fell 62 feet.

Jonchuck then sped off toward Manatee County and was arrested and charged with murder, assault and fleeing police.

Source:

<https://www.wtsp.com/article/news/crime/jury-finds-john-jonchuck-guilty-of-murder-in-death-of-his-5-year-old-daughter/67-a1aaf547-4bf4-45be-bf99-6bc2b6927d86>