

Jury: Dalia Dippolito guilty in murder-for-hire scheme

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WEST PALM BEACH — A jury this afternoon convicted Dalia Dippolito of trying to hire a hitman to kill her newlywed husband in 2009.

The jury of six took barely three hours to come back with a guilty verdict on the one count of solicitation to commit first-degree murder.

The 29-year-old Dippolito barely showed any emotion as the verdict was read. Dippolito, who now faces up to 30 years in prison, was led quietly out of the packed courtroom in handcuffs by sheriff's deputies.

Earlier, the alternate two jurors who sat through today's closing arguments, said after they would have voted the Boynton Beach woman guilty. The two, who were dismissed this afternoon, said that they were not swayed by defense attorney Michael Salnick's arguments.

"He can take a steel girder and bend it into a pretzel," Sandra Clutter said she would think while hearing Salnick speak during the high-profile trial. "Dalia is certainly getting her money's worth."

Clutter said she observed Dippolito's demeanor and noticed her giggling on Thursday. But today the reality set in, and she observed her crying.

The remaining jurors had asked to see two videos as they began deliberations.

Both the defense and prosecution had two hours to sum up their cases for jurors this morning.

Chief Assistant State Attorney Elizabeth Parker: "The evidence is overwhelming... they can't say she didn't do it."

She likened Dippolito to poison candy: attractive outside, deadly inside.

Salnick, the defense attorney, said there are many unresolved questions. "Dalia Dippolito is asking you to let her wake up from this nightmare," Salnick said, asking jurors to find her not guilty.

The defense case, predicted earlier in the trial to last two days, was over in less than two hours Thursday.

Dippolito did not testify. And no one testified that there was any kind of ruse or plot between her and husband, Michael Dippolito, to get on reality television.

Salnick had argued in opening statements that Dalia Dippolito never planned to kill her husband. Rather, Michael Dippolito had concocted a murder hoax in an effort to get on a reality TV show.

Dalia Dippolito was arrested in 2009 after Boynton Beach police staged an elaborate sting. Their videotapes show her plotting her husband's demise and trying to hire a hit man.