Eight Moments That Led to a Guilty Verdict

**By Corrine Ramey, James Fanelli, Caitlin Ostroff, Vicky Ge Huang, and Rachel Humphreys**

The trial of one-time crypto billionaire Sam Bankman-Fried, in courtroom 26A in downtown Manhattan, was nearly a month of courtroom drama.

People raced to squeeze into the wooden benches wen Judge Lewis Kaplan announced at about 7:37 p.m. Thursday that the jury had reached a verdict after jut over four hours od deliberations, almost as long as it took him to instruct the jury on the seven charges facing Bankman-fried. The foreperson, juror number 4, stood up and read out: guilty on all counts.

Bankman-Fried, who stood and faced the jury, cast his head down. His parents both held their heads in their hands. His father was bent over. His mother cried. Bankman-Fried, the 31 year-old found of failed cryptocurrency exchange FTX, was found guilty on seven criminal counts, including fraud and money-laundering offenses. His trial was a revealing window into how a hyped-up company can rise and fall so quickly. For some, the proceedings were pure schadenfreude, the comeuppance for elite millennials who had a plan to make obscene amounts of money and then use it to save the world.

The line to get into the courthouse could start as early as 11:30 p.m. the night before, and, on some days, courtroom lots were claimed by 4;40 a.m. Anyone wo didn’t make it into the courtroom could watch the action on Tv screes in overflow rooms. There, it could get rowdy, with laughing or heckling in response to witness testimony.

Here are moments, arguments and people that stood out:

**Captivating testimony**

Caroline Ellison, the former chief executive of Alameda Research, testified that bankman-Fried directed her to prepare multiple difference versions of Alameda’s balance sheet. “There is no innocent explanation for having eight alternatives to a balance sheet and then picking one of the alternative ones that omits the key crimey, fraudy parts of the balance sheet, “ said Assistant U.S. Attorney Nicolas Roos in his closing argument.

Ellison and Bankman-Fried had had an on-again-off-again relationship. She cried on the witness stand when she recalled the week that FTX collapsed. She felt relieved, she testified, because she had been dreading that the truth about Alameda taking customer funds would come out. She said, “I felt a sense of relief because I didn’t have to lie anymore.”

**Bankman-Fried’s hair was a point of contention**

Prosecutors and Bankman-Fried’s defense team sparred over the reason for his messy mop top. Ellison testified for the government that Bankman-Fried cultivated an image “as a smart, competent, somewhat eccentric founder” to win FTX business. His shaggy hair, as well as his preference for wearing shorts and aa T-shirt, were crucial to the look, she said.

Bankman-Fried testified that his appearance wasn’t purposeful. He wore shorts because they were comfortable, he said. “I was kind of busy and lazy and didn’t bother getting haircuts for long periods of time,” he testified.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Danielle Sassoon was clearly skeptical of his explanation on cross-examination.

And in closing, Bankman-Fried’s lawyer Mark Cohen, said, “We’ll agree that there was a time when Same was probably the worst-dressed CDO in the world, and had the worst haircut,” Cohen said, but added that his appearance wasn’t a crime.

**It was a family affair**

Joseph Bankman and Barbara Fried, both Stanford law professors, passed through security most days around 8:30am and then spent hours watching their son’s trial from the family-and-friends benches in the courtroom. They took notes and doodled, and sometimes visibly reacted. After Bankman-Fried floundered during cross examination without the jury present, his mother had her head in her hands.

The prosecutors’ parents often sat, proudly across the aisle of the courtroom. Judge Kaplan’s wife was in the courtroom gallery, too, some days.

**A quick judge with a lot of one lines**

Impatient with a line of government questioning about one of many spreadsheets, Judge Kaplan note he would tally up pounds of smoked fish sold at his father; deli as a child. Even Bankman-Fried laughed.

The prosecutors and Bankman-Fried’s defense team, weren’t always collegial to one another. During one impasse, Judge Kaplan asked the two sides to negotiate a compromise.

“We can certainly try,” Cohen, a lawyer for Bankman-Fried, told the judge.

And if you can manage that, I’m going to send you to the Middle Easst,” Kaplan replied.

**One dedicated juror**

The 12 members of the jury and their six alternates sat for hours listening to evidence. In the fourth week of the trial, one was dismissed. He showed up for trial sick, having been throwing up, but wanted to stay on the jury. Judge Kaplan said he would have to be excused. He couldn’t miss a day and couldn’t risk getting others sick. The judge told the court that the juror “refused to leave because he says he’s involved.”

**The unusual dress rehearsal**

Bankman-Fried took the stand, without the jury present, so the judge could determine whether the FTX founder could testify that lawyers were involved in some business decisions in question. Sasson included questions such as “Would [safeguarding assets] include not embezzling customer assets, for example?” (This was struck down) and “Were you aware than [FTX chief regulatory officer] Dan Friedberg used illegal narcotics with your employees?” (This was also struck down0. On the stand in front of the jury, during is cross-examination by Sasson, Bankman-Fried said he couldn’t recall more than 140 times, by prosecutors’ count.

Bankman-Fried calculates risk (and everything else)

Bankman-Fried and Ellison are both math whizzes, and math shapes Bankman-Fried’s view of the world. Ellison testified about Bankman-Fried’s unusually high tolerance for risk: “I guess he also talked about this in the context of thinking about what was good for the world, saying that he would be happy to flip a coin, if it came up tails and the world was destroyed, as long as if it came up heads the world would be like more than twice as good.”

**A big cast of characters**

A rotating cast of hundred from the worlds of law, finance and, of course, crypto attended. Spotted at the courthouse: actor -turned-crypto critic Ben McKenzie; best-selling author Michael Lewis; crypto-book author Zeke Faux; crypto influencer Tiffany Fong; convicted pharma bro Marttin Shkreli.