

#### Plea Entered in Hiawatha Murder Case

(KNZA)--A Hiawatha woman has been convicted on charges in the beating death of a 4-year-old boy in March of last year.

30-year-old Janice Summerford entered an Alford plea Friday in Brown County District Court to three counts in an amended complaint of second-degree murder, felony child abuse and interference with a law enforcement officer.

In an Alford plea, a defendant doesn't admit guilt but acknowledges prosecutors can likely prove the charge.

During testimony from investigators in the case, details of Summerford's involvement in the murder of Mekhi Boone were presented to District Judge Jim Patton by Brown County Attorney Kevin Hill in support of the plea. Judge Patton accepted Summerford's plea and found her guilty on the charges. Sentencing was set for September 22nd.

A jury trial in the case had been set for next month.

The child's father, Lee Davis IV, is currently behind bars serving a nearly 20-year prison sentence after being convicted of second-degree murder and felony child abuse.

Authorities say Summerford was Davis' live-in girlfriend and the child's primary caregiver.

Summerford was arrested in April of last year following an investigation by the Brown County Sheriff's Department.

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he remains in the Brown County Jail after her bond was revoked.

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