

# The Berkshire Eagle

## Pittsfield men found not guilty of barrel theft

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PITTSFIELD -- Two Pittsfield men were found not guilty Wednesday of stealing stainless steel barrels worth around \$42,000.

The jury's judgment followed a two-day trial in Berkshire Superior Court.

Jeffrey J. Renzi, 37, of West Street, and Donald Thomas, 41, of Dalton Avenue, were acquitted of six felony larceny charges.

The men had been charged in connection with the June 2010 theft of six massive stainless steel barrels, each valued at about \$7,000, from L.B. Corp., a Lee-based contractor. The barrels were sold for scrap and allegedly only netted about \$200 apiece.

A third defendant, Mark Renzi -- Jeffrey Renzi's father -- was scheduled to be tried with his son and Thomas, but due to a medical emergency will be going to court at a later date.

The trial, held before Judge John A. Agostini, revolved around the testimony of one of the men accused of the heist, James Castagna of Columbus Avenue, Pittsfield, who alleged the other three men were also part of the caper.

The defendant's attorneys, Richard LeBlanc, representing Thomas, and Renzi's attorney, Raymond Jacob, focused on Castagna's credibility. They said he had initially lied to police about his role in the crime and was only testifying in the hopes of getting a plea deal.

Both attorneys, in their summations, said Castagna was a "liar."

Berkshire Assistant District Attorney Rachel Eramo, told the jury that while they may not like Castagna,

his story was corroborated by various details and that he clearly identified his co-defendants from the stand.

The jury deliberated for about 90 minutes before returning its verdict.

The investigation was conducted by members of the Lee Police Department.

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