

Jury Finds Business Owner Not Guilty of All Charges in Prosecution for Social Security Fraud and Theft of Government Funds

DES MOINES, IOWA — On May 10, 2019, a federal court jury returned a verdict finding Leesa Parkhill-Nieland not guilty on all criminal charges arising from a multi-year investigation and prosecution. The government had accused Ms. Parkhill-Nieland of Social Security fraud, theft of government funds, and making false statements to a federal agency. The charges arose from Ms. Parkhill-Nieland's ownership of two businesses in Altoona and her receipt of Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) benefits due to a severe back injury. The government claimed that she made false statements and concealed information from the Social Security Administration in order to knowingly and intentionally receive Social Security Disability Insurance benefits to which she was not entitled. Ms. Parkhill-Nieland adamantly disputed the government's accusations and denied any criminal liability.

Todd Lantz of The Weinhardt Law Firm represented Ms. Parkhill-Nieland during the trial, which lasted five days and involved over thirty witnesses and hundreds of exhibits. "Leesa always believed that she was innocent, and she trusted a jury to hear the evidence and make the correct decision," explained Mr. Lantz. "She is overjoyed with the result and looks forward to moving on with her life."

In a May 23, 2019 Newton Daily Newspaper article, *'Happy that it's over', Parkhill-Nieland found not guilty on all charges*, Ms. Parkhill-Nieland said, "When you're accused of something like this, you don't know what your future holds. I was shocked. I could not believe they thought I was doing something wrong. I was very open and honest." As further reported in the article, investigators searched through the Nielands' phones, computers and tablets. Every text message, every email, every phone call, every Facebook post and every private message from as far back as 2009 was scrutinized. Nevertheless, Ms. Parkhill-Nieland refused to take a plea bargain.

The trial was held in Des Moines, Iowa, the location of one of the courthouses for the United States District Court for the Southern District of Iowa. The presiding judge was Rebecca Goodgame Ebinger.

About The Weinhardt Law Firm The Weinhardt Law Firm is a boutique firm that specializes in the litigation of complex civil and criminal cases. The firm has extensive experience in all types of civil and criminal matters, but its attorneys concentrate their practices in complex business disputes, the defense of white collar criminal matters, and high-profile investigations. The firm practices in federal and state courts in Iowa and across the United States.

The Weinhardt Law Firm is located at 2600 Grand Avenue, Suite 450, Des Moines, less than 10 minutes from the U.S. Courthouse and the Polk County Courthouse, and eight minutes from the Des Moines International Airport.

To learn more, visit www.WeinhardtLaw.com or call (515) 244-3100.

Media Contact: Please direct follow up questions and/or requests for interviews to –
Diana Deibler, Deibler & Company
(515) 681-2317
Diana@DeiblerandCompany.com
