

JURY ACQUITS GRANDDAUGHTER IN ANTIFREEZE POISONING OF GRANDFATHER

A Casey County circuit court jury returned a not guilty verdict in the case of a young woman accused of poisoning her grandfather with antifreeze, after spending four days hearing the evidence and more than three hours of deliberations. In an unusual ending to the case, Judge James Bowling allowed the jury foreman to read the verdict—instead of reading it himself—on the charge of Attempted Murder. With the words “not guilty” resounding in the courtroom, Brittany Miller hugged her attorneys and smiled broadly.

“A spectacular result!” exulted Miller’s lead attorney, Mark Stanziano. “This was a hard-fought trial and the outcome was certain to be life-altering for Brittany. I’m glad her life will be altered in the positive ways freedom provides, instead of in the negative ways associated with living for a long period in prison.” Miller faced 10-20 years in prison if convicted.

While there is no way to know what swayed the jurors, some insight was provided when they came out with a question early on in their deliberations. “One of the jurors was holding the exhibits we introduced and it was clear they were really pouring over the information in those documents,” said Stanziano. “Right or wrong, we took that as a positive sign.”

Miller’s co-counsel, Bethany Catron, wiping away tears of joy, said that, “The jury really cared about attention to detail during the trial. It’s no surprise they took the same approach during their deliberations. We are so very grateful for the work they did and, of course, for the verdict.”

After the verdict was announced, several of the jurors took the time to wish Miller good luck as she attempts to put the pieces of her life back together. “She still loves her grandfather, but I am afraid the relationship may be broken beyond fixing,” said Stanziano. “But, Brittany is hopeful that, with time, things may get back to normal.”

The prosecution claimed that an 18-year old Miller poisoned her grandfather over the course of a weekend in an attempt to obtain an inheritance much more quickly than she would otherwise have been able. The case turned on the interpretation of evidence from Miller’s home computer. According to Stanziano, “We were able to show that Brittany’s grandfather was not so naive regarding the use of the computer as he claimed to be, and that he accessed not only political sites but porn sites as well while checking on how he might safely ingest antifreeze for the purpose of getting attention from increasingly distant family members.”

Catron said that the defense’s examination of the computer’s hard drive was far more extensive than that of the prosecution. “We were willing to say to our expert, ‘find everything, good or bad, and let us see it all. We’ll take it from there.’ We were willing to go with the truth wherever it took us because our client was adamant that she did not poison her grandfather. We were confident the results of our examination would lead her to freedom.” Ultimately, they were right.

Stanziano credited the entire defense team as well as members of the criminal defense bar across the country who helped brainstorm the case and to perfect the defense theory. “It was a team effort, to be sure” he said. “We could not have prevailed without everyone’s help.”