



Palm Beach Millionaire John Goodman Granted New Trial

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(Source: CBS4) John Goodman

WEST PALM BEACH (CBS4) – The Palm Beach millionaire and Polo Club mogul convicted of killing a man while driving drunk will be granted a new trial.

Lawyers for John Goodman announced Friday that, due to perceived bias from a member of the jury, a judge granted the defense's request.

“The jury is the foundation of our criminal justice system. It is the equalizer between the citizen and the state. However, as in any institution run by human beings, there will be those who seek to corrupt the process,” said Goodman’s attorney Roy Black in a statement released to the media.

“A juror who deceives to get on a jury in a high profile case for his own profit is a trial lawyer’s worst nightmare. Fortunately, this time the deception was exposed and a courageous judge set aside the verdict. But in this new world of social media and self-publishing, expect this to occur more frequently. John Goodman’s trial should stand as a warning to all of us.”

In March 2012, Goodman was convicted of DUI manslaughter in the death of Scott Wilson, 23, in February 2010. He was subsequently sentenced to 16 years in prison.

Prosecutors claimed Goodman was drunk when his Bentley slammed into Wilson's car. The force of the crash pushed the car into the canal where Wilson drowned.

Investigators said Goodman left the scene and waited nearly one hour before calling 911.

Goodman's defense team argued he didn't realize he had hit the vehicle and then left the scene to get treatment for his injuries.

Prosecutors claim Goodman was driving under the influence when he crashed into Wilson. A blood sample taken nearly three hours after the crash showed Goodman had a blood alcohol level more than twice the legal limit.

Goodman's attorney tried to counter the DUI accusation with another theory. His expert testified that the millionaire left the scene because he may have suffered a concussion and did not behave as you'd expect someone to if they were just in an accident.

Goodman admitted on the stand that he had four drinks over the course of the evening. Goodman said the last thing he remembered before the accident was that the brakes seemed odd.

Goodman told the jury that after the crash, he passed out. When he came to, he said he was disoriented and didn't initially realize he hit anyone, because Wilson's car was submerged in the canal.

Goodman said he took off walking, looking for a phone. He said he ended up in an office in this barn, known as "a man-cave with a TV and bar. He said he had a few drinks to kill the pain of his injuries and that's why he failed a blood alcohol test.

Goodman told the jury he drank in the "man-cave" and then hiked through a field to a nearby trailer where he first called his girlfriend and then called 911. On the 911 tape, Goodman sounded disoriented, continually asking if everyone was alright.

He said that it was during that call that he got scared, realizing the wreck was worse than he knew.

In addition to local headlines, Goodman made national headlines when he adopted his girlfriend as his daughter to help shield his assets in the event of a lawsuit in civil court.