

‘Not guilty’ not end of the road for Cahill co-defendant

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By Mass. Lawyers Weekly Staff

A Dec. 11 not-guilty verdict was an early Christmas present for Scott Campbell, but the holidays won't be completely stress-free for the former chief of staff to Timothy P. Cahill.

After a grueling four-week trial, which concluded with more than 25 hours of jury deliberations, Campbell was acquitted on charges that he had conspired with ex-Treasurer Cahill to spend \$1.5 million of the Lottery's advertising budget over an eight-week span in 2010 during Cahill's run for governor.

Lost in the hoopla surrounding the verdict is the fact that Campbell, who's represented by Boston lawyer Charles W. Rankin, is a co-defendant in another high-profile public corruption scandal being prosecuted in the same Suffolk County courthouse in which he was just acquitted.

Campbell, 40, is accused of conspiring to participate in a hiring scheme with embattled ex-Probation Chief John O'Brien. A trial is slated for April.

Attorney General Martha Coakley, whose office is prosecuting the case, alleges that O'Brien began making inquiries in 2005 about a possible Lottery job for his wife. The AG says Campbell and O'Brien agreed that the then-probation chief, who's facing state and federal indictments, would sponsor a fundraiser for Cahill. In exchange, O'Brien's wife would allegedly receive a full-time job at the Treasury.

A few months after the fundraiser that netted \$11,100 on behalf of Cahill, Coakley says, Mrs. O'Brien began collecting a paycheck as a customer service rep in Cahill's office.

If anyone knows how Campbell and his legal team felt when they walked out of Judge Christine Roach's courtroom last week, it's Boston lawyer Martin G. Weinberg.

Weinberg represented Richard Vitale, a co-defendant in the 2011 public corruption trial of former House Speaker Salvatore F. DiMasi. After a jury found Vitale not guilty of all charges in U.S. District Court Chief Judge Mark L. Wolf's session, Vitale still faced unrelated state lobbying and campaign finance violation charges.

Weinberg says the prospect of back-to-back trials is one he wouldn't wish on anyone. "It is an ordeal to be on trial; it is the ultimate ordeal to face consecutive trials," Weinberg says. "It's just a withering, exhausting challenge to somebody's courage and inner strength."

Three months after the not-guilty in federal court, Weinberg was able to arrive at a resolution on Vitale's state case that allowed his client to enter an Alford plea on seven misdemeanor charges and avoid time behind bars. "The bottom line is that it's hard to do it twice, even for the innocent," he says.

Rankin could not be reached for comment prior to deadline.